

# giving

Manos de Dios



....a hand up to families in  
the barrios of Sonora, MX

## March 2007 Newsletter

This newsletter includes a recap of the March 3<sup>rd</sup> border guard lunch trip and the March 9<sup>th</sup> "meet and learn" trip to Mexico.

### March 3<sup>rd</sup> lunch with the Mexican border guards.

Whoever does not believe that God works in mysterious ways should read some of our newsletters! And this one is no exception. We had been planning to go to the Mexican side of the border and offer lunch to the Mexican border guards and their families (could be up to 125 people) for about three months. Missionary Pat talked to them about it months ago and they put it on their calendar for March 3, 2007. They asked how much this would cost them. Then, they found it amazing when they learned it would be free. We just wanted to meet with them and explain to them what we do and why. As the planning started we gathered 40 gallons of tea and lemonade, 300 hot dogs, all the fixings, chips, oranges and even homemade cookies! We borrowed 4 tables and 12 chairs from church and we were ready to head out.

About a week before our trip to the border, one of the men in my Serve and be Served group asked if we would like a donation of a GMC Suburban. "Is the Pope Catholic? No way would I turn down a donation like that", was my answer! So Eric and I picked up the vehicle, detailed it and it was ready to be delivered to one of our 'family' in Mexico a few days later. I am not amazed, just in awe of how God knows what we need and then provides it to us at the opportune time! Oh, we also had a bicycle to donate and it fit nicely in the back of the suburban. Saturday

morning the group of volunteers (Eric, Paul and Karyl, Lucy tambien and Allen, Michael 'Miguel' Torres, Amy, Mike Sawicki, Albert and Vicki, Rosalie, Nelson, Greg and Susan and Lucy uno and I) met in the church parking lot with vehicles full of equipment, food and donations. We had two trucks, 2 vans, the donated Suburban and one motorcycle (Mike Sawicki decided to ride his motorcycle). What a caravan! When we arrived at the Mexican side of the border we immediately pulled into the secured area where we were to cook lunch. Missionaries Pat and Gerry (and their three girls) met us and before we got out of our vehicles advised us of an obstacle. The Commandant in charge at the border did not tell the men and women guards about the lunch that was to be provided for them that day. So there were only 12 people working that day and no family members would be coming. We had 300 hot dogs to cook! The Commandant did have a suggestion. He stated that there was an inspection station 13 miles south of the border on the road to Caborca. He would give us permission to pass thru this inspection area (without being inspected) and go directly to the other area if we wanted. There would be about 70 people at that station. Some of the people in our group had never seen that area and were excited and ready to go. That was a blessing from God because we had



Serving the border  
guards lunch at check  
point on road to  
Caborca

3-3-07

prayed about whom to give the Suburban and it was decided that Missionary Pat and Gerry should have it. Our next dilemma was how to get it to them along with the other donations. Well, God and His plan eliminated that dilemma.

The inspection station was out in the middle of nowhere. It was a place where all the vehicles and semi trucks had to stop and be inspected. We had to park just behind the offices and then carry all the BBQ grills, tables, chairs and food to an area in the back of the compound. We put up our lunch station between four (4) burned out semi trailers and an old boarded up building we called the interrogation room. No one came to eat right away...so we decided to go ahead and eat. We laughed as we looked around...we had driven 5 hours to set up a barbeque and eat hot dogs in a junk yard! God has a sense of humor! The men finally started to show up for

## Needs...

Here is a partial list of the items  
we need for "Water Fun Day" in  
Invasion barrio

"no tears" shampoo  
puppets  
juice boxes  
granola Bars

Christian coloring books

*Manos de Dios* is the sole support  
for two community/church food banks.  
Here are some of the much needed items:

Peanut butter  
Coffee  
Beef Stew  
Juice boxes for kids  
Meat ravioli  
Canned corn  
Vienna Sausage  
Canned ham  
Canned tuna in oil  
Cooking oil  
Chocolate drink mix  
Soup mixes  
Macaroni and cheese (the good stuff)  
Mashed potato flakes  
Powdered laundry soap with bleach  
Laundry softener

You may purchase these items or give a  
donation to Manos de Dios for a specific  
need. For donation drop off or pick up...  
[GetInvolved@ManosdeDios.org](mailto:GetInvolved@ManosdeDios.org) 975-7356

For more information go to [www.ManosdeDios.org](http://www.ManosdeDios.org)

### March 3rd border guard lunch, con't

lunch and we went to work. The first thing they asked was 'why are you doing this'? That was the question we were waiting for! We were then able to explain that we are Christ-followers, working with other Christ-followers in Sonora to help the poor. We also wanted them to know why we carry so many items and tools into Mexico. We were able to offer them pocket size booklets of the Gospel of John (in Spanish). The Commandant and a few of his men took the booklets with them! Miguel pointed out where John 3:16 is located and they folded over the page. We were told the men rotate the locations where they work. So the men we served will eventually be at the border in Sonoyta. Hopefully, we made friends and they will look at us in a different light when we pass through. We hope they will remember our red shirts and that we are Manos de Dios...simply God's hands doing His work in the barrios of Mexico. We had a blessed 13-hour day! It was a wonderful day of fellowship, service and learning about God's plan! We would like to thank all who supported us with their prayers, financial and physical support.

