



**... Partnering with the Holy Spirit to empower Mexican people to grasp all of God's full purpose**

*Dennis and Lucy Smith, missionaries to Mexico*

[www.ManosdeDios.org](http://www.ManosdeDios.org)

**November 2008 Newsletter**

*This month's newsletter will be a little different in that it will include (at the very end) a discussion on the current state of the violence in Mexico and the need for Gods' transformation. Some information in our articles may be a little uncomfortable for some to read. In any case, as you read this newsletter please pick out things that touch your heart and pray about them.*

## **Pantano Church partners with Amor Ministries to build five homes in Puerto Peñasco**

Five homes were built in the 'invasion' neighborhood of Puerto Peñasco over the Veteran's Day weekend. The Los Niños outreach activities were held in four different barrios, with one



right in the center of where PCC work teams were building the houses. We were fortunate to be able to visit each family receiving a new house. One of the houses built was for a mom, dad and small child. With the new home, they were able to move out of the small motor home (18 foot) they were living in (see photo to left) and pass it on to another needy family. They were being blessed to be a blessing! Another touching story is of a family that had been living

under a palapa (a structure of four posts with a roof of palm branches/tarps) for two years! The mother stated that for two years they had been at the mercy of the elements (wind, sand, rain, heat, cold) living in a structure with no walls. What she was looking forward to most and would be the greatest blessing was to have a building with walls and to be out of the wind, freezing cold in the winter and blazing hot in the summer! Can you imagine living under a



giant umbrella in Tucson for two years?? See their new home shown in the photo above. Each house built was a blessing to the family and is greatly appreciated. We are passing on a sincere thank you from the families to the construction crews and everyone that helped make this miracle happen for the families in the barrio! Great job work teams!

*His servant, Dennis*

**But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. James 2:18**

## Los Niños programs spread God's love to children & moms

What a wonderful opportunity to reach out to children and their moms in four different neighborhoods with a team of 45 volunteers! When Pantano Christian Church (and other churches from Arizona) partner with Amor Ministries to build

homes every Veteran's Day weekend a group of willing women, men and youth spend their



days spreading God's love and joy to children and women. In each location we began by setting up our sound system to play fun children's music in Spanish. Next came the soccer balls and jump ropes. The kids loved playing in the dirt road with our group of adults and youth from the US! Crafts stations were set up under EZ-Ups. Kids made lion and sheep masks with yarn; colored; and created land and sea on paper plates (complete with gummy worms and goldfish crackers). The moms painted rocks or enjoyed a pedicure and facial masque. Everyone enjoyed interacting and sharing.



After more than an hour of games and crafts, the children were gathered together to sing songs together including Padre Abram (Father Abraham), Aquí estamos (Here we are), Yo Tengo un Amigo (I have friend in Jesus) and Jesus es mi Rey (Jesus in my King). A memory verse was taught (I John 3:1) and a drama of the Creation Story was told and acted out. Again, we were assisted by El Sembrador Church pastors and members. Pastora Rafaela told the gospel story and prayed with the children. Often, she asked the children to pray for the adults standing near them. What a special moment!

Refreshments were served and Bibles were given to the moms who wanted (needed) one.

The most difficult of the four outreaches was the one held in the "invasion neighborhood" near where our teams were building the five new homes. Each mom asked us, "how do we get a home built for our family?" What a difficult question to answer. We directed them to the Amor pastor board pastors who receive applications from needy families and make the decisions of







who receives a home. We were invited to come see the condition of current homes. I went back into the neighborhood the next day to visit some of these families. We prayed with each family and directed them to the Great Provider. There is so much need: physical & spiritual! We were delighted to meet Christ-followers living in the neighborhood and

encouraged them to disciple, mentor, and pray with their neighbors. We see a real hunger for God and open hearts to Spiritual intervention in their lives. Please pray with us for God's Divine Strategy for how to reach out to this neighborhood in the future.

