



CENTRAL
AMERICAN
LUTHERAN
MISSION
SOCIETY



*“Connecting and Advancing
Leaders in Mission and Service
to Win the Lost for Christ.”*

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January 2010

Being Made in Human Likeness...Our Missionary God

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. Who being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:5-8)

We've just celebrated the birth of Christ our Savior. What a wonderful and wondrous event: The Savior of the World was borne of a humble peasant girl in a stable! God Himself came to live among us! We refer to this event as Christ's incarnation. He literally took upon Himself our human flesh. When we think of Christmas, however, we also are challenged to think about Jesus' mission to save the world. And, we are invited to see the missionary dimension of his incarnation.

Have you ever considered that Christ is the greatest missionary of all time? Missionaries cross barriers like time and space and culture. Jesus certainly did that in spades! He did not just cross barriers of space like ordinary missionaries—and he did—like the times he ventured into “enemy” territory to bring salvation, hope and healing to the traditional enemies of the Jewish people—the Samaritans. Jesus crossed the greatest barrier of all from a perfect place in heaven to our sin-wracked world. He moved from eternity without beginning or end to our limited dimensions of time and space.

And like human missionaries who cross barriers to bring God's good news to sinful, sick people, Jesus entered into our circumstances and experienced every human emotion. He not only proclaimed salvation, he demonstrated total, unconditional love to all people. As the scripture from Philippians 2 says, “***And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross.***” Jesus knew His mission and was obedient to His Father's will. He willingly identified with us and even took upon Himself all our sins—paying the ultimate price by dying on the cross—so that we might have life!

What a God! What a missionary! What a missionary God!

God bless us all in this New Year as we cross barriers together in Central America and our own hometowns!

In His Missionary Service,



Pastor Steve Hughey, CALMS' Executive Director



CALMS' Guatemala Missionaries meet at a December 2009 Retreat in Rio Hondo Guatemala to plan, evaluate and study God's Word. During their retreat they focused on the above passage from Philippians 2.

God's Transformation Work...

Transformation is one of CALMS' four values that help guide our ministries in Central America.

As we work with our partners, we look for changes in individual lives, congregations and communities. We believe that focusing on people and processes more than projects and products can help bring about needed, permanent changes.

In our housing ministry for example, we seek to make people the focus. We work hard to connect volunteers from the United States with the family receiving a new house and the local congregations and their members.

We regularly review our processes for the housing ministry to make sure that people are connected, individuals are respected, and relationships with congregations are strengthened.

Transformation is God's work as the Holy Spirit changes a life over time and helps individuals grow as disciples of Jesus. He does this through the Word of God and as mature disciples of Jesus model and mentor new disciples. So part of our strategy is deliberately connecting mature Christians with unreached people and immature Christians.

Changing people's world-view is another key component in our ministry with people in Central America. Our world-view is our glasses through which we see and interpret reality, shaping the way we see ourselves, God and others.

In our ministry, we are seeing how this change in world-view is crucial to real transformation. For example, this month we are helping the community of Campanero La Avanzada near La Union, Guatemala build a community center. This village has around 1,000 people and was the most affected by the land-slides in the summer of 2008 that destroyed so many houses, crops and lives. Malnutrition has increased dramatically in this village due to the loss of jobs.

CALMS is currently helping the village build a community center to provide space for the school which is very over-crowded, a health clinic and small groups to meet to study God's Word. As important as this building is to provide needed services, however, we recognize that unless we help people in the village develop a new world-view, needed change will not occur and people will remain locked in poverty.

There is only one small evangelical church with less than 20 people in the village and the Catholic Church has little influence since the priest comes only one time per year. Since there has been almost no spiritual equipping in the village, the world-view of the villagers is still heavily influenced by animism. Most of the villagers believe that unpredictable spirits control their lives and that creation is chaotic and events in their lives are beyond their control. This world-view leads people to be fatalistic about their circumstances.

So in addition to working with the community to address some of their many infrastructure challenges, we must also help them embrace a new world-view. They must come to believe that God has given human beings the ability to have dominion over creation.

In many cases, faulty world-views can paralyze people making them unable to make needed changes in their lives unless there is a paradigm shift in their thinking. That is why government programs are most often not so helpful even though vast sums of money are involved.

Ministries like CALMS, even with far fewer resources, can be instruments of lasting transformation as we apply good development principles, as we recognize the importance of helping people change their world-view and as we share the transforming Word of God.

Thank you for standing with us as we serve as God's transformation agents in this New Year!



This large building will be finished by a CALMS' team in January 2010 and will serve the community of Campanero La Avanzada near La Union, Guatemala. The building

will provide this very poor community with space for school classrooms, a small clinic and for worship and Bible study.

Pray For Us...

Pray for Miles and Elma Richmond and for Ramiro and Marubeni Peñate as they provide leadership for CALMS' housing ministry in Guatemala. Ask the Lord to grant them good health and wisdom so that they can help all our partners work together for the benefit of the poor.

Ask the Lord of the Harvest to guide the construction in early January of a new community center in the village of Campanero La Avanzada near La Union, Guatemala. Pray especially that volunteers from the United States and the village might work together cooperatively to finish this project and that it might become a place of hope for these suffering people.

Pray for Milton Castillo, president of the Lutheran Church in Panama, as he visits the United States in January as part of a CALMS' get-acquainted trip to share what God is doing in his church with our partners in the United States.

Pray for Peg Wolfram as she begins her new volunteer service with CALMS in Belize and ask God to give her many new friends as she adjusts to her new life in Central America.

Lift up to the Good Shepherd prayers for the medical team going later this month to Holy Cross Clinic in Amatitlan, Guatemala and for the team leaders, Dr Mike Frith and CALMS missionary, Pastor Miguel Torneire. Ask the Lord to bring to the clinic those people needing medical care and spiritual help and allow the visiting volunteers to work cooperatively with their Guatemalan partners.



CALMS' Missionaries and staff enjoyed the 85 degree weather at their recent December Retreat in Guatemala to help prepare for a challenging year of ministry. Pray for them and the Guatemalan housing ministry, leadership development and human care and for all CALMS' ministries as we begin a New Year under God's banner of love!