Now to finish the story about getting the Suburban into Mexico for Pat and Gerry. We left the donations and bike in the Suburban and when we departed from the border, Pat drove the Suburban back to Peñasco and will title it the next time he is in Arizona! Again, God's plan is perfect.

### Galatians 5:22 (NIV)

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness...**

I would also like to point out that our group was filled with the "fruit of the Spirit" that Saturday. They showed the characteristics listed in Galatians 5:22 to the border guards in spite of the adversity we encountered. May we live Galatians 5:22 everyday!

Yours in service...

*Dennis Smith*



Donated Suburban



Border Guard luncheon



## Future projects:

**Saturday, May 19, 2007 Medical Clinic in Peñasco**

**Prison:** Medical personnel and translators needed. Contact Dennis ASAP: [dennis@manosdedios.org](mailto:dennis@manosdedios.org), 975-7356

**Saturday, June 23, 2007 Water Fun Day in Invasion barrio in Puerto Peñasco.** Families welcome! Needs:

'no tears' shampoo, volunteers to help, to have fun and to provide hair cuts. Camp or stay in a local motel. Come early for a beach day and/or stay for church on Sunday.

**Saturday, September 1, 2007 Youth Concert in El Diamante in partnership with the Rock Church of Sahuarita.** Spend labor day weekend camping with us and assisting in this outreach to the teens of small towns 100 miles south of Peñasco.

## You can help!

Manos de Dios is making a difference in the lives of families, pastors and prisoners in Sonora. Please prayerfully consider making a monthly or one time financial contribution. Contact us for details (520-975-7356) or donate on line at [www.ManosdeDios.org](http://www.ManosdeDios.org).

Thank you! Dennis and Lucy Smith, Manos de Dios, Missionaries to Mexico



## March 9<sup>th</sup> trip to Sonora

The March 9<sup>th</sup> trip was a little less hectic than our last trip. We did not have a building project going on and we were a much smaller group. Eric Carlson and Lucy tambien Pirro (Allen Pirro had a meeting he had to attend in LA so he couldn't join us) teamed up with us and we were off early Friday morning. With two trucks loaded up with donations we still had some physical work we had to do. God gave us the green light again at the border and we never slowed down.

We were thankful because we had some things that would be hard to explain without paying a tax on the items. When you are missionaries, every penny counts. The pots and pans, men's clothes, women's clothes, misc. food, and craft supplies may have passed thru with out a problem. It was the baby clothes, formula, car seat, baby blankets, dog food, two mattresses and very large women's undergarments that would have raised an eyebrow. ...because we did not have a baby or a very large woman or a dog in our vehicles. (:

Friday was spent fellowshiping and discerning where the donations should go. Lucy tambien and Lucy uno visited their friends in the prison. They led a study from John chapter 4 about the Samaritan woman at the well.

