



"Connecting and Advancing Leaders in Mission and Service...to Win the Lost for Christ"

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June 2009

## “We Need Each Other...”

I first met Dulce (“Sweet one”) and Maria in February 2008 while on a short-term medical trip to Holy Cross Clinic in Guatemala. Dulce was very dirty and had a terrible skin rash because she was unable to bathe on a regular basis. Although she was six years of age, she looked several years younger due to malnutrition.

Dulce had come along with her mother Eva to the clinic where we were holding a week-long medical outreach to support the clinic. It was actually her mother who was being seen by Dr. Elry Orozco and the other doctors on our team. As the doctors discovered, her mother had inoperable ovarian cancer.

I met Maria later that same week when we made a follow-up home visit to check on Dulce’s mother. She lived next door to Dulce and did what she could to help Dulce’s mother and siblings. While her house, like that of all her neighbors, was made of tin, cardboard, and nylon, you could tell that she worked hard to keep it as neat as possible. The dirt floor was swept clean and she even had a blender and a small micro-wave oven in her humble kitchen.

Now around nine months later, I was back at the clinic with another medical and evangelistic outreach. This time, Dulce and Maria were together at the weekly children’s Sunday school held at the clinic. Dulce looked like a different child—certainly cleaner and with shining eyes and neatly combed hair.

The next day, Dulce and Maria came back for a seminar on parenting that we were giving as part of our outreach to the community. While waiting for the seminar to begin, Dulce played with the other children and I talked with Maria. I discovered that just several weeks before, Dulce’s mother had died of her cancer, but before she died, she asked Maria to take care of Dulce.

Maria explained that Dulce’s father was an alcoholic and that he had often beaten Dulce and her siblings. Dulce’s mother Eva observed how Maria had reached out to her daughter Dulce and shown kindness to her family during her illness. She wanted her daughter to have a better life and felt that Maria would be a good mother. She asked her oldest daughter to take her other two children, but knew that it would be difficult for her to care for three siblings in addition to her own child.

Maria explained that she was now 77 years old, a widow and alone herself, so she could understand how difficult it would be for Dulce to be left alone without a mother. “As sad as the death of Dulce’s mother has been,” Maria added, “this has all turned out to be such a blessing to both Dulce and me. I was alone and so was she. Now neither of us feels alone anymore. My own grand-children are the same age as Dulce, but they have their parents while Dulce only has me. We really needed one another and I believe God brought us together!”

NOTE: For years Maria has sold water and snacks to the school children at the public school nearby. Unfortunately, shortly after taking Dulce into her home, the school decided that she could no longer sell anything to the children because the school wanted to have their own snack bar. Now Maria has no way to make any money to buy food. If you would like to assist Marie, the 77 year old widow and her new seven year old daughter, Dulce, you can send your contribution for the Dulce and Maria fund to CALMS at 11906 Manchester Road, Suite 110, St. Louis, MO 63131. CALMS, working with Holy Cross Clinic, has set up a fund to help these two special people and will administer the funds through Dr. Elry and his wife, Liz.



*Dulce Sica and Maria Francisca Ticas pose for a formal picture to celebrate their new relationship as mother and daughter.*

## **“We need each other— Central American and North American Christians”**

Dr. Elry Orozco and his wife Liz are the backbone of Holy Cross Clinic at Lake Amatitlan. Located within a short walk of the clinic are the humble houses of approximately 2,500 very poor people who invaded an abandoned railroad track after losing their homes in an earthquake a few years ago.

Dr. Elry teaches classes on medical subjects at various universities and institutions around the area to help provide for his family. He and Liz also work several days a week at the Holy Cross Clinic which he founded several years ago to serve the poorest of the poor. Patients who come for medical services come from the very poor community of Amatitlan along the tracks of an abandoned railroad.

Dr. Elry also visits nearby villages such as Llano de Animas – a village of 2,000 in the mountains above Lake Amatitlan—where there are few medical services.

To supplement Dr. Elry’s services, CALMS sends short-term teams of medical specialists from the United States on a regular basis. These teams serve alongside Dr. Elry and provide basic and specialty care to sick people living in the area near the lake, in the surrounding villages, and in the nearby city of Amatitlan. The goal is eventually to be

able to provide at least one short-term team per month in order to meet the medical needs of many people living in the area.

