



CHANGING LIVES ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER

La Palabra De Dios En El Desierto

Spring 2010

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Hard times in the Desert



Life has been always hard in the tiny villages we serve in the Chihuahuan desert. Lack of electricity, poor roads and poor communication services make it very difficult for the people living here to eke out a living. The climate in this region is very harsh. Obviously the desert is very dry. In addition the temperatures in this region are very extreme. Daytime temperatures of over 110 degrees Fahrenheit in summertime are the norm. While in the winter it is not unusual to see temperatures in the teens. In spite of the lack of infrastructure, harsh conditions and with little support from the Mexican government (or should I say in spite of the Mexican government) the people have managed to survive.

In our recent trips to the region we discovered that the people are suffering greatly. For several reasons they are unable to sell the candelilla wax. In Jaboncillos they are only selling very small amounts of the flagstone. Everyone says the same thing; "We have never seen times so hard". We encountered one family who was telling us of their situation during which the father commented; "If only I had 10 pesos to buy some food". We had some extras we were able to share with them and a few

(see *Hard Times* on page 2)

Please plan to attend our 3rd

annual Fiesta Fundraiser. See the details on page 2

BRING HOPE and save \$

We have shared with you many times that the people tell us, "Please do not stop coming. You give us hope." We want to encourage you to consider coming with us. I know that many of you are worried about the violence you hear about in the news. It is true that in certain areas of Mexico it is quite dangerous. We have been in Mexico 6 times this year. (Three of those have been with groups) At no time did we encounter any violence. We did encounter more police presence throughout the region which indicates that the government is working hard to suppress any incursion of violence into this region.

We also recognize that finances are difficult. We are always trying to find ways to lower costs. We wish we could lower the fees but we must cover the cost of each trip. One of things that will help with the finances of each trip is to have adequate staffing for each trip. To that end we are making an offer to all who have been with us in the past. **For each person you recruit (first time participation, paid in full) we will discount your next trip \$75. If you recruit as many as four we will scholarship your entire fee.** We hope that this will help us improve our staffing efforts and help you with finances.

We have included a registration form with this newsletter along with the schedule for the remainder of the year. Will you come with us? You have much to offer! *Curtis Allerkamp*

2010 Fall Medical Trips

Boquillas Sept. 22-26

San Vicente Oct. 12-17

Alamos De Marquez Oct. 27-31



In March Boquillas trip members from First United Methodist Church of Stephenville, Texas are sharing the love of the Lord in song at the evening worship service in Las Norias.

Domingo and Chavela

By Sara Allerkamp

I don't know about you, but often times when I hear about earthquakes and floods happening in other parts of the world, I feel numb. I hear and see on the television about the violence across the border and though I cross the border at least a dozen times each year, what's happening in Juarez or Laredo still leaves me feeling pretty much "untouched". I've been crossing at Eagle Pass and Presidio over the last twenty-four years and I've never seen any killings and I've never been threatened by any situation.

This past spring we began to hear from the villagers about the "hard times" (tiempos duros) that they are experiencing. Their means of making a living has been essentially taken away from them. Most villagers in the Chihuahuan desert harvest, boil, and extract wax from the candelilla plant. They have been selling this hard wax to buyers for at least a century. At this time there are no "buyers". No buyers, no money.

It was not until I sat down and spoke with

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Domingo and Chavela at a little Catholic Church in Las Norias that I “felt” concern, alarm, and sorrow for these folks. (*see ten pesos on page 2*)

(Hard Times)

other folks but it is a drop in the bucket compared to the overall need. (see Sara's article *Domingo and Chavela on page 1*)

Would you consider giving for the purpose of buying food during this time of need? Perhaps your church could help. Would you go with us to help deliver the food? Contact us to see how you can help. 830-997-6542 or callerkamp@beecreek.net



Thad Miller is enjoying the early morning in Boquillas with his children and his nieces and nephew.

Domingo & Chavela (Ten Pesos)

It was their voices and their eyes that got to me. Domingo, a small, wiry man with graying curly hair and mustache said to me: "We have been selling our burros to buy food to put on the table." His voice sounded frustrated and fearful. His eyes appeared angry. The families need the burros to haul the candelilla to the burning pits. "If I had ten pesos (approximately \$1) I would go to the conasupe (local supply store), but I don't even have that."

Chavela, a bronzed skin woman in her fifties was also frowning as she contemplated their situation." We have another grown son and a second son who is not mentally well living with us. We just don't know what we're going to do."

I "felt" their fear and their frustration. I felt helpless. Curtis and I had 5 pounds of flour, one pound of beans and rice with us. I went to the room in which we were staying. I picked up the supplies; brought them back to the church and gave them to Domingo and Chavela. Then we knelt down and prayed.

Mark your calendar! July 30th is the date of our 3rd annual Fiesta Fundraiser. It will be at Holy Ghost Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall located at 103 East San Antonio in Fredericksburg. Festivities will begin at 7PM and last until 9pm. Arrive early to check out the silent auction and the Mexican Market!

Renewal

All of us from time to time need the time to reassess where we are in our lives. This is especially true in our walk with the Lord. Most of us are very busy with human activity and seldom take time to address the need to renew our spirits. I know this is true of me and I have learned that I need to take time away from all of the activity to allow Him to touch my spiritual and emotional needs. During our many trips with various groups we try very hard to help individuals with these same needs. In fact this was our original concept of *changing lives on both sides of border*.

We have been thinking about facilitating trips solely for the purpose of renewal. After much prayer and thought we have decided to do our first group next February. While we desire to eventually do groups with individuals from all walks of life we recognize that pastors and missionaries often ignore their own need because they are so busy in the work they have been called to do. We feel that by addressing the needs of leaders in the Church that we will touch the lives of their parishioners as well.

Our desire is to keep the group relatively small (12 or less) so as to be able to address individual need as well as the group as a whole. We are praying about which ejido will host the first group. We have narrowed it down to Las Norias, La Union, and Alamos De Marquez; with an outside chance we might choose Boquillas. Please pray for us as we move forward on this endeavor.

Please pass this information on to your pastor. Or perhaps your church would want to send your pastor. Please contact us at callerkamp@beecreek.net or 830-997-6542.

YES! I want to join you!

Our fees to participants only cover the basic costs of each trip. All of our other expenses are covered by private donations. If you would like to join us on a trip, help with scholarships or donate to our general fund, please let us know.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/ST/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

- Contact me about joining a trip to Mexico
 Enclosed is my one-time donation for \$ _____
 Enclosed is my monthly donation for \$ _____

Thank you!

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