



... 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)

December 2008 Newsletter

Wow, what a busy year 2008 was! We were healthy (most of the time), enjoyed safe passage back and forth to Mexico, met many new friends, were blessed by the Lord in uncountable ways and were able to serve as we were called. Can't ask for much more than that! We closed out the end of the year in December with two successful trips to Penasco, a visit to El Diamante and Desemboque and a new contact that will be very beneficial to our ministry!

## The third annual Christmas Posada at the Prison

The prisoners requested *Menudo* and *Pazole* soups for their "Christmas dinner", so this year's *Posada* was a little easier to manage than last year's (when we deep fried turkeys in peanut oil to make turkey pasta salad for 450)! And this *Posada* was truly a community event. Manos de Dios and Amor Rico Missions were blessed to have over 40 people volunteer to serve those incarcerated in the Puerto Peñasco prison. The volunteers included ten local women that cooked the soups. Manos de Dios had purchased the pork meat for the *Pazole* in Tucson and the other ingredients for the soups, including *tripas* (small intestines), *patas* (pigs' feet), hominy, vegetables, chilies and spices were purchased in Peñasco. On Friday, Lucy and friend, Vicki, had the privilege of delivering the ingredients to each volunteer's home. We loved seeing where many families (who worship at our local church,



Dennis Smith and other volunteers serve up the Pazole for prisoners in Puerto Peñasco.



Female and male prisoners are joined by Lucy Smith (pink shirt) and Gerry Rico (tan shirt) as they sing praises at prison Posada.

*Compañerismo Cristiano de Peñasco*) live. Saturday morning we returned to each home to pick up five giant pots of *Pazole* and five giant pots of *Menudo*. Some of the soup had even been cooked outside on an open fire. These fine women demonstrated servant's hearts as they prepared this delicious meal! Our group of volunteers, musical instruments and sound equipment, food to feed 350, and donations/gifts entered the prison under the watchful eyes of the Commandant and guards. The praise and worship was provided by the worship team from *Compañerismo Cristiano de Peñasco*, under the leadership of Gaby Lugo. The prisoners loved the music and responded positively to the personal way Gaby and his team related to them. Some of our team moved over to stand with the prisoners during the singing. Lucy and other women had a chance to encourage and pray with the women prisoners. The message was delivered by Julio Peralta and his 16 year old son. The both shared, in a



powerful way, how they are sold out for Jesus and how He desires a personal relationship with each person there listening. Please join us in praying that the seed that was planted in so many hearts that day in December will grow this year!

The soups, rolls, coffee, juice and condiments were served by 30 people from the local community and four of us from the United States. The 86 pies that were donated to Manos de Dios for dessert were a real treat! Actually, in October the men in the prison had already started asking if we were going to bring the pies for the posada again this year! After the men and women had their fill, we gave a pie to the Commandant, a pie to the guards, and pies to some of the servers. We even had enough pies to take to each pastor we visited that week of Christmas! The men prisoners were given a 32 oz drinking cup stuffed with a toothbrush, toothpaste, socks, and a razor. The women received a gift bag that Lucy and Vicki prepared. Donated, 'gently used' shirts and shoes were available, so many of the men were able to pick out something they needed. The day ended with the breaking of the Piñata, scattering candy all over the ground turning grown men into children as they laughed and desperately tried to pick up their stash!

The day brought joy to all of us that served as we saw the smiles on their faces and joy in their eyes, plus listened to the heartfelt THANK YOU from the men and women we visited.

This day was an example of Manos de Dios living out Matthew 25:34-36 *"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'"*

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Pastor Julio Peralta shares about Jesus with prisoners at Posada.



# from Vicki's pen...

Paul and I were blessed to have the opportunity to travel to Mexico to help Lucy and Dennis with the Christmas Posada at the prison. We both have servant's hearts and whenever we can help, we are blessed.



**Vicki and her dogs, Carly and Chopper, enjoy a visit with Brianda.**

the pots of soup were collected, the supplies were packed, and we prepared our hearts for the party in the prison. Even though Paul and I could not understand the words being sung or the message, we could feel the love. It is amazing what a smile can mean. The men and women of the prison were able to escape the day to day tasks and enjoy the worship and dinner. We were all tired at the end of day, but oh what a blessing!

We can't wait to return to Mexico and see our new friends. They give us hope and remind us how blessed we really are. Our God is awesome.

Our week started out with Lucy and me visiting some of the families that Manos de Dios is involved with. This is when I started to realize how truly blessed I am. Even though some of the families had little food, furniture, personal items, water or electricity, they were still filled with Love (for us and the Lord). The people did not have Christmas trees, decorations or gifts but they did know the reason for the season.