CALMS has organized a team of Christian doctors from the United States who have been trained to lead short-term teams and work effectively with Dr. Orozco. New leaders are needed to lead or participate in additional teams. New leaders can expect to receive orientation from the advisory team members to help them understand the clinic's philosophy and prepare for their short-term service. CALMS also provides logistical help to each leader and his team.

As Doctor Elry observed recently, "I want and need US doctors and nurses to come alongside of me to help me reach out to more people than I am able to reach alone. My wife and I are volunteering to serve these people and we come as often as we can. But the needs are so great that we can not hope to do it all by ourselves. The short-term volunteers also help us by encouraging us and praying with us so that we are strengthened for our ministry. We believe that the experience of helping these needy people also helps our American friends use their gifts and experience the joy of helping those who are among the neediest in our society."

Note: CALMS and US congregations working with CALMS have helped Holy Cross Clinic refurbish a lake house donated by a former member of Castillo Fuerte Lutheran Church in Gualan. The Clinic still needs a refrigerator to store pharmaceuticals at the clinic pharmacy as well as furniture such as beds, tables and chairs. If you would like to assist Holy Cross Clinic to provide more services to neighboring villages you can send your gift to CALMS at 11906 Manchester Road, Suite 110, St. Louis, MO 63131.



*Dr. Elry Orozco examines a child at a recent medical outreach in the village of Llano de Animas—a village with many poor people who have few accessible medical options.*

## **“We need each other—career missionaries and volunteers”**

This past week, I lead a group of seven seminary students and two of their wives on a cross-cultural training event to help the students understand how to minister in a cross-cultural setting. We worked with Dr. Elry Orozco and his wife Liz at the Holy Cross Clinic.

Even though the group did not include anyone with a medical background, students and their wives were able to assist Dr. Orozco as he examined patients. They invited people to the medical outreach, greeted patients who waited to see the doctor, kept records of those who came to the clinic, gave out medication, prayed with the patients and played with their children.

Students also participated in research guided by CALMS and designed to help Dr. Orozco know more about the medical needs in several new communities near Holy Cross Clinic. They also led seminars with patients and their families about how to lead devotions in the home, how to be a good parent, how to study the Bible, etc.

During each day's outreach in a mountain village and at an inner-city school, students learned to share their faith as they worked with Rebeca de Franco, Lutheran Hour director in Guatemala and her staff who assisted us in the outreach.

During the learning/serving event, I debriefed the day's experience with the students, shared mission insights and experience, and led them in a daily study of mission theology.

I have served for over 40 years now as a cross-cultural missionary and mission consultant, but I am still learning. The student's questions caused me to reflect anew about why we do things a certain way and how we might be more effective in outreach.

Their energy and enthusiasm for sharing their faith renewed my own faith and gave me hope for the years to come. The opportunity to ask questions and interact with the Guatemalan people in a cross-cultural setting seemed to be an effective learning experience for the students.

We all agreed that career missionaries and mission volunteers need each other. It is encouraging to know that God has a place for each of us in His mission and that He gives us the privilege to participate in His mission.



*Left: Seminarians Kevin Bueltmann (left) and Jason Holden (right) invited villagers like Hortencia Ardon (middle) to the medical outreach clinic and asked her questions about health care and other issues affecting her neighbors.*

*Right: Seminarian Martin Hasz (kneeling) with the help of Lutheran Hour staff member, Naomi, shares the Good News of Jesus' love with patients waiting to see Dr. Elry Orozco at a special medical outreach in the village of Llano de Animas, in the mountains above Lake Amatitlan.*

## “We need each other— CALMS and congregations”

CALMS “connects and advances leaders in mission and service.” We work with our Central American partners to help them advance their mission by designing short-term projects that build their capacity as leaders and help them impact their communities with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Often American congregations and organizations are eager to send their volunteers but are not always sure how to connect them to the right projects that can use their skills. CALMS helps these congregations evaluate their abilities and gifts and connects them to the most appropriate projects. We try to develop a “win-win” situation so that both American team members end up feeling fulfilled and useful and Central American partners end up feeling supported and encouraged in their ministries.

In the case of the special short-term team from Concordia Seminary, we worked with our Central American partners to develop projects that would help the students learn while using their skills to meet the real needs of the field.

