



# *update*

*HAPPY NEW YEAR 2003*

*Guatemalan Mission Outreach*

- 2002 has been a busy year filled with changes! Bernard stayed in Panimaquin and worked while Trish traveled to the States and shared her heart. We had a new great grandson, Alexander (Nicole, our oldest granddaughter is his mom), a new grandson (Jeremy married our granddaughter Bethany) and we are waiting for our 15th grandchild in Jan 2003.
- We had 5 salvations. Daniel, Mike, and Johny youth from the project were baptized too! Several of the father's of the project returned to church and took their place as spiritual leaders of their families.
- Vito, who recommitted his life to Christ the end of 2000, celebrated one year of deliverance from alcoholism. He really has a heart for evangelism and is a powerful testimony of God's grace to everyone in the village.
- Our project added four new babies and added a new needful family.
- We had two licensed Christian teachers working with us for the year.
- We are desperately searching for 2 Christian, Spanish-speaking experienced teachers to join us in the ministry full time. There is an available house for this couple or (2 women or 2 men).
- This year we purchased new land, added walls to prepare three play areas, and put the roof on the new factory and new classroom.
- Pablo and Factor have added music to our services.
- We had three (groups of two) visit and help with construction and evangelism.
- We gave needed injections, dressed wounds, offered emergency ambulance service, and gave family counseling during times of loss.
- We also gave short term, low interest loans as money permitted.

- Some of our workers also began saving accounts as a result of financial teachings given over the last few years.
- The worker's weekly discount store was a great success.
- Bernard continued to teach new skills to Pablo and Factor, who begin their sixth year with us and are now able to do almost any part of construction needed for the project.
- The women in the kitchen begin their sixth year too and do a great job!
- The factory continues to take orders for bible covers (they have made over 250 so far) and will be taking orders for stuffed bears this year. They continue to make small items like change purses and baby quilts. These four workers are excitedly waiting to move into their large, new room.
- Dalila, one of our teens continued her education on weekends, while she helped with school during the week. She starts 8th grade in Jan.
- Of course, by now, you have all heard about our newest daughter, Sarah. She will be 6 months old on Jan 9th. We should receive the results of the DNA, the last requirement for the adoption the end of Jan. The minute the adoption is final and her passport is in our name, we will get a travel visa and be on our way to the States to introduce her to everyone.

Since July 9, 2002 when Sarah was placed in our arms for the first time, my perspective on adoption has changed a lot. I feel so sorry for the birth mother who feels she is without option. She must give her baby to total strangers and trust that those strangers will give her child the love and comfort that so often is missing in her own life. It is so easy to pass judgement--- to say, "I would never do that!"

Sarah was bouncing up and down, giggling, and chewing on her teething ring. It was just an ordinary day, she didn't know what we were doing in that office. Bernard and I had not been able to sleep *all* night. Last week Sarah and I drove into the capital and waited in the same office, but Claudia (Sarah's birth mom cancelled the test at the last minute-a problem with her new boyfriend). Would she come this week or not? This DNA test is required for the adoption to be final.

I sat watching as each birth mother came into the room. Some were so young. I watched as women carrying babies entered the room (court appointed guardians of the babies) and with them the future mothers. Then, there were the tramitadores (the people with the legal paperwork representing the lawyer of the adoptive parents). Some had papers for two or three babies. They seemed so indifferent to the situation. I couldn't help but notice the far away look on each young girl's face. Each one had a different story. I imagined one said, "I have been on the streets since I was 6 years old. I sleep with many men, this is my third visit to this office. They gave me Q500 (\$69) for each baby. I'm not a bad girl, but I need the money. I can't take care of myself, let alone a baby." Maybe another one said, "I need money for drugs, besides I can have lots more babies whenever I want too." Still another said, " My parents forced me to give my baby away, they are so ashamed of me." It seemed I could hear the heart of each one cry out. I could feel the dynamics---the anxiety of each adoptive mother, wondering if the adoption would ever be final and the pain of the birth mother, feeling trapped into a decision that she would regret for a lifetime. I could not handle looking at the young girl's faces. How long would we have to wait for this to be over? Finally, our lawyer came with our legal papers and we went in for the test. Two polaroid shots of Sarah full face, one side view, right thumb print, then two swabs twisted on each side of her cheek to get saliva and dead tissue. Sarah giggled, she thought it was a new game. I signed the photos, the papers and paid the \$700 for the test to be sent Fed Ex to Fairfax, Va. Then, our lawyer called Bernard and said that he could bring Sarah's mom for her portion of the test. You see, Claudia doesn't want to see Sarah. She decided to *give* Sarah to a Christian couple to raise. She did not receive a penny for *her* baby. A special kind of **selfless** love.

Later, that day as I began to get that (homesick, it's nearly Christmas and I wish I were in the States with the children right now feeling) I once again saw that room filled with young girls, who will **never** spend the holidays with *their* children. I am blessed. I thank God for trusting us with Sarah's life and I thank Him for each member of our family from Mom (Grandma) Snyder to Alexander, our first great grandchild. What a blessed year this has been! I miss you all---May 2003 be everything you would dream it could be Trish.