KAIROS MINISTRIES

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 1

FEBRUARY 2010

When We Call On Jesus...All Things Are Possible

It is incredible that we are already into the second month of the new year. As we flip the pages of the calendar, it forces us to reflect on all the wonderful things God has done through us and around us in Kairos Ministries during 2009.

In the Kairos House alone, between January and the beginning of December, 17,052 meals were served. and there were 6,950 bed services offered with 725 offered during the month of December alone! These numbers are astounding to us. The cost of 1 meal is approximately Q20. without meat. If you sit down to do the math, that is Q341,040 or $42,630 -$10,000 over the year's operating budget for the entire Kairos House! How is that possible? For our family, it seems impossible, but when we take the responsibility of feeding each house guest and turn it over to God, then the task becomes easy. For we read in Mark 10:27, "Humanly speaking it is impossible. But not with God. Everything is possible with God." In this text, Jesus is responding to a young man's inquiry on how to achieve eternal life. However, His words are not specific only to this event, but to all aspects of our life. Many times, we become paralyzed with fear when faced with certain tasks. Someone may ask us to do something or an idea may be placed on our heart and we think to ourselves, "there is no way I can do that! I don't have the [resources, time, energy, etc.,] to do that", then we don't do it. But how awesome is it when we take that fear of failure and turn it over to God and say, "I know I cannot do this alone, but with You, I can do anything for Your glory". When we get out of the way, God can take 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread and feed thousands or use an 11 year old boy to raise enough money to build a medical clinic in Africa or supply a small ministry in Guatemala with thousands of pounds of donated food from strangers to feed his hurting people. It is our hope, as you read through this newsletter, that you too will be filled with awe at all God has accomplished in Kairos and join us in praise.



Sharing a meal with a villager from Tierra Blanca, Comotán, Chiquimula

Inside this issue:

Kairos Becomes Wired	4
Christmas Festivities	3
Groups with 1 Purpose	2
Some photos of Kairos House	3
501 what?	3
Fun Facts—How High Is....?	3
Vistazo a la Familia Valdez	4

Special points of interest:

- Kairos Will Achieve Non-Profit Status here in the USA
- We're on the Web!
- 5 Groups slated for 2010

Hay Frio, Hombre! New Weather Trends Causing Cold Times in Guatemala

Global warming? El Niño? Arctic blasts? Whatever you want to name it, there has definitely been a shift in the weather around the world and Guatemala has not been exempt from the effects. In early December, videos were being passed around on internet sites as snow was recorded on top of the Volcano Tajumulco (located in Tajumulco, San Marcos, Guatemala, approximately 10 miles from the Mexican border and with an elevation of 13,845 feet ,a little over 2 miles; this is the tallest volcano in Central America). In what is normally considered the dry season, the cold weather has been creating high levels of humidity which in turn have been creating strong rains to fall across the majority of the country. Just how cold are we talking? Well, low temperatures have been recorded in Petén at 11 Centigrade (51.8F), 0 C (32F) in Huehuetenango, 2 C (35.6F) in Sacatepéquez and 8 C (46.4) in the Capital. These low temperatures (which have even been recorded at below zero centigrade in some areas) have the most negative impact on those persons without shelter, especially children and the elderly. Even if some had access to sweaters and extra blankets, these would do no good if they are still forced to sleep outside. Throughout Guatemala, there are 59 shelters with the majority located in the West in areas that are more susceptible to freezing temperatures. These shelters are provided by

(Continued on page 2)

Cold Temperatures... (*Continued from page 1*)



Snow falls on top of Volcan Tajumulco early December



the Coordinadora Nacional para la Reducción de Desastres (Conred), a division of the national government, similar to FEMA here in the USA. Between January 5th and 7th, 5,900 people sought refuge from the cold temperatures, primarily in the shelters located in Sacatepéquez, Quiché and the capital.

