



First Quarter 2007 Newsletter

The Salvador Foundation is committed to serving God by bringing together people from all walks of life for the common cause of helping our fellow man. We, as the body of Christ, have a responsibility to care for those in need. By helping and enabling people one project at a time, our goal is to share encouragement, hope and faith.

In late March, we visited Choluteca Honduras to review progress on a few of the projects we have been involved in over the past 3 years. While we were there, we visited the tortilla factory, malnutrition clinic, a newly built bakery and some homes we've built for homeless people in conjunction with GCLA and King of Glory Church. To be honest, I was exhausted from the stress of work and was kind of reviewing projects as if they were engineering programs back home. However, one evening all of that changed when we were invited to an outdoor dinner in Limon with the local people of that village. There were Government officials and pastors from local churches, but most importantly, there were local families who lived and worshiped God in Limon, Honduras.

While we were eating dinner under the beautiful Honduran sky, a video was projected on the outer wall of the tortilla factory reviewing all of the amazing things that happened in this tiny little village over the past few years. As I watched the video, I was overwhelmed that God allowed us to be a part of such an amazing story.

Here I was under the beautiful star-lit sky watching story after story about new jobs that had been created, children who had food on the dinner table and families who had a roof over their heads. As I listened to the stories, I kept thinking –the projects we do are nice, but they're only a catalyst for something much greater. The real blessing in people's lives comes primarily from the love God shows through personal relationships.

After the video, people from the village took turns at a microphone and spoke of how their lives had been changed over the past few years. One lady had been living in a shed constructed of junk she'd found along the roadside. She was now living in a new home constructed because of the compassion of a small group of people from a church in Austin, Texas. Another man told us how he, his wife and their two children where all HIV positive. He talked about how happy he was to know that when he and his wife died, the friends he had met in his local church would be there to provide for his children. I thought, this man and everyone he loves is going to die, and he feels compelled to say how blessed he has been by God because of the compassion shown through a few individuals in his life.

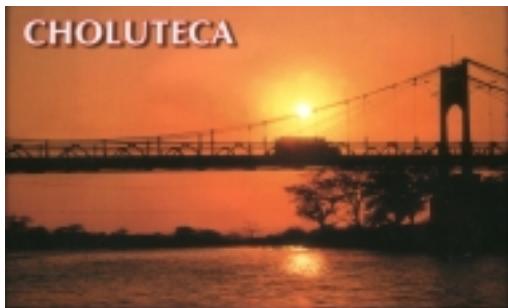
When dinner was over, I walked around the compound thinking about all that had happened over the past three years. All night I had been trying my best to speak what limited Spanish I knew, but to be honest – I was tired, and my vocabulary of 5 Spanish words had pretty much been exhausted. I have to admit, by 9:00 pm, I was trying to avoid any more personal interaction.

As I stood alone in the dark, a young Honduran man of about 18 years approached me and put his hand on my shoulder. I looked at him and thought, "oh man, the only phrase left in my arsenal of conversational Spanish is 'where is my dog?'". This was going to be a very short conversation. He looked at me and in perfect English said. "You've done a lot of nice projects, but the real reward will be when you see one of these people in heaven and they say to you as an individual 'thank you for feeding me when I was hungry'". I just stared at him not really knowing what to say. He was just a kid, but he had a kindness and wisdom in his eyes that was difficult to describe. He probably thought I had totally lost my mind as I stood there with a dumb look on my face, but the message he delivered has really hit home with me.

That young man's name was Francisco. Somehow, in one simple sentence, he was able to communicate to me that real changes in people's lives come about not because of "projects" but because of individuals who allow God to work through their everyday lives. So, instead of a summary of Foundation projects, this letter is a summary of a few people who God has used to impact lives in Central America.

Toñito

Last year we met a family living under a bridge under some corrugated aluminum siding. One of the five children in that family was a boy named Toñito. Toñito was suffering from malnutrition and his grandmother supported the family through odd jobs she found in the community. While we were there last year, some men from a small church in Austin who accompanied us on the trip fell in love with Toñito and his family. As a result of their individual compassion, Toñito's family now has a new home, his sister is in school, and his grandmother has a full time job in the tortilla factory.



Toñito's home in 2006



Toñito



Toñito (left), his brothers and his grandmother in their new home with Nic Gonzales

The tortilla factory

In 2005 we started a small tortilla factory where Toñito's grandmother now works. When we started, the tortilla factory was producing about 10,000 tortillas per month on a wood-fired oven and employed 3 women. The new factory is now producing roughly 1,000,000 per quarter and employs 26 people. The factory has been running non-stop for three years now, and we were wondering what type of maintenance might be needed for the tortilla machinery. Ironically, one of the men who joined us on the visit to Honduras this year was a mechanical engineer who was an expert in food processing machinery and he volunteered to spend his vacation time performing preventative maintenance on the equipment. Temperatures during the day were around 100° F with 80% humidity, and the heat generated by the tortilla machine pushed the working environment to truly breathtaking levels. In spite of the working conditions, the man was eager to start work on the machine. Several of the bearings and gears on the tortilla machine were on the verge of failure when we arrived. If they had failed, the employees of the tortilla factory would have been without income. When we left, the machine had been completely renovated due to the compassion shown by a single man from Missouri.



Tortilla factory in 2007



First harvest of tilapia in Camalote, Honduras

Tilapia farms

In 2005, we started a project to build fish farms for people in Camalote, Honduras. We paid for excavation of the ponds, for young (fingerling) fish, and for commercial fish food for the first year. One of the details we didn't plan for was digging ditches for irrigation to supply fresh water to the ponds. Coincidentally, that summer there were a bunch of students from Virginia Tech University who decided to spend their spring break serving God in Honduras rather than drinking beer in Cancun. About 20 students showed up after the ponds had been excavated - eager to dig irrigation ditches. During their stay, they worked side-by-side with families to establish a long-term source of income and in the process, developed friendships which will last a life time. Thanks to those students, the tilapia farms now have a healthy supply of fresh water, the tilapia harvests have been beyond all expectations and the people of Camalote have an extended family attending Virginia Tech University.



Excavation of tilapia ponds in 2005

Malnutrition hospital

Two years ago we started a malnutrition clinic to support the people of Choluteca. In that area, roughly 40% of the children suffer from chronic malnutrition. The hospital is shown under construction during our visit last year. This year, we saw the completed clinic which was an amazing thing, but to be honest, the most impressive part was hearing about all of the volunteers who keep the clinic running and all of the families in the US who have individually adopted 30 children and paid for their health care for the next 18 months.



Malnutrition clinic under construction



Completed malnutrition clinic



Volunteers working with children in malnutrition clinic

Chicken Pen

Finally, there is the story about a lady in Camalote who had two young children. The lady woke up in the middle of the night about 3 years ago with a high fever, and by the next morning she was paralyzed from the neck down. She was incapable of supporting herself, let alone her young children.

Two young girls from Colorado decided to save the money they were getting from selling eggs from their own flock of chickens, and build the family in Camalote a chicken pen. The chickens would supply food as well as a source of income for the family. The chickens required minimal attention and could be cared for by the children without interfering with school attendance.

Those two little girls in Colorado didn't understand that poverty is a huge problem and no individual can possibly solve it. They weren't old enough to assume that Government "ought to do something about it". All they knew was that a lady and her family could eat if they had a few chickens.



Chicken lady



New chicken pen paid for by two young girls in Colorado

The Salvador Foundation is currently supporting efforts in the US and Latin America. If you would like further information on this or any other activities, please contact:

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