

Dear Friends,

It's three years since Trish and I came to Guatemala. While walking through the village the other night, I thought of how blessed we are to be in such a beautiful mission field. Here in the mountains among the fields of crops, it seems such an unlikely place for city dwellers like us. It's amazing how God can make us over, if we allow Him.

Our day begins at seven usually by a light tap on the door by one of our village friends asking if we're going to Itzapa, a small town three miles away. By the time I'm out the door, there are about eight baskets full of vegetables, flowers, and assorted greens sitting on the wall in front of the church accompanied by eight to ten women and children. What fun it is to take them down the mountain as they chit chat in their native dialect. I'm beginning to pick up a few words and phrases in Cachiuel, but to communicate we speak Spanish. It's always a challenge to get a few more people in the Trooper or Toyota on our way down. What a blessing when we reach our destination, the market. I'm always sure to help everyone out of the truck and help with their things. The people ask "how much for the ride" and I say, it's a gift from God. They smile and thank me. There are many onlookers as all this transpires. Softness, caring, thoughtfulness is the form of ministry that makes a difference. Too often we're on a mission of good will and knock the people over doing it.

When not traveling to town we're busy ministering, building, and learning how to take care of the crops. The day by day experience of working with the people has allowed us to start building precious relationships. The men have a good sense of humor and like to give everyone a nick name. One of the leaders, who is half my size, is called barrel so I dubbed myself cistern, which they thought hilarious.

A week ago at the village council, we were granted the privilege of having our own water faucet. I know this doesn't seem significant, but they felt grateful we had become part of the community and only charged the normal price, which is something! Now for Oct. to May, we have sufficient water. The rest of the year we depend on the rain water off our roof and public water every third day.

We started a Sunday School Program in our neighboring village, Xeparquiy. The pastor told me we probably wouldn't have many children, but so far, it's been very successful with an average attendance of forty. The public school has also donated a room which we will use for our vitamin program and any other programs we start. We have been invited to hold chapel services in both Xeparquiy and Panimaquin.

A week ago we experienced church growth. . Santiago works on a dairy farm and said he would like to attend our church. We ministered to his wife Rosita by giving her a small baby layette. Even though we've been accepted by the community, I was beginning to feel like Noah.

Our neighbor's dog Chopper inspired me the other day as I was preparing my message. There is nothing worse than a dog who barks for hours. The last few nights he's been barking almost the entire night at what I've been told were coyotes. Frustrated with his senseless barking, I thought how our Lord and Savior must feel about our continuous barking at the world. You see all Chopper has to do is go down the hill and confront those coyotes. However that could be dangerous and so he prefers to bark on top of the hill. Here in Guatemala we broadcast our services from the roof and bark the word of God with about as much effectiveness as Chopper. What hill are you barking from?

You're in our prayers daily,

Bernard and Trish