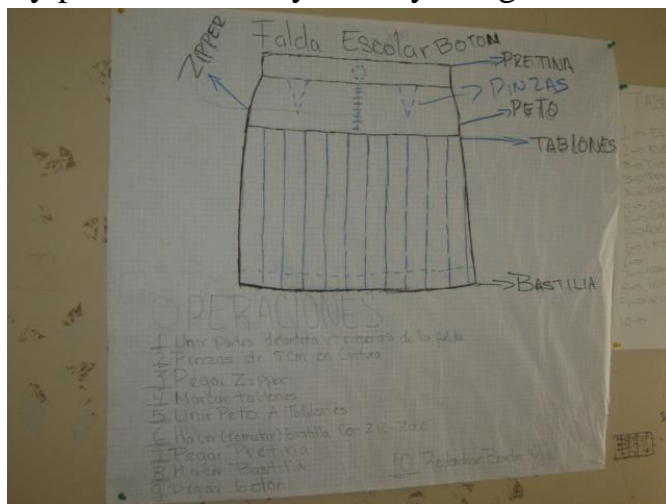
In awe of our Lord, Jesus Christ,  
Lucy

### Church women volunteer to sew uniforms for students



80 children still don't have uniforms to attend school. The DIF (local government) office offered to provide the fabric, if the women would sew the skirts and pants for these children's uniforms. Pastora Rafa and the women of El Sembrador church have set up an assembly line to sew the plaid, pleated skirts for the girls and the gray pants for the boys. They designed the patterns and have the instructions posted on

the wall of the church room. Sewing machines are set up and women come in shifts to cut out and sew skirts and pants. These women are willingly giving of their time to provide uniforms for needy children so they can attend school. Praise God for this donation of time and energy! May God truly bless these women!



## **Donations taken to Mexico in November**

150 pounds of nails, for homes in the barrio  
2 trowels  
4 hand saws  
2 bags of men's dress shirts  
5 bags of children's clothes  
1 bag women's winter clothes  
4 bags children's winter coats  
1 bag women's/children's slacks  
1 bag men's underwear and socks for prison ministry  
3 bags of food  
5 blankets  
1 kitchen table and 4 chairs (for Armando and Diana's new home)  
15 gallons of paint for Tony and Norma's house  
600 pencils for Pastor Lupe  
20 school supply kits for Sunday school programs  
(contains: scissors-ruler-pencil sharpener-glue-paper-eraser)  
1 multipurpose game table for Pastor Lupe's youth program  
(air hockey-bowling-soccer-checkers-chess)  
4 bags of sweatshirts  
1 bag women's sweaters  
12 pair children's shoes  
20 dress shirts, 4 suit coats for pastors



## **Dirt Poor Missionaries**

Lucy and I have been blessed with the use of a small house for a year in Puerto Peñasco. And as houses go, there will be problems. It seems that one night the water pipe broke, created a sink hole that swallowed up a 1,100 liter water tank, and flooded the back yard and the laundry room. Lucy, being in Peñasco alone and being the trooper that she is (I was in Tucson preparing for the Amor house building trip), took charge! She coordinated the plumber and other work crews that installed a new tank on the roof and cleaned up the mess. Sharing each others' hardships, as we do, she left the sink hole for me to fill up. After the 3 day house building project was finished I ask for volunteers to assist me in filling the hole in our back yard! There were not many takers to my request, especially when I told them we had to fill it by filling 5 gallon buckets with sand and carrying them through the living room to the back yard (no outside gates and the door was too small to get a wheelbarrow through). That's when someone said "so you are dirt poor missionaries and need some dirt!" I did get two guys and a teenager to help out. It took about 100 buckets of sand and 90 minutes, but we got it done! What a blessing that was! Thank you volunteers!

### **Men's prison ministry**

The weekly visit to the prison went better than usual. Desert Son Community Church from Tucson was just finishing up a house building project/camping trip and had leftover sandwich fixings and asked if Manos de Dios could use it. I accepted their offer and said we would make sandwiches for the men and women in our prison ministry. Their kitchen crew not only donated, but put together the 70 sandwiches and included 100 cookies, apples, and 4 bottles of juice. To say the least, the men and women in the prison were very thankful! They enjoyed a delicious meal!

The ministry program was well received with lots of singing, praying and a message. I also had the opportunity to talk to a young man that spoke some English. (He was not in the Bible study – he was on the other side of the fence.) I asked him how it was going. He replied, a little better – my sentence has been reduced by two years, from 28 to 26 years! If you look at it from his side, it is a blessing. He also said he does not have any relatives in Peñasco and is in the need of a pair of shoes. I told him to keep praying about being blessed with a pair of shoes and we will see what the Lord has in mind. I did not have much time to talk to him because we were on our way out of the prison at that time. And by the way, he is in prison for killing a man with a grenade in the city of Sonoyta, Mexico (border town across from Lukeville, AZ).