The cold temperatures are not only affecting the people, but are also affecting their way of living: agriculture. One example can be seen in the village of Chirijuyú, Tecpán Guatemala, Chimaltenango where Willy Orlando Botzotz, is a local farmer. In an article published in the Prensalibre in December of 2009, Mr. Botzotz commented that the low temperatures harmed his crop, with damages costing approximately Q30,000, forcing him to borrow credit to replenish his crop.

You might be asking how this impacts the work we are doing in Kairos. Well, with the temperatures dropping in the evening, we are finding the house to be filled over capacity, as those who may normally "tough it out" and wait outside the hospital, cannot bear the cold and seek shelter. We have had about 42—45 people each night in Kairos over the past several weeks...that is almost double capacity! This is a visual reminder to us of our friends in Tierra Blanca, Chaguatón and Marimba, who do not have access to shelters and do not own warm clothing. Further, the loss that the farmers are experiencing (combined with rising fuel costs) has been passed onto us at the market place. Priscila shares that a bundle of tomatoes, which used to cost Q80, are now Q250. That is a 300% increase! However, during these uncertain times, God remains faithful. We are reminded of and comforted by the great hymn written by Thomas Chisholm, in 1923,

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide; Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see. All I have needed Thy hand hath provided; Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

We praise God for His faithful provision & depend fully on Him.

3 Medical Teams, 2 Construction Teams, 1 Purpose

"It was a blessing to work with the Valdez family and the villages. We feel that we can see a difference since we were there last January. Our prayer is that we are able to supply some comfort and a somewhat better health to these wonderful people."

Jan Temple,

First Presbyterian Church of Lewisburg,



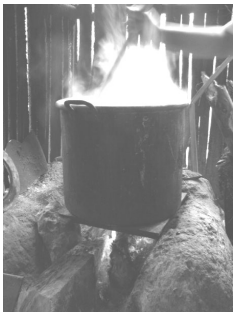
First Presbyterian of Lewisburg posing with some locals in January 2010 in Tierra Blanca

January started with a flurry of activity within Kairos, beginning with a medical team traveling to Tierra Blanca and Chaguatón in Chiquimula. For the past two years, First Presbyterian Church of Lewisburg, PA, has been expanding their service from 1 summer trip to 2 trips, spaced 6 months apart. The church began taking medical teams, along with non-medical personnel, to Guatemala with Kairos 5 years ago when they visited Huehuetenango in July of 2005. The following summer, they were willing to come back and embark on a new venture with us to an area we as Kairos wanted to target due to the immense poverty level and malnutrition. (To read more about this area, you can see an article written in 2006 by visiting: http://www.miamiherald.com/multimedia/news/americas/guatemala/index.html). It did not take long to see that one visit a year was only making a dent in their healthcare and leaving a 6 month supply of vitamins, while helpful, was not enough for the doctors and their team. Under the leadership of Dr. Randy Storm and his wife Kathy, the team decided to try a second visit. Though the turnout is generally smaller for the January clinic, there are still lines of people waiting to be seen by "los doctores" and hundreds of smiles demonstrating their deep appreciation for the care they are given. This past trip, in January, had a bonus of having a midwife travel with the group. The leadership was able to appoint a female translator that enabled a more comfortable environment for some of the women being treated. One week after this group left, Gustavo and the rest of the Valdez family welcomed Ruhl's United Methodist Church back for their 6th trip to Guatemala. The team of 6 stayed for 2 weeks and worked in the Kairos House. During their time there, they were able to construct a wall inside of Paco's office, adding another bedroom, while fixing the leaking roof in the kitchen. During the same visit they also painted some tables and chairs, provided organization for Paco's office and built much needed shelves in the kitchen pantry. This church will be adding a 2nd team who will travel this year with the first young-adult led group Kairos has hosted. The leader, who is 18, will be joined by a half-dozen other young ladies and 5—6 adult "chaperones". They will be traveling at the end of July for a week to Chiquimula where they will be helping to paint the school in Tierra Blanca. Also in July, we will be hosting 2 medical teams. The first week we will welcome back a team from Lewisburg, PA. They will be conducting clinics in Tierra Blanca and Chaguatón again. The 2nd medical team, made up of our friends from LCBC, will arrive the 2nd week of July, when we will travel back to Chiquimula, though will be attending to the people in the village of Marimba.