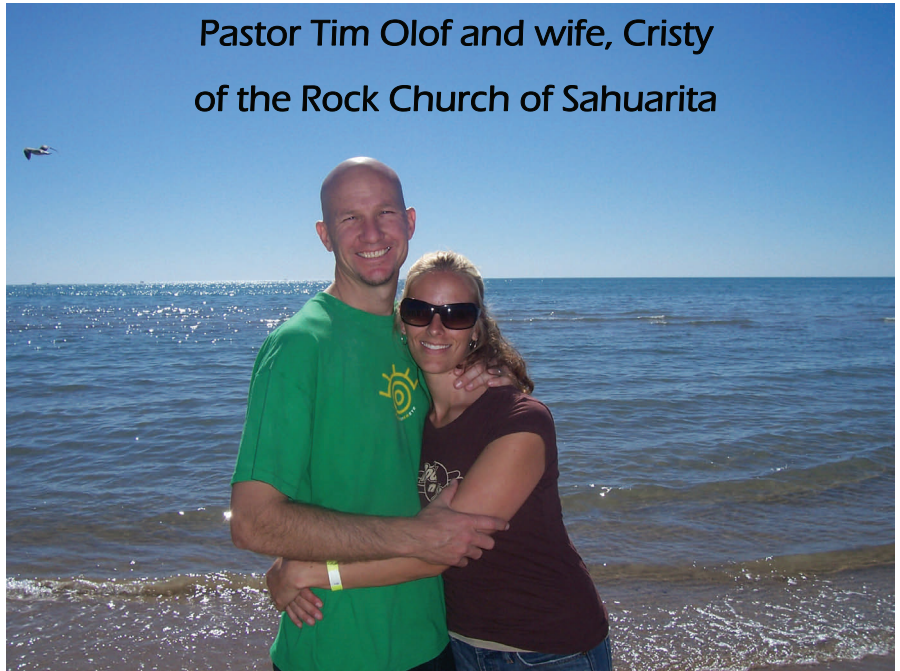
**Lucy uno reports...** "The female prisoners resonated with the woman being an outcast and a sinner. We praised God for sending Jesus to accept us as women, (no matter what our past involves) and to be our friend. (The song, "I am a friend of God" ran through our heads). The women enjoyed the granola bars and raisin snacks. They appreciated the feminine hygiene supplies, sunglasses, clothing and shoes that we stuffed into the one suitcase allowed to be brought in during the Bible Study time. The women told us how much they appreciate and look forward to our visits. They reported that they feel uplifted by God's Spirit when we arrive (even if they are in conflict).

**We are blessed to be a blessing!** "

Saturday morning Lucy x 2 loaded up our truck and took off for the barrio. They had 240 boxes of juice (100% fruit), boxes of granola bars, vitamins and lots of water when they left and almost none when they returned. Lucy will have to tell you about their day... it was a blessing from God! Eric and I did some maintenance on our travel trailer and then I showed him around Peñasco. We even dropped off a case of much needed toilet paper at the Women's Rehab Center. Maria was smiling when we drove up and got out with the TP! Saturday night we had Missionary Pat and his family over for, what else? – shrimp, a BBQ and fellowship. After worship at Peñasco Christian Fellowship on Sunday we decided to take a total 'Sabbath' and relax on the beach (before Pastor Tim, wife Cristy and their four boys were to arrive Sunday evening). We enjoyed a relaxing and rejuvenating afternoon!

The Rock Church of Sahuarita (a new church in Sahuarita, Arizona) is the first and only church, so far, that has come on board and is financially

## Pastor Tim Olof and wife, Cristy of the Rock Church of Sahuarita



*We had the privilege to travel to Mexico and see first hand the work of Manos De Dios. The biggest impression for us was not just the physical impact of changing lives through new homes, food supplies, and outreaches but how Dennis and Lucy impact the people of Mexico through God's Spirit! They are all about creating relationships that go far beyond the physical needs. We were so touched by the comment of one of the pastors when he said, "We don't care if you come and bring us anything....we just want you to COME!" The Mexican people desire to have a relationship with us and THAT is what Christ's work is all about. He wants relationships with people! We are honored that The Rock Church of Sahuarita can partner with Manos De Dios to bring people to Christ! Tim & Cristy Olof Pastor*

supporting Manos de Dios. The pastor is Tim Olof. His wife, Cristy, is the church Worship Team leader. They have four boys..10, 9, 5 and 4! Tim and Cristy wanted to come down to Mexico and learn what we were doing and see how they could possibly increase the working relationship we have developed. We are blessed to have them as friends and supporters. If you are ever in or near Sahuarita or Green Valley, Arizona and want to attend a worship service that is Biblically sound, to the point and is appropriate for everyday life (not to mention great songs and singing) you must stop in and worship with them. Check them out at

[www.TheRockofSahuarita.com](http://www.TheRockofSahuarita.com)

Monday we took their family around Puerto Peñasco to see and meet some of the families Manos de Dios works with. We visited some of the barrio areas where we have built homes and the new area in the barrio called Invasion Nueva Peñasco. (for more info about this area see the February 2007 newsletter). Seeing the extreme poverty was an eye opener to them.

We also took them to see the free clinic, Clinica Nova, and the additional dental care building added to the clinic recently.

Tim and Cristy were introduced to some of the local people and pastors. The morning and afternoon was long and hot so we decided to call it a day (we still had to go to the bulk food store and make purchases for food banks) so everyone could get ready for tomorrow's trip to El Diamante and Desemboque. Bright and early Tuesday morning, with a truck and a van loaded with food and donations, we went by to pick up Missionary Pat and Gerry and then headed south. First stop El Diamante. We introduced Pastor Tim and family to



**Olofs meet Pastor Alfonso & family**

The lone tree is the center of the barrio named Invasion.

