



FIRST

VISIONS

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THE PASTOR PONDER'S



"PERSONAL STORY WITH A LENTEN FLAVOR"

The following story actually happened in one of my previous churches. As we consider "tough" themes during the Christian season of Lent, I hope it will give you something important to ponder:

Joe had fallen off the wagon. A year before we'd hired Joe as our church's custodian, knowing full-well that he had a severe, chronic alcohol problem. He was both in AA and taking a drug called "antabuse" to keep his alcoholism at bay. And for quite a long time all had gone well. He actually lived at the church in a couple of rooms that we'd converted into a small apartment for him. He kept himself neat and clean. Although it wasn't required of him, he started attending one of the church's evening Bible studies. Later he began showing up at Sunday worship. And one Sunday, three months before, he'd walked forward and publicly committed his life to Jesus Christ. There wasn't a dry eye in the sanctuary that Sunday morning, for virtually everyone in the congregation knew Joe's checkered history. For thirty years he'd battled alcoholism, and not often with much success.

When Joe didn't show up for work for the second day in a row, I sensed something was wrong. So I knocked repeatedly on his apartment door. Eventually he answered - and I immediately knew he'd gone back to the bottle. He looked terrible and smelled worse. He'd actually managed to drink while taking antabuse, which is designed to make you very sick if you try to do such a foolish thing. Joe was an absolute mess.

I helped clean Joe up to the extent possible. He wasn't in any shape to talk at that point, so I told him just to get some sleep and come to see me in my office the next day.

The next day he showed up as requested, clean and sober once again. "Are you going to fire me?" was his first remark. "No, Joe," I responded. "I'm not going to fire

you. You're fighting a tough disease and you just lost a battle. I want to help you win the next one. I don't believe Jesus would fire you after one mistake, so neither will I." Joe was amazed. He'd been fired so many times in the past that he just came to expect such whenever he stumbled.



Be kind and compassionate to one another; forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
Ephesians 4:32

Joe stayed with us for about six more months. When he finally decided to quit, of his own volition, it was to reconcile with his wife - from whom he'd been separated for more than three years. I don't know what happened to Joe after that; I lost track of him. But I trust that the grace of Jesus Christ, which Joe found in a church I served 20-plus years ago, is still with him to this day.

Lenten blessings to you all!

Dave Ring

ATTENTION



Mark Your Calendar--March 21 !

The Missions Committee is hosting a **POTLUCK & FUND RAISER** following the 11 AM service . There will be an informative video presentation on the **CENTRAL CONFERENCE PENSION INITIATIVE**. The Central Conferences are composed of 71 annual and provisional conferences in 42 countries in Asia, Africa and Europe and include more than 9,000 clergy ministering to more than 3 million lay members.

This is not an extravagant program . In Liberia for example , 500 + retirees and spouses receive payments of only \$60. PER QUARTER !! 20 District superintendents hand deliver cash payments, many into remote areas difficult to reach . In some cases it takes up to 80 days for pension delivery ! In poor countries , pensions are key to overall development. Without pensions the elderly depend on adult children and extended family for basic survival .The entire economic effort must focus on it's oldest members . With pensions the economic effort can be focused on the youngest for nutrition , health care, and education . This shifts the economic emphasis from maintaining the past generation to investing in a better future for all. In our affluence it's difficult to imagine a pension of only \$20 monthly for survival when we can spend that much on lunch.

Remember the blessings God has bestowed on us and our duty as Christians to spread the Gospel . Prayerfully consider a generous gift for the support and security of those who labor for Christ in underdeveloped areas growing His Church.

3/7	MYF Roller Skating
3/14	MYF Martha Z. leading, Jan Frensdorf, 2nd chaperone
3/21	MYF Linda L. leading, Susan Keddy, 2nd chaperone
3/28	No MYF
4/4	Easter No MYF
4/11	Open
4/18	Open
4/25	MYF teen depression Eileen Douglas, 2nd chaperone
5/2	MYF Hiking with Ronda Jones, Ann L. 2nd chaperone
5/9	No MYF
5/16	'Lost Boys' mission movie @ the Rings
5/22	Open
5/30	No MYF

by Beth Myers

First, I'd like to thank the FUMC Missions committee for their donations for my trips to Casa de Amor para Ninos last fall and this year. Many thanks also go to Beverly Basey-Jones, who provided some pictures and comments to help complete these articles, and to White Rock Baptist Church for being an ongoing supporter of this mission. Finally, thank you to every one of you in the FUMC church family who have been on mission trips in the past and told others in the congregation about your experiences. After attending churches of various denominations across the USA, this is the most mission-oriented and -supporting church I have ever known and it's contagious!

