

MEETING THE NEEDS OF OTHERS (PART 4)

This year we celebrate a Golden Anniversary of ministry (1972 - 2022).

Following are a few opportunities we have had over the years.

One of our largest and most memorable groups of visitors came to us from Morris, Illinois - Morris Christian Church. Nate (then youth minister at Morris Christian Church) and I (David) began planning in 1995 for their summer 1997 visit. Their main objective would be to help construct 16 church benches. This was way before Home Depot came to town and quality wood was hard to come by.

We worked with a local carpenter who bought all the wood planks. He planed them and then stacked them in his shop for over a year and half to dry properly. As the summer of 1997 was approaching our neighborhood carpenter cut all the necessary pieces for each bench. For an entire week we had an assembly line church bench factory. No screws or nails were needed as all the lumber was cut to fit perfectly with wood dowels and tongue and groove cuts. As the benches moved along they were assembled, sanded, stained and varnished. Proud to say that the benches are used to this day and have kept together perfectly. Thanks, Morris for a job well done and making an eternal investment in the lives of those who attend the Ontañon Church of Christ.

Vacation Bible School is another highlight we will mention. The facility has held some remarkable short term mission groups to help oversee this ministry outreach to the inner city children. One, now grandfather, has mentioned to us several times how as a child he still holds dear his first ever VBS craft from 1992 and has watched his children encounter that same experience of meeting Jesus for the first time.

It has not always been easy. We have had to overcome being robbed several times, beaten more than once, spit on, called some pretty ugly names, taken to court for simply preaching the gospel, doors slammed in our faces when evangelizing, we had to hide Bibles to get them into the country in those early years, even had to meet as a group of believers behind closed doors, all because we were called Christians. Through it all the ministry grew stronger.

We've met the needs of homeless people in need at mid-night to see they had blankets and food in the winter time. One such lady we met during our "Daily Bread" time when we went with groups to pass out sandwiches and a drink: Her response was a simple "God bless you. How did you know I was hungry?" That was payment enough!

In our neighborhood there is a lot of gang related graffiti on the walls of businesses, homes and abandoned buildings. They say if your home, in our case the church and mission building, have no graffiti on them is because the gangs respect you. For 50 years, no graffiti has ever been on our walls.

Once Sheri was walking back from the open market with some strawberries she had purchased. One gang boy nicknamed the (ardillo) squirrel tried to rob her of her goodies. She said "You will absolutely not do that to me". In shock, seeing a little white woman saying that, the young boy soon became a friend to Sheri and came by the mission often just to talk to her and he did receive a piece of fresh strawberry pie later.

This same young boy told me where I could find the church sign that was stolen from the front of the building. Of course I knew by the way the squirrel was acting he had done it as he said he could steal it back from those who had taken it and return it for just a few pesos for his work. My reply was just bring it back and I would buy some of those bracelets that he made by weaving silk threads together. A friendship was made and a trust that lasted for many years.

When Jorge passed away on February 23, 2001, all our church friends were there to help comfort us, but the entire neighborhood from all around came out. All of our neighbors and special gang related friends made by our relationships of trust and love. Hundreds of people touched by VBS, food, clothes bazaars, hospital visits, water during drought times, even prison visits. They were there when we needed a friend to lean on.

Emanuel Mexico Mission is all about meeting the needs of others. For fifty years we have faithfully done our part in sharing the gospel in a number of ways. When we were most in need, we saw first hand how serving others can come back to you in the most unexpected ways and by the most unexpected people. All because you share Jesus with everyone you meet even if they try to steal your strawberries.

Next month we will continue to share our 50 years of history. We will talk about education needs being met, mariachi bands, hymn books and more interesting facts. In the meantime, rest assured that your gifts and prayers continue to meet the needs of others in the inner city of San Luis Potosi.

Jose, David and Sheri

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All gifts are tax deductible
Donations can be made out to:
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