After visiting, Lucy and I shopped for the Posada. We then gathered all the food supplies needed to make the soup and delivered it to the ladies from the Church who volunteered to help. Again we visited and again we were blessed by their joy in helping. While Lucy and I

delivered items, Paul and Dennis prepared the gifts to be handed out to the men at the prison. The next day



**Vicki encourages prisoner at posada**

***Earlier, I mentioned being blessed and obtaining a new contact that will help in our ministry so I have to tell you about it!....***

Lucy and I were introduced to a local woman, Kory, in Peñasco just a week before Christmas. Kory is known for 'knowing' the right people and connecting them (connecting missionaries with the right Government official, etc). She had heard we were having trouble getting 400 blankets and other supplies for the prisoners and others in need into Mexico. After a short conversation with her over the phone, she immediately contacted

the Mayor's office and scheduled a meeting with the Mayor's secretary (a male) for that afternoon. Fast worker! Kory and I met with the Mayor's secretary at a local restaurant (Lucy was unable to go as it was during the weekly Bible study with the women in prison.) The three of us had a great meeting. We discussed how important it is to get the assistance to the people that really need it, how not to enable the Mexican people, how not to duplicate activities and how to work together. Most importantly, God was mentioned throughout the conversation by all three parties. At the close of the meeting the Secretary said it would be a pleasure to work with Manos de Dios and the Mayor appreciated the fact that we wanted to work with the Mexican government and follow their laws and procedures. And he would start the process of accepting Manos de Dios as an official **Foundation** immediately.

Two days later we were accepted as a **Foundation** and were given permission to bring in the 400 blankets, 200 sheets, pillow cases, towels, and 3 bags of uniforms that were loaded and ready in Tucson. Lucy and I headed back to Tucson to get the fully loaded trailer of donations for distribution. When we returned and arrived at the border, the border officers had a letter from the Mayor requesting permission for us to pass throughout without delay or being taxed and it was approved. The crossing took all of 5 minutes. PTL again! Lucy and I look forward to working with the Mayor and his staff as we both have the same goal of serving the needs of the less fortunate. Again, we express our thanks to Mayor Renteria and his staff, the Commandant of the border station in Sonoyta, and Kory for your assistance and support!

## Update on Amor House recipients:

The Lopez family received one of the Amor homes built by PCC church in November. They touched all of our hearts with their gentleness, humbleness and hard-working attitudes. Vicki accompanied me when I visited them after the prison posada in December. They were so happy to see us and we blessed them with some Christmas presents sent by their house-building team. They invited us into their home and we all thanked God for the warmth the house provided! They had very little furniture (only a stove and a single mattress), but very proudly showed off their home. We joined hands in a circle to pray together before we left.

Late in December I had a chance to return to visit the Lopez family. This time Gloria, our local friend, accompanied me to their home. Manos de Dios had

received a donation of two chairs and we felt they should go to this family. Maribella and Domingo appreciated the chairs so much! Domingo had been dismantling their old (plywood) home and was using some of the wood

to build an additional room on the south side of their Amor house. This will provide much-needed space and shade for their family in the hot months to come. (See photo here)

Gloria and I spoke with Domingo and Maribella about God. Gloria shared how God has been blessing her since she dedicated her life to serving Him. She shared about her church (Compañerismo Cristiano de Peñasco) and invited them to worship with her family there. We talked about reading the book of John as a good place to understand more about Jesus. What a blessing to have Gloria share part of her testimony and to speak about having much in common, including living in a community without electricity. It was a powerful time of



Domingo and Maribella Lopez  
(who are expecting their second child in May)  
open Christmas presents in front of their Amor home.



Domingo builds an addition at the back of their  
Amor home.



sharing and encouragement. Little did I know that God had directed me to the exact right person to accompany me on this visit. I praise God for Gloria's gift of evangelism and told her I would pick her up each time I headed out to this home for a visit!

~Lucy

# We are blessed to be a blessing

... is a true statement and here is proof. Phase one: When our friend Margarita and her daughter first came to Peñasco over a year ago she needed help and came upon a lady named Kory. Kory was able to connect Margarita with a doctor that referred her to the Shriners Hospital to get an appointment for her handicapped daughter, Alejandra. Phase two; Margarita was introduced to Lucy and me to see if we could help them arrange for travel to the Shriners Hospital in LA. Since then Lucy and I have become like family with and to Margarita and Alejandra. Phase three: Recently we told Margarita of the problem we were having getting a trailer full of donations across the border she said, "I may know of someone that can help, a lady named Kory." Phase four: Margarita introduced us to Kory. Phase five: Kory got us connected with the Mayor's office. The Mayor is making it possible for us to bring in donations without hassle and we are able to assist the poor. So in reality, Margarita was blessed to be a blessing and passed it forward! We were all blessed to be a blessing to each other! What a network of connections is being built all because of someone (Kory) stepping out and helping a stranger (Margarita) in need! Look what that act of kindness has led to. ☺ PTL again and again!