If you are interested in any more information on these groups listed, or would like to discuss potential future groups with your home church, please contact Gustavo and Elizabeth Valdez. You can send them an email at kairosministriesguatemala@yahoo.com or you may call 717-665-5794.

The Miracle of Christmas

Continuing the tradition started a few years ago, Kairos traveled East to celebrate Christmas with our friends in Tierra Blanca. On December 21st, before the sun even rose, Paco, Priscila, their son Francisco and his family, along with their daughter Any and her family, loaded up a rented pick-up truck with all the necessities for a great celebration. Along with 130 gifts, they packed 15 canastas típicas (baskets with oil, rice, beans, and cornmeal) for the church women, 2 piñatas (complete with candy, of course) and enough food to feed close to 200 people! For lunch, everyone feasted on homemade chicken soup, freshly prepared tortillas and sodas. Everyone had a wonderful time of fellowship and in addition to sharing a meal, they all took time to sing some songs and play some games. The kids loved it and we noticed that the local children were more engaged and participated more this year. Francisco's wife, Ingrid, led them singing a few funny songs and a couple of games. It took a while for them to respond but after 10 minutes they were singing, playing and laughing. After the games and piñata and a time of devotion, the children were lined up to receive their presents (3 of the Valdez' grandchildren, Sarah, Regina and Felipe each helped with passing out the gifts to the children). Priscila recalls looking at the long line of children, wrapping around the church and saying to Ingrid, "We are not going to have enough presents. We did not get enough. What are we going to do?" Ingrid paused, stepped to the side of the line, and assessed the mass crowd and calmly replied, "Have faith". When they came to the last child, they each laughed and praised God as they handed out what was the very last present in the pile. Jehova Jirah!



Chicken Soup cooking over a fire



Clockwise from top left: Priscila with Doña Juana; the line for presents; a little girl hitting the piñata; a little girl shows her thanks for the present

CHRISTMAS DINNER

On Christmas Eve, we were not permitted to enter the hospital, as we have for the past 15 years, but we did not let that stop us from celebrating with our brothers and sisters in the Kairos House. With the help of donations from a few supporters, we served 90 meals on the 24th and passed out 100 presents to the children, both staying in the Kairos House and hospitalized in the Cancer Unit (we do have permission to enter this unit). The night ended with a beautiful worship service in the entrance way of the house.

How High Is . . . ?

When we have groups travel with us, one of the most frequent lines of questioning we get relates to elevation levels in Guatemala. So, for a little fun, we have provided a list of areas in Guatemala and compared them to known areas around the world. Data is # feet above sea level.

Volcan Tajumulco	*13,845 ft*
Guatemala City	*4,855 ft*
Panajachel	*5,238 ft*
Chuiquimula	*1,378 ft*
Camotán	*1,546 ft*
Tierra Blanca	*2,000 ft (appx)*
Volcan Ipala	*5,413 ft*
Antigua	*5,030 ft*
Denver, CO	*5,280 ft*
Rocky Mountains	*14,259 ft*
Mt. St. Helens	*8,364 ft*
Mt. Rogers, VA	*5,729 ft*
Mt. Kilamanjaro	*19,341 ft*
Mt. Everest	*29,035 ft*
Lancaster, PA	*00,403 ft*

Kairos Seeks 501(c)(3)

Soon, Kairos Ministries will have it's own bank account and possibly a PO Box here in the USA. With the help of a lawyer friend we met through one of our medical groups, we have been pursuing the necessary steps to establish Kairos as a non-profit ministry here in the USA. Kairos already has this status in Guatemala, so why pursue it here? We feel it will make certain aspects easier for the ministry as a whole. Sometimes there are certain grants that only non-profits can apply for and we would like to be able to offer receipts for donations offered for special projects (like that of the Christmas dinner described above) and eventually offer an online payment option on the ministry's website. We have established a great Board of Directors and will keep you posted as the process progresses.







