

News from Suz

A monthly update on life and ministry in the Huastecas July 2007

Organ (and wheelchair) Diaries

A good number of you got a good laugh from my talk of transporting an organ from Texas to the Huastecas. And to tell the truth, moving a human organ would have been a lot easier! But, thanks to God, no one needed an organ transplant; there was simply an electric home organ in need of a new home. Thanks to the generosity of Mrs. Rena Allen of First Presbyterian Church, Kerrville, the Buen Pastor Presbyterian Church of Chancuetlán, Hidalgo is now sporting a fully functional organ. And thanks to the many folks who helped wrap and rewrap the organ, it came through rains from San Antonio to Monterrey unscathed. We give thanks to God for His care over the organ. I told him he was going to have to keep it safe through the forecasted rains, the pot-holes, speed bumps, and rock roads. And he did.



Pastor Abel tries out the new organ after it was delivered to the Buen Pastor Church. In the absence of the local pastor, he wondered if we could not pack it up again and take it to Frijolillo instead! Elders of the Buen Pastor Church, seen behind him in the photo, said "Amo!" (No!)

Another word of thanks to First Presbyterian Church of San Antonio, TX for the donation of two wheel chairs, a walker, and a pair of crutches which have been dispersed among three churches here in the Huastecas to be used as needed by members of the congregations and their communities. Sister Miriam of the Frijolillo church is using the crutches now as she recuperates from a broken ankle. Thank you, FPC and thank you to the family of the

sister from FPC who collected such gifts for those in need around the world.

Celebrating the Sanctuary's 43rd Anniversary

Last Sunday, the Frijolillo church celebrated the 43rd Anniversary of the dedication of its new sanctuary (see the sanctuary on the right in the picture below). The service included testimonies about the construction by men who participated in the 11 year project and concluded with an all-church tamale lunch.



La Santisima Trinidad Church of Frijolillo

After lunch I had a conversation with one of the retired elders of the church, Brother Marciano, the church's unofficial historian. He brought a photo of the church's first elders, strapping young men wearing the traditional "calzones" (billowy, white poplin pants and shirts) and only one with leather huarache sandals (most went barefoot in 1929!). He then proceeded to fill me in on more details of the church's construction. It was the first concrete and rock building in the entire community (the rest were built out of tree trunks, mud, and grass). All of the construction materials...rock, cement, sand, water, steel, was carried on the backs of men, women, and children from Tempexquititla a 3-4 mile walk downhill from Frijolillo. As a then young man, Brother Marciano even lost a hand during a dynamite explosion to break up limestone rock for the construction. Part of the

construction had to be redone when the architect from Mexico City corrected the brothers' work...after all it was their first experience with rock and concrete!

The sanctuary was and still is a testimony to the faith of men and women... that such a structure could be built in the Huasteca...and ought to be built for the honor and glory of God. Eleven years....breaking up rock...carrying materials on one's back or head, three to four miles up hill! And all of this from a community that in 30 years had become virtually 100% Christian in an environment of persecution and violence. Join us in giving thanks to God for His faithfulness and the faith and witness of those who gave so much that we might worship God in a solid, beautiful place.

Saluting the Mexican Flag on the 4th of July

After 13 years in Mexico, I have grown accustomed to saluting the Mexican flag and singing Mexico's national anthem. I understand it to be par for the course of serving in a country other than one's birth. Indeed, my loyalties are divided. But above all, at that odd moment when the flag is presented and we begin the salute, the Lord always reminds me that indeed our citizenship is not of this world, thus the allegiances we pledge in this world may be many or few as He leads each of us, but one is always to override the rest.

But this past Wednesday was extra special. I had the honor of being "madrina" for Hulda, Pastor Abel's daughter, as she graduated from Jr. High. The activities began at the Presbyterian Church where those of us from the congregation (3/4 of the graduates from Kindergarten, Elementary and Jr. High) gave thanks to God for His work in their lives. And to my surprise, we sang a new hymn I have never sung before, "My Mexico" to the tune of "O Beautiful for Spacious Skies"! From there we walked up the hill to the *galera* or roofed basketball court where the school festivities began with honors to the Mexican flag. It was then that I remembered that my co-patriots in the U.S. were celebrating as well....the 4th of

July. Thanks be to God for His special care over each of our countries. May He also grant us grace to live as citizens of the one, sovereign Kingdom of God.

Summer is Here and So is VBS!