Some of you may even feel disgusted when hearing it and think I should not add this to our newsletter. I do have an underlying reason for telling you this information which I will explain. Prison ministry is part of the real world. It needs prayers and to be lifted up more than some other areas of ministry. Prison is a community in itself, however it is a community far different than the normal community. The prison community is a concentration of sinful, hurting, dangerous and mentally ill people that desperately need Jesus and His saving grace. Just like a regular community, the prison community has their share of rapes, stabbings, beatings (four weeks ago about 20 men beat a man to death that was in there for child molesting), abuse by the prison guards (I knew an American prisoner that was in for a traffic accident that killed a passenger of his vehicle and he was beaten regularly), drug abuse and robberies.

Without a doubt the prisoners have done something wrong and should be held accountable (and as a former police officer I am still a firm believer in obeying the law and paying for your crimes). What I have learned as a Christ-follower is that I need to pray for everyone, good and bad. Jesus and His disciples prayed for prisoners in their time and I bet the criminals they prayed for were just as violent and bad as ours are today!

So what I ask of you is to pray for all prison ministries. The missionaries and the prisoners are in a very dark place while in prison, one where many people do not even want to think about. Please pray for deliverance from sin and evil, strength, repentance, and spiritual growth for the prisoners. And for the missionaries, pray for strength, perseverance, compassion and discernment. For the prison directors and guards, pray for honesty, fairness, compassion and that they do their jobs without abusing the prisoners.

Dios les bendiga, Dennis





### Women's prison ministry

**Tears** appeared in almost every woman's eyes as Rocio passed around the photo of her 16 year old daughter. I had met her daughter when I visited the pastor's wife that is caring for her while her mom is in prison. I took a picture (photo shown here of Rocio's daughter in her school uniform) and printed it out to take it with me to Bible Study.

Rocio has not seen any of her three children in over nine months. The women prisoners all sympathized with this mother as they all are experiencing separation from their loved ones. We discussed how much God loves our children and how much He loves us. We then we read Psalms 27:1 *"The LORD is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?".* God is to be our stronghold. We rely on Him and place our trust in Him. We will continue this discussion about strongholds in our December ministry sessions. The women in the prison are looking forward to a dental/medical clinic being held December 5 & 6 and the Posada planned for December 20<sup>th</sup>.

### On a personal note from Lucy...

I am enjoying focusing on the *Reason for the Season*. I love Christmas music and cherish the words of the well-known carols including, "O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord". We are simplifying our lifestyle and spending much time with friends and family here and in Mexico. Listening to: Jaci Velasquez' CD "Navidad" and Casting Crowns' new album "Peace on Earth" (especially love the song 'While you were Sleeping'). Meditating on the book of Joel. Singing scripture...especially Psalm 145.



Fifteen year old mom and her baby in barrio

Thank you, Lord, for your extravagant love! Fill me with your love for you and for others. .... Lucy  
<mailto:Lucy@ManosdeDios.org>

### Looking ahead to December 2008...

- Prison Posada December 20<sup>th</sup>
- Visit to El Diamante with Pastor Alfonso and Angelita

### Looking ahead to 2009....



We hope to continue equipping and encouraging the local, indigenous pastors. We are praying for God's timing to provide Crown Financial and Scriptures in Use Oral learning training in Sonora. Manos de Dios will be traveling to Huachinera, Sonora to join a short terms missions team who are helping local missionaries Heidi and Conrad (photo here) of Mission Impossible ([www.impossibleministries.com](http://www.impossibleministries.com)). The project includes home visitations to share God's love, planting pecan trees, a children's outreach, a healing prayer meeting and their new church dedication.

