



# NEWSLETTER

## Serving the Underserved

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### \*\*\* PRAISE FLASH \*\*\*



We are praising God that by His extremely miraculous provision, this 2001 three horse trailer was provided to the Plant Today equine program. This was made possible through the liberal giving of several of you Plant Today partners; the patience of the owners of the local trailer sales business who helped so much in this long process; and the generosity of the previous owners, who sold us the trailer for half of its value and donated the balance. We began using it the very next day!

### From Mike - Reaching out to “the least of these” . . .

Since returning from San Pedro Las Huertas, Guatemala in August, I have been very eager to share with you all that is happening. Three men from our May outreach---Mike Stancliff, Pete Pietrini, and Pastor Bryon Dardon---were able to accompany me and God met us at every turn! We gained a lot of information on how our work there is progressing, met with the mayor of Antigua and the fire chief of the district, and had interviews with an Antigua television station and newspaper. As you can see in this photo, we also visited the orphanage where Tina lives, the little girl who was able to undergo major heart surgery thorough the generosity of you, our Plant Today partners. (Isn't she a doll!!)



We have discovered that in most communities, you must go to those in need; they will not leave the felt “security” of their neighborhoods to come to you. Approximately 90% of the people in San Pedro live in what we would call the ghetto. They find whatever means they can for shelter and call it home. It may be made of bamboo, palm fronds, cardboard, or tin. They call home their 8'x8' walls and ceiling. Their floor is the dirt of the earth. Their bathroom is without plumbing. Their kitchen is a small covered area outside these “walls.”

Due to a social “cast” system, the “least of these” do not cross the invisible lines around their neighborhoods for any reason. So, Plant Today is preparing to go to them. In a monumental meeting with the six churches in San Pedro, we were able to act as a catalyst to bring together the pastors who, in unanimous support, agreed to begin a six month ghetto outreach. The plan is simple: divide the ghetto into six sections, with each church responsible for reaching its one assigned section once a month. We anticipate reaching 400 people each outreach, for a total impact of touching 2,400 people per month with a meal, some clothes, and a short church service. These people literally do not know where they will get their next meal, much less their next change of clothing. Now they will have an opportunity to hear the message of hope via a relationship with Jesus Christ. Our prayer is that at least one new church will be planted, as there are no churches at all in this entire area. We are very excited, but also very in awe of the magnitude of the undertaking God has put before us!

Please let this newsletter give you a glimpse of the people that Plant Today--- through you---is serving in San Pedro Las Huertas, Guatemala. *Mike*

## Guatemala Outreach - Praise Report!

We rejoice in what was accomplished and for your determined prayers for this area. Our trip, from August 18 through 21, resulted in the following:

Since October 2008, the small church that we have partnered with doubled in size. It appears that the vision God gave Plant Today to assist the local people with their physical needs has resulted in them going to church and giving their lives to Christ. Pete had left \$200 in May, and Pastor Israel and his wife Cecilia were able to use it to give 22 families food and clothing. A number of the people accepted Christ or rededicated their lives. Another family with two children is now being supported on an on-going basis. Five of the six families we support are still attending church as a result of our reaching out to them.

We met with the San Pedro city council for updates. Ten water fountains have been completed, another is under construction, and yet another is to begin soon. However, we must go back and clean and apply sealer to all the fountains, as they are already showing signs of deterioration without this. The plan is to have the remaining fountains completed by the end of this year. The city council has not gone back to the owner of the land where the water purification system could be located to obtain his response. We requested they have an answer for us in October so that the system can be installed by the end of the year.



The Mayor of Antigua very willingly signed a proclamation stating that he and the city of Antigua agree to partner with Plant Today to assist in the water purification, community center and economic development of San Pedro! While he cannot provide any funds, we are grateful to God for giving us favor with this man, as he holds the "key" to any works that we want to do outside of the local church.

We met with fire chief Carlos Croc and three of his volunteers; he was so happy we took time for him. He (again!) requested that his emergency rescue volunteers receive additional training, and asked that Michael send him a list of suggested training and priorities.

We had two 40 minute interview sessions on Metro 9 Noticias Cable TV. Elmer, the moderator, did a very good job "plugging" Plant Today and what we are doing in San Pedro. About 40,000 in and around Antigua watch this station. In addition to this, Eric Mendoza with the local newspaper met with us and we were able to give him an overall summary of the mission of Plant Today, our involvement in San Pedro since October 2008, and our future goals.

We had a lengthy meeting with the pastors of the six churches, which is detailed extensively below as it involves our planned outreach to the ghetto.

As a "side trip," we drove three hours to the Casa Samuel Orphanage, which we have assisted in the past. A more detailed account of this is also below.



