

## MEDICAL MISSION TRIP TO GUATEMALA

June 9-24, 2007

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is difficult to describe to each of you the tremendous gratitude that we feel when we thank you for all that you did to make this medical mission trip to Guatemala possible. We were in Guatemala for two weeks. We worked in a clinic, vocational center, and school in San Benito the first week, then in a hospital in San Cristobal the second week. Seventeen people from St. Paul's and the community went on the trip. Although we were able to serve several thousand people, we realize that it was the efforts of numerous unnamed people here that really answered prayers.

We would like to share with you some of the joys we experienced in sharing God's love with the poor of the poor. Every day, we saw long lines of people hoping to meet a medical person who might help them in their misery. In Guatemala, it is clear that the people know that God is in their presence. It is a different world than here where we feel that "we" are in control. There, they pray every day that their agonies will be addressed, and they saw in the "Americans" a possible answer to their desperation. In many small ways, we were able to provide some comfort through Christ.

We saw over 1,500 medical patients, both children and adults. We found 2 children with possible cancer and one with terminal kidney disease. Because of the incredible people in the United States who are willing to share their time, talents, and treasures with the less fortunate, we are working toward bringing those children here for a possible cure. Yes, it is only three children, but this means everything to their families.



We saw many children with skin rashes, open sores, respiratory infections, and malnutrition. We provided medicines, nutritional instruction, and love and prayers to their parents. We provided vitamins to hundreds of children. You may think this is a small thing, but in Guatemala, children suffer from malnutrition and retardation because they lack essential vitamins and nutrients, and are infected with parasites. In our country, we don't even think about these things, but in a third world country, vitamins can be a mother's answer to prayer. When we give them just a month's supply of vitamins, they cry and kiss us and thank God because now, their child might not have bowed legs or skin rashes or mental retardation. We know in our hearts that these efforts are only the beginning but at least, they are the beginning.

We screened and left medications for hundreds of patients with diabetes, hypertension, and kidney disease. Several people were treated for pneumonia. We did cervical cancer screening on 120 women who had never had that screening before. Cervical cancer is the number one cause of cancer death in third world countries. For most of those women, there was good news that they are healthy. For others, there was bad news, and we are working to help them find treatment. This will not be easy for them because of their poverty and the poor quality of health care in this impoverished country. But we made contacts with other Christian doctors in Guatemala who are working with us to provide surgery for these people who would otherwise die.



We walked up and down the streets and went into homes and schools to provide 5,000 treatments for intestinal worms that contribute to malnutrition and cripple a child's chance for survival.

Each of the people on this trip can give you a different story. Perhaps it was the boy with the newly broken arm who will never get it fixed but whose mother learned that through physical therapy it can get better. Perhaps it was the prayer with the woman with the alcoholic husband who knows that people in America really care about her and her burden, and are willing to pray with her for a better life. Perhaps it was

the 32 year old woman with uterine cancer who will now have an operation that before would not have been possible. Perhaps it was the battered wife who realized that she has value in God's eyes and she does not have to endure such suffering. Perhaps it was the children who spent 2 days learning "ballet" and the joy of dancing.



God also blessed us on this trip with a teacher who was able to minister to and "teach" the teachers who are working in a Christian bilingual school. We were also able to do construction and painting at a Christian vocational center whose mission is to teach teen boys job skills to help keep them out of neighborhood gangs.

Because of you, we were able to bring \$50,000 worth of medications and over 1,000 pairs of prescription glasses, reading glasses, and sunglasses on this trip. The glasses filled a big need in the communities we visited. We were able to improve the sight of at least 500 people of all ages. Many came in with very poor vision, and left crying because they were now able to see the world and their loved ones, read, or perhaps thread a needle so that they could sew. We also gave out 500 bibles and prayed with countless patients, and visited a pediatrics ward of the local hospital that was filled with very sick children.



But the numbers are unimportant and the "successes" are unimportant. What is important is that Jesus tells us over and over to give to His most needy. Matthew 25:40 reads, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." In the United States, we are thankful for our many, many blessings and freedom, but cannot understand why we are so



blessed when others are so unfortunate. Why were we born with so many more economic advantages than most of the world's 6 billion people? This question can be daunting and difficult to answer. But fortunately God doesn't ask us to know the answer. He only asks that we know our responsibility: to share with those less fortunate! It is our responsibility to love and care for those who are in need, who have no one else to care about them and nowhere else to turn.

This letter is being written out of love to each of you who contributed to our trip. Your efforts did not go unnoticed for every good deed has endless good results. Although you were not able to join us physically on this trip, it was only through your contributions that God's work was done! We wholeheartedly thank each of you for your donations, contributions, encouragement, support, and prayers. We ask that you continue to pray for the people of Guatemala and others in need.

In Christ's name,  
The 2007 St. Paul's Medical Mission Team