**Manos de Dios encourages and equips families, pastors, prisoners and communities in Sonora, Mexico. We are trusting in God totally to provide for our needs and the needs of those we reach out to. Please consider partnering with Manos de Dios, a 501 c 3 not-for-profit corporation. Your tax-deductible donations will have ETERNAL value as they impact lives for Christ in Sonora, Mexico! Donations can be made on our website [www.ManosdeDios.org](http://www.ManosdeDios.org) or with checks made payable to Manos de Dios, NFP. Contact us for our mailing address and/or online banking donation information.**

**Contact us: [GetInvolved@ManosdeDios.org](mailto:GetInvolved@ManosdeDios.org) or 520-975-7356**

### **Violence and Transformation**

*CAUTION, THIS ARTICLE CONTAINS INFORMATION THAT IS GRAPHIC AND MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR SOME READERS.*

You are hearing and reading in the media many things about the violence in Mexico. Some brutally real and others sensationalized to get a certain point across. Unfortunately most of the brutally real articles are true, but need to be read in the correct context.

I feel Mexico is in a state of civil war. Not a war between the people of Mexico and the government, but between the government and organized crime. I also think the President is doing the best he can under the circumstances. He can't do it all, just as our government can't solve all our problems. It takes more. It also takes the involvement of the people and a change in the people's attitudes. As a Christ-follower, I would put prayer and strength from God at the top of that list of changes.

Are we safe in Mexico? Yes and no. It depends on where you are, what you are doing and what is going on around you. In Puerto Peñasco, where we do most of our ministry, it is relatively safe, but serious crime is on the rise. In the past six months violent and gang related crime has risen quickly. One week this summer while Lucy and I were there, there were 3 murders in one week (all gang related). I met a man at the prison that had killed a man in Sonoyta with a hand-grenade, a group of men in the prison beat to death a child molester that had just been brought into their cell, a man that had killed a policeman attacked a pastor as he was giving the Bible study program one Wednesday afternoon in the prison. Just a few weeks ago the Peñasco police were chasing a pickup truck, when the men jumped out of the truck leaving a case of automatic weapons, a case of ammunition and a case of hand-grenades. And very sadly, in October an eight year old girl was kidnapped, molested and killed.

In other parts of Mexico it is even more violent. The Government's crackdown on drug cartels, which has cut off their income and caused rival organizations to wage war against each other (very violent people) and bodies are dumped in tourist spots. Wealthy Mexicans are considering implanting radio transmitters in their loved ones as the number of kidnappings soar. Mexican drug cartels, Hezbollah and other Islamic terrorist groups are joining forces in Mexico.

Nogales, a once thriving tourist city, has turned to void of tourists and we know of Mexicans that work in Nogales, Sonora that will not go back there because of the crime.

Why am I telling you this and what does it have to do with mission work?

As Christ-following missionaries, Lucy and I are concerned about the lives of our fellow brothers and sisters in Mexico that we serve. And as Christ followers we can't do it all either (as some expect the government to). We rely on Christ, His power, guidance and discernment and especially prayer and prayers from others.

A few months ago, as I was praying and thinking about what is going on in Mexico and how it fits in with our mission work, and I felt strongly that God desires UNITY! Being involved in visiting many states of the country of Mexico for the past five years (and spending a lot of time in the state of Sonora for the past three) I realized there needed to be more unity with in the country, its people and especially within Christ-followers. That was what God was putting on my heart. Even with the 30,000 troops President Calderon has sent to different cities to quell the violence and bring safety to the community, he is unable to bring it! Mexico needs God's unity and transformation in order to turn the tide and bring an end to the extreme violence, corruption and lack of moral character. Notice I did not say we (Americans) need to help them bring about this change, because we cannot! Change will have to come through repentance, unity, transforming of lives to fit God's moral character and a desire to work together.

To transform and bring unity the process must start with prayer and lots of it. Cities and communities that were worse than those in Mexico have been transformed into God's communities. And the process always started with prayer, then unity, then hard work and then in God's time...transformation took place.

If you are reading our newsletters, website and emails, then you have an interest in God's work in Mexico. So I ask you to pray for Mexico and God's people there. Pray for unity in the communities, churches, pastors, and between the people and the government. Pray for an end to corruption, apathy, greed, pride, and an attitude of "it's not my fault." Lucy and I will be praying along with you and we will be working within the communities we serve to encourage and assist them with taking the steps necessary to bring about the change and unity that only God can provide.

We are praying for God's Divine Strategy and timing for transformation in northern Sonora and the entire country of Mexico. We are asking Him what role we as Manos de Dios need to take in this process. We continue to encourage and equip the local Christ-followers and pastors. Please join us in this prayer for increased crying out among the church in Mexico!

***But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men this is impossible, but all things are possible with God."*** Matthew 19:26

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