One of 10 water fountains that have been completed



Meeting with the Mayor of Antigua



Interview on Metro 9 Noticias Cable TV



Meeting with the leaders of the six evangelical churches

## Meeting with the Churches & Planned Ghetto Outreach from October 2009 to March 2010:

To our dismay, during our May community outreach we discovered that there was an invisible line that the poorest people of the community---90% of the population---would not cross. People were standing across the street from the outreach but, while they wanted to participate, they merely watched. It was then we learned for the first time of the social cast system that existed: the lowest of the poor did not mingle with the other poor or cross over the invisible line except when they needed to do laundry at the community wash tank. To our further dismay, we learned that we could not reach the people in the ghetto by partnering with ghetto churches because absolutely none existed. And, no one from the ghetto went to any of the village churches because every village church was located on the other side of the invisible line!



Some of the children and staff of Casa Samuel

When I returned to the States I felt God gave me a message from Matthew 22:37-40, that I was to challenge the village churches to reach that ghetto. We asked Pastor Israel to see if the local evangelical pastors would meet with us. On that scheduled day of the trip, I really struggled with Satan in a very real spiritual battle over standing before these men and saying this. However, GOD MET US!

After reading the scriptures God had given me and sharing with them the idea for an outreach that God had also given, one by one the six churches represented stood and spoke to their support. The outreaches are scheduled to begin October 17, 2009.

The outreach idea is simple. We will be collecting clothing and donations in the States. In San Pedro, the six churches have divided the ghetto into six strategic areas, one per church. Once a month, each church will hold an outreach by erecting a tent-like structure and feeding a meal to the people who come, along with distributing some clothes. While this is going on, the church will be holding a service that gives the message of Christ to those who have come. We hope to reach approximately 2400 people a month with this plan.

Of course, one of our highest goals is that at least one church is quickly planted in this ghetto area of approximately 6.000 people, with more to follow. Please be in earnest prayer with us, as Satan has opposed this from its inception!



Some of the younger Casa Samuel children; they really are this happy!

## Casa Samuel Orphanage:

On this trip we were able to visit Casa Samuel Orphanage, located three hours away from San Pedro. We have not supported this orphanage on a regular basis, but we have assisted periodically with special projects. One extremely special project was open heart surgery for a little girl, Tina, who was just 14 months old at that time. Through a couple of extremely generous Plant Today donors, the expenses for her surgery were completely covered. Today she is a healthy and very active "almost" two year old. She is absolutely beautiful!

This is the most wonderful orphanage I have ever seen! I have visited many state-run orphanages and I always left feeling very depressed by the atmosphere.



Art work done by children of Pastor Israel's church, using art supplies donated and delivered by partners of Plant Today



Children from Pastor Israel's church

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However, this orphanage is highly unusual because it has both a physical beauty and a beautiful spirit among all the children and workers. It is privately funded and run, and it is truly an oasis. The workers love the children as Christ loves. They teach and live by the Bible.

And, they do have needs, as they receive no funds from the Guatemalan government. At this time, Plant Today is working to provide 20 book bags for the children by the end of November, for the January school session. We are also working on providing art supplies and books (and possibly an artist/teacher on a future outreach) for a number of children who have evidenced a real talent for art but have no supplies and no one to teach them.

## Ways You Can Help:

### Please Pray:

Prayer---intensive prayer---under-girds this entire foundation. Without it we can do nothing. Please particularly pray for the outreach to the San Pedro ghetto, as we endeavor to reach souls for Christ. Ninety percent of the population of the village lives there, so the spiritual warfare over the battle for souls will be intense. Pray for the local pastors and church people who will be entering what is, to them, uncharted territory. Also pray for the funding so those in the ghetto can see that we care about both their physical and their spiritual needs.

### Consider Going:

If you feel impressed to physically go to Guatemala, consider going on a future outreach, scheduled for late April to early May of next year. We need every "body" possible and there are innumerable ways you can minister. No one is too old, too sick, or too "untalented" to go! The possibilities of your assistance are unlimited in God's eyes. At this time we anticipate medical, dental, and eyeglass outreaches, along with fire/rescue training and community projects.

### Give:

As with any ministry, the financial needs are never-ending. We move forward as God lays burdens on our partners' hearts and they give accordingly. As we partner with the six local churches involved in the ghetto outreach, God has already provided for one-sixth of the need! At this time there remains the need for five partners who will give a \$1,250 one-time gift to provide for start-up expenses. This money provides the tent/tarp covering for one outreach, the food to feed the 400 people anticipated to be at that particular outreach, and the cost to ship the clothes and supplies necessary. We also need a total of \$3,000 per month to pay for the ongoing outreaches during the six month period this project will run. We will be collecting clothes on an on-going basis and are looking for five partners---churches, small groups, or others---to fill a box with clothing each month.

As always, thank you for being a partner with Plant Today. A critical aspect of this foundation is that, from its inception, it has been based on relationships with its partners. We are nothing without you. Thank you for helping as we work toward planting at least one church in an area of more than 6000 people that has ZERO churches at this time.