His blessed servant, Dennis

## Blessing for Desemboque Pastors



Pastor Ruben at door of current house  
(room at the back of their church)

Our trip to Desemboque was very important this time because we had some great news to tell Pastors Ruben and Erika. A year and a half ago Ruben mentioned they needed a larger place to live and had been praying that the Lord would provide. Lucy and I started praying that if it was in the Lord's plan, He would provide a home for this family we are serving the Lord with their lives. A house building project in Desemboque would require a completely different set of circumstances, but nothing He could not handle! The area is 100 miles south of Puerto Peñasco, it's a small fishing village with very limited services, all the building material (as well as much of the food) would have to be brought in from Peñasco (100 miles away), and the build team would have to spend extra time in Mexico due to the increased distance from the border. This build would require a special team!

The prayers have been answered! Last month a short term team from a church in Kansas, (that we had met last year while they were in Peñasco), contacted us and asked if we could work together to build a house for someone in Mexico. They asked if we knew of a family in need in an area outside of Peñasco and told us they could stay for a week. We accepted the offer and knew the perfect family, Ruben and Erika! Their family of four live in a room at the end of the church that is about 10' X 30'. They need a house! This team from Kansas will provide the funds to build the home and send a work team to

**In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' " Acts 20:35**

build it! We also plan to do children's outreach activities at the church and prayer walk the small community.

After prayer and discussion the Lord directed us to build a parsonage home on the church property and the Kansas team agreed. The new two bedroom house will have water, electricity and a bathroom.

It was a blessing to tell Ruben and Erica the good news. The house will be built in March 2009!

I almost forgot to tell you that we also enjoyed a wonderful lunch of chicken *pazole* (Erika prepared the soup with chicken instead of the traditional pork for Lucy!), handmade *tortillas de harina* (flour), and lots of fellowship. Manos de Dios gave the church money to purchase food for the food bank plus delivered winter clothing and blankets.



Parsonage will be built on this lot, behind the church (red brick building) in Desemboque.

Again, we were blessed to be a blessing!

*Dios te bendiga, Dennis*

## Donations delivered in December 2008

400+ blankets and 200 sheets, 50 pillow cases, 3 bags of uniforms, feminine supplies, toothbrushes, toothpaste, socks, 10 *Pasión por Jesus* books, 100 pounds of pork, 87 pies (to prison); 100 hospital gowns (to local medical clinics); blood pressure equipment, 3 bags of children's winter clothes, 1 box of children's shoes, 50 towels, 10 blankets, 1 bag of stuffed animals, 2 boxes of women's clothing, (to Pastor/doctor in Sonoyta); 30 winter coats, gloves, scarves, 2 study Bibles, 3 bags of men's and women's dress clothes, 12 personal gifts for children (to local pastors and friends); 2 folding and 1 office chair, 1 computer desk, 1 large bag of yarn (to local women for small businesses); cash donations to purchase food bank supplies in Desemboque and El Diamante

## What are we doing early 2009?

**January** Mission trip with Peñasco Christian Fellowship Church to Huachinera; transport Margarita and Alejandra to Tucson for flight to and from Shriners Hospital in LA; prison ministry in Peñasco,

**February** Replace a roof on an elderly Christian woman's home in Peñasco. Pour foundation for Parsonage Home in Desemboque, doing prison ministry, working with local pastors.

**March** Partner with a church Mission Team from Kansas build a parsonage for Pastor Ruben and his family in Desemboque and provide children's/medical outreach program; prison ministry in Peñasco.

This is just what we are aware that we will be doing. I'm sure there will be other things that come up and we will attend to them! Thank you for your prayers and support!

## Lucy's notes:

We are preparing for our Mid-January mission trip to Huachinera to undergird **Mission Impossible** missionaries Heidi and Conrad. We are to have our testimony and the plan of salvation ready to share. I am memorizing these in Spanish (as much as possible) to be prepared to share with families we meet. We are praying and fasting to prepare for the spiritual warfare we will face during this upcoming week in the communities in the Sierra Madre mountains. We are preparing for the children's outreach programs, learning songs including "Zaqueo (Zacchaeus)" and "Yo tengo un amigo que me ama (I have a friend that loves me)". We are preparing to bless many and are praying scripture including:

**"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe."**

**Ephesians 1:17-19a**

**"Pido que el Dios de nuestro Señor Jesucristo, el Padre glorioso, les dé el Espíritu de sabiduría y de revelación, para que lo conozcan mejor. Pido también que les sean iluminados los ojos del corazón para que sepan a qué esperanza él los ha llamado, cuál es la riqueza de su gloriosa herencia entre los santos, y cuán incomparable es la grandeza de su poder a favor de los que creemos."**

**Efesios 1:17-19a**

**May God bless you! Lucy**  
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**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!**

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