As I mentioned in my note last week, I hit the ground running after my trip north. Yes, school is out this week in Mexico and churches all over the country (as well as the Presbytery of the Huastecas) are gearing up for VBS.

This coming week (9th-13th), the Presbytery will host a binational team from Covenant PC of San Antonio, TX and Buen Pastor PC of Castaños, Coahuila coordinated by Proyecto Amistad. They will provide a VBS program (on King David) in three different congregations here which do not have sufficient personnel or experience to carry out their own VBS yet. Please be in prayer for team members and local church members as they fellowship and minister together to the children of La Peña, Rancho Nuevo, and Soledad. May the Holy Spirit be about His work in each of us. Pray that children from non-Christian homes will attend, hear the Good News, and begin a relationship with Jesus Christ this week.

The week of the 15th I will be in Chapulhuacanito, assisting Missionary Raquel Bonilla and her congregation with their VBS program. My assignment is to teach the youth class (12-16 year olds). I am mostly prepared at this point. Pray that the Lord's anointing would be upon me and the message the Lord would want to the youth to receive, that as they study the life of Abraham they will be inspired to commit their own lives to the Lord and his service.

The following week, 23rd-27th I will then be in Taxicho, assisting Missionary Sareth Hernandez de Hernandez with VBS there, also teaching the youth class. This time the study is on the life of the Apostle Paul. Pray for the youth of Taxicho, especially for those youth who will be visitors to the church, that Paul's witness and life will encourage them to commit all they are to the God who created them, also for a particular mission.

The Teaching-Learning Cycle

While in Texas I received two correspondence courses I plan to complete by the end of this year in order to advance toward finishing my M.A. at Fuller by June 2008. The courses are Foundations of Leadership and New Testament 1: The Gospels. My prayer request is that the Lord would help me find a right balance between my studies and life and ministry here. I am still so new here that I hate to take time away from developing relationships and language learning, but I need to complete my studies and I believe the Lord would have these courses be used in benefit of the pastors and lay leaders in our presbytery as well. Pray for open doors to sharing my lessons with my colleagues in culturally appropriate ways.

The presbytery's Bible Institute team has invited me to participate as a teacher. I asked them to grant me the next 6 months in order to complete the above mentioned classes and to learn the in's and out's of the presbytery's program. I am so greatly honored by the invitation and I am excited to have the opportunity to teach. But above all I am interested to see how God puts it all together since I am being asked to teach courses I have never officially studied myself! Nevertheless, I believe God would have me participate as faculty and I look forward to have the opportunity to be a part of the training of our pastors (both lay and ordained). I have been here only 6 months, so I must be careful in my evaluation of the spiritual condition and needs of the people of the Huastecas, so please pray that as I preach and teach, that I will be lead not by my own understanding but by the Holy Spirit of God who wishes to speak to His people and that I might be a faithful witness to the power and joy of life in union with Christ.

I trust my "news" finds you all well, enjoying the summer, and above all living as witnesses to the Kingdom of God in our midst.

In His grace,

Susie

¡Gracias! Thank you! Tascamati!

IN UPCOMING ISSUES:

On Being a Madrina: What it Means and How it Feels.

The Art and Science of Building a Traditional Huastecan Home

How the Gospel Transformed the Huastecas: A Brief, Interpretive History of the Evangelical Movement 1920 to Present

How the Witness of David, Abraham, and Paul Transformed the Huastecas this Summer: A Report on VBS 2007

LOOKING FOR A WAY TO PARTICIPATE IN LIFE AND MINISTRY IN THE HUASTECAS?

1. Pray for me and all of the pastors, elders, and missionaries attending to believers in the presbytery.... Pray for God's provision for their families, for His care over them as they travel, and that each would receive encouragement and power from Christ alone for the ministry to which he/she has been called.
2. Consider visiting us and participating in the life and ministry of our presbytery. Opportunities abound for teams or individuals.
3. Consider contributing financially, either to my salary support through the Presbyterian Church USA or directly to the ministry here in Huastecas through Presbyterian Border Ministry (funds used to purchase resources and materials useful to missionaries and pastors here in the Huastecas (including myself).

PCUSA, Individual Remittance Processing, PO Box 64370 Pittsburgh PA 15264-3700. Label checks "For Frerichs, ECO#074044".

Or Presbyterian Border Ministry
319 Camden, San Antonio TX 78215
Label checks "For Huastecas".