Lucy tambien and I spent a Saturday afternoon there. We are being called to continue to reach out in friendship to the women and children that live in the shacks. We took donated vitamins. Some of the women had requested them last month. The delivery of the vitamins gave us an opportunity and excuse to be in their neighborhood and to visit with them. After listening to their stories, we asked if we could share a story about a woman in the Bible. They were open to listening. We referred to the 4th chapter of John in our Spanish Bible. They could relate to the woman seeking water. Their neighborhood does not have water pipes nor regular water delivery. They listened while we spoke of the living water that Jesus offered to the Samaritan woman, a woman rejected...just as some of these woman are. **Jesus answered, everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. John 4: 13-14 NIV**

We offered them copies of the book of John in Spanish. We highlighted chapter 4 in one woman's book...the other women wanted their's colored in yellow, also. We pray they will refer back to this verse and God's word will not return void. We will visit them again soon.

*Lucy uno*



For lots more info go to:

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

Partner with us to offer hope...

Manos de Dios is a 501-c-3 not-for-profit organization that partners with local pastors and missionaries in Sonora, Mexico to assist the poor with immediate relief efforts and long-term self-sustaining projects.

Work projects are staffed with volunteers from the Mexico Missions Life Group of Pantano Christian Church plus other volunteers. Please prayerfully consider supporting our work to help the poor in Mexico.

Go to our website for details:

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

#### March 9th trip recap continued...

Pastor Alfonso and Angelita. We talked, toured their church, inspected the newly replaced roof on their house, and heard what was on Pastor Alfonso's heart for reaching the people in his community. He spoke about trying to reach the youth for Jesus. We brainstormed about helping him put together a youth concert with praise and worship music, dramas and food for teens and early twenty year olds. Cristy jumped in with the idea that the Rock's worship team could learn some songs in Spanish and come down and play for this youth concert! We tentatively planned to put it together for Labor Day weekend (September 1, 2007). More info TBA! We then went to look at some property with the intent of purchasing it to set up a missionary outpost there in El Diamonte. Pastor Alfonso is very supportive of this idea! The property is priced very reasonably, so now is the time to buy! Then, after unloading the food for the food bank we sat down for a snack of Tres Leches cake, baked by Angelita. As is our custom, we prayed with and for Pastor Alfonso and Angelita. After we finished praying, Pastor Alfonso said he wanted to pray for Tim and Cristy. He placed his hands on them and offered up a touching prayer for their family, ministry and church. He then looked Pastor Tim in the eye and said, "I see something special in you". It was a God moment! After many hugs and promises to return SOON...we left for

Desemboque.

Introductions, again, at Desemboque. Everywhere we went, Tim and Cristy were received warmly. The pastors felt honored that this pastor would come from the United States to visit their church and community. That the Olofs took time to reach out in friendship was very meaningful to all we visited. A special lunch was being prepared, but we had time for a visit to the beach. The Olof boys loved the sand and ocean. They played with Yamilexi, Pastor Rueben's daughter. Even though this is a poor community, they insist on cooking something for us every time we visit. We have been there enough times, now we are considered family and they are family to us! This time lunch was some type of large, flat fish. It was split down the middle and cooked over an open fire. I am not a fish-eating person, but the rest of the group said it was delicious. After lunch we took time to visit and hear Pastor Rueben and Erika's hopes, dreams and needs for their church. Their request was for leadership development materials for their church members. Erika shared that she was praying for consistent prayer among the women in their church. They try to go to Caborca once a week to pray with other women there. We prayed together and it was powerful. It was apparent they are very in tune with God's heart. Lupita (Erika's mother) referred to all of us sitting at the table of God in heaven...and we felt as if we were there! It was such an emotional time

of prayer that Pat got choked up and had to stop translating! Thank you, Lord, for this bond of friendship based on Christ! They appreciate our friendship and support so much. They report no one else has ever cared so much for them on a consistent basis.

We made plans to come down in April and go to a Sunday evening worship service at their church and spend the night in their community (at the only hotel <only 8 rooms> in town). They were very excited that we would actually come down for services and spend the night. After another 13 hour day on the road we were back in Peñasco and said our good bye's to Pat and Gerry. The Olofs and our groups would all be heading back to Tucson early Wednesday morning.

Our home church, Pantano Christian Church, is doing a sermon series, "Just walk across the room" (based on the book by the same name authored by Bill Hybel). We are being encouraged to meet people and make new friendships. We are reminded to take time to listen to their story and then share our life story along with God's story. Manos de Dios and our group of volunteers strongly believe in, and have been not only walking across the room but also walking across the border into another country. And we will never stop saying thank you for helping us make it possible.

¡Gloria a Dios!

*Dennis*