Clockwise: New shelves in kitchen pantry; common area; new sun-roof in kitchen; space to grow and keep organized in the office



KAIROS MINISTRIES

152 South Charlotte Street
Manheim, PA 17545
USA

Phone: 717-665-5794
Email:
kairosministriesguatemala@yahoo.com

"...I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me. Matthew 25:40

We're on the Web!
kairosguatemala.com

After many years of dreaming and talking about designing a website for Kairos, our prayers have finally been answered! In September of 2009, a member of Peace Presbyterian Church in North Carolina contacted us after reading one of our monthly email updates with a prayer request for assistance with starting a website for the ministry. After a few design changes and countless, tedious hours on his part, the website is now up and running. It still requires a few tweaks and updates, but you can visit it at www.kairosguatemala.com We are hopeful to be able to store our monthly updates, in a "blog" format as well as an archive of each newsletter. Prayer requests and updates on work teams will also be posted here. If you are a friend on Facebook®, we will post updates as to when changes have been made on the website, with a link to click on for easy access. It is our prayer that not only will our regular supporters be kept more informed, but that others may learn about what God is doing in Guatemala through Kairos.



Un Vistazo en la Vida de la Familia Valdez



Paco and Priscila Valdez surrounded by their 3 children: Edwin Francisco, Any and Gustavo

So much to update you on since our last newsletter, especially for those of you who may not have internet access and do not receive our regular e-mail updates. First, we want to say "gracias" to each and everyone of you for lifting us and Kairos up in your regular prayers. It is the prayers of the faithful like you that sustain us each and every day. As many of you are aware, Paco and Priscila welcomed grandchild #5 into the family on March 26, 2009 when Gabriella Sofia Valdez was born to Gustavo and Elizabeth. It was a special blessing that the entire family was able to visit a few weeks later and take a family portrait with all 13 members! Gustavo and Elizabeth traveled to Guatemala for the summer again, with both girls in tow, and, along with the rest of the Valdez family members, hosted 3 teams. Though plans did not work out for Gustavo and Elizabeth to travel to Guatemala for Christmas as was scheduled, the family received an even more exciting Christmas present with the announcement of Any being pregnant with the Perdomo's 2nd child! Grandchild #6 is due to arrive on August 14th by planned cesarean and we are all anxious to see if it will be more pink or if Felipe Andres will get some blue to keep the playing field even. Paco and Priscila continue to stay busy. Paco celebrated his 59th birthday on November 9th and Priscila caught up to him on January 20th. Paco continues to lead the volunteer firefighters in their community and has recently started a new church with services being held in the city. Priscila spends her days at the Kairos House and running to different markets seeking the best deals on fruit and vegetables. Their son, Francisco, has been assisting Priscila at the Kairos House by visiting with the children in the hospital and collecting demographic information from each house guest. Gustavo and Elizabeth remain busy here in the US as they continue raising support while working on achieving non-profit status for Kairos, assisting with developing the new website, maintaining communications with current and new supporters while also planning and coordinating the different groups for the summer. We praise God that the entire family is healthy. Being surrounded with so many ill children in the Kairos House and in the villages where we visit, we are reminded of our blessings and celebrate that Sarah Camilla will turn 7 in May, Annalucia and Regina will both turn 5 in April and August, respectively, and Felipe will turn 3 in April while little Gabriella will begin all the birthday celebrations when she turns 1 year on March 26th. Please continue to pray for all of us, especially Any and her remaining 6 months of pregnancy. We praise God for each of you and the blessing you are to us and the ministry.

In His Service, *The Valdez Family (Paco, Priscila, Gustavo & Elizabeth)*