Dr. Elry needed more information about the communities he wants to reach with the Gospel and with medical services. The students needed to learn how to listen and ask questions in a cross-cultural setting. CALMS was able to bring together both the needs of the students and the needs of the clinic and to facilitate a “win-win” situation.

By teaching the students to do research in a cross-cultural setting, we were able to provide much valuable information to help Dr. Elry make good decisions about how to best serve several new communities. In the process, the students got to meet people from different cultures, share their faith and serve our mission partners with the valuable information.

Our recent short-term event with seminary students at Holy Cross Clinic is another example of how we can help one another—CALMS and American congregations and their volunteers. While American congregations have talented people who are ready to engage their spiritual gifts, share their prayers and financial gifts, CALMS is able to guide their involvement to the benefit of many. It was also a good example of how we can serve better together than alone!

NOTE: Contact CALMS at [calms@calms.org](mailto:calms@calms.org) for information about how your congregation can get involved in a short-term mission project that can help your members grow spiritually as they serve with Central Americans through strategic short-term projects designed by CALMS.



**Left:** “Dr. Elry Orozco, director of the Holy Cross Clinic; Rebeca de Franco director of the Guatemala Lutheran Hour; Gozalo Prado, director of “El Cerro de Corado” School in Amatitlan, Guatemala; and, Rev. B. Steve Hughey, Executive Director of Central America Lutheran Mission Society worked together to bring health and healing and to involve the seminary students in God’s mission during a recent CALMS’ short-term experience in Guatemala.

**Right:** Seminary students like Aaron Meyer shown in this picture, led small group seminars each day for community members focusing on parenting skills, how to lead home devotions, self-esteem, and how to study the Bible.

## Guatemala—a country of contrasts between old and new!

A team from Concordia Seminary worked with CALMS and the Holy Cross Clinic to bring medical services to the village of Llano de Animas, in the mountains above Lake Amatitlan.

This village of about 2,000 people has a catholic church and five small evangelical churches. The Catholic Church in the village only has a priest once a month because there are not enough priests available. The evangelical churches do not have seminary trained pastors. One pastor can not read, yet preaches to his people sharing messages he says “come directly from God.” The village is in great need not only spiritually and physically since there is no doctor or trained nurse to serve the population.

As we visited house to house to get to know the people and to ask questions about health, we met many people who needed health care but were unable to get to a hospital or clinic due to distance and lack of money. One older lady for example, had ulcers on one leg due bad circulation and infection and was in danger of losing her leg because she was not able to travel to a hospital and had not received proper treatment.

There are many superstitions that guide life in the village. For example, the farmers had just planted their corn on May 15, which corresponds to the day of San Isidro, the Saint who governs the growth of crops. The villagers also talked to us about “La Llorona” (The Crying One) who cries out at night. She is a spirit who comes down from the mountains above the village. According to legend, if you happen to look upon her, she will give you the evil eye and cause you misfortune.

Despite the spiritual ignorance and legends that guide much of village life, there are also signs of many changes. The contrasts between the old life and the new modern life of the village are also evident. For example, while the majority of the men in the village earn their living by farming on the steep hillsides, some younger men in the village work for a company that installs cell towers throughout the country.



*A hundred year old ceiba tree in the middle of the village of Llano de Animas Guatemala reminds us of village life as it has been for hundreds of years. The cell tower behind it reminds us of the global world to which Guatemala now connects.*

## Pray for...

Thank God for the work of Dr. Elry Orozco and his wife Liz serving the medical needs of the poor in Guatemala. Ask the Holy Spirit to give them wisdom and strength as they respond to the many needs of hurting people!

Ask the Lord of Life to bless the marriage of Pastor Miguel Torneire, CALMS' Missionary-at-large, and Diane Nelson, former missionary to Guatemala, who will be married at Messiah Lutheran Church in Weldon Spring, Missouri on June 6, 2009.

Ask the Lord to watch over the CALMS counseling team that will be working in Belize this month to train Belizean leaders to give Godly counsel to their churches and communities regarding family life, personal problems, etc.

Thank God for the partnership between CALMS and Lutheran Hour Ministry in Guatemala! Ask the Lord of the Harvest to use Lutheran Hour Ministry to enhance the evangelism work that CALMS teams do as part of their short-term events and CALMS' housing ministry to enhance the short-term involvement of Lutheran Hour short-term teams.

Pastor B. Steve Hughey, Executive Director

*B. Steve Hughey*

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