People have asked how I am able to do this even with disabilities. Well, it's not difficult, just different than what we're used to. Mexico is geographically close, but in reality is a world apart from our American lifestyle. After seeing the difference in the standard of living, it made me much more appreciative for the things we take for granted such as warm housing and a comfortable mattress, good sanitation and roads, safe neighborhoods and drinking water, electricity, public education and Christian families. Going to Puerto Palomas on the 2nd weekend of every month, or farther south into the home regions of the Tarahumara Indians, makes going on a foreign mission trip easy, without breaking one's piggybank.

After a few trips to Casa de Amor para Ninos, I made the commitment to fill in for four months for another person who went on a long-term missions trip to India. Someone was needed to plan and provide for engaging the children with crafts and games while the adults are in a business meeting. After praying and asking God if he would give me the funds, physical strength, health, and decreased sensitivity to noise to do this, he said yes, so I volunteered and purchased items for crafts and other activities. Seeing the children grow month after month, building relationships with them and other members of

the community, learning Spanish, and teaching God's Word are among the many reasons why I've continued to invest time, treasure and talents into this ministry.

WHAT WE DO ON A TYPICAL WEEK-END MISSION:

Usually, we meet on Friday around 5:30pm at The Light at Mission Viejo church in Santa Fe, where we load up the vans and trailers. We eat a quick late dinner in Albuquerque with a couple of additional rest stops along the way, getting to the border around midnight. Items we bring down need to be declared to the Mexican customs agents, and lists are prepared about a week in advance. Sometimes we get through customs at Puerto Palomas quickly, other times it takes quite a while. We drive to the orphanage and unload only our personal and sleeping items until the next morning.

After breakfast on Saturday, we meet to discuss what needs to be done for the weekend, and pray that God's will be done in all we do. After the board meeting and lunch, we break into smaller groups. If we're hosting a large community outreach event such as Mother's Day, Fall Carnival & Christmas, we prepare food and the orphanage grounds for that. Otherwise, some people work on maintenance and repair projects around the orphanage or improve someone's home in Palomas. Others visit local pastors or individual families, finding and meeting needs in the community. Opportunities to provide support for additional ministries, such as health checkups for the children occur on a periodic basis. Playing with and caring for the children is

WHY & HOW TO BE A WEEKEND MISSIONARY PART 2: FELIZ DIA DEL AMOR Y LA AMISTAD

always popular; hugs are freely and frequently requested and given by children of all ages. In the evening, we frequent La Tienda Rosa, the Pink Store, for dinner. After dinner, some might follow up on earlier visits, many relax with the kids during a movie back at the orphanage, while others prepare for activities on Sunday.

Sunday morning worship service is early, informal and inspirational. The kids love the music and occasionally will stay for the message, usually sitting on our laps or cuddled close beside us. Later, some of us make follow-up visits or attend another worship service to support pastors in their own congregations. A few months ago, I was privileged to witness a teenage boy's baptism at one of these local churches. He and other members of his family had been brought to Christ by the example and witness of many who volunteer at the orphanage. Being able to see the Holy Spirit working, beginning at the orphanage and fil-

It is amazing how many Mexican pre-teens and teenagers work full-time instead of attending

school. Without education, the cycle of poverty among abandoned children is nearly impossible to break.

number of people going. This is a family-friendly trip, although it is not suitable for young or high-needs children, since our primary job is to be missionaries. For more information, email info@WRBCnm.org.

The next big community event Casa de Amor is co-hosting with the Mayor's office in Palomas is the annual combined Mother's Day & Mexican children's Fiesta Day in



Bible Lesson

This is one mission area we are diligently trying to expand as soon as possible.



Guerrero Backpacks

tering throughout the community, is awe-inspiring. Unfinished projects are completed and orphanage finances are reviewed before leaving around noon. We present our passports to the customs agents and return to Santa Fe about 7pm.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Interior roofing renovation now that the exterior roof rebuild is finished. Orphanage maintenance as well as local home and church improvements are ever-present and ongoing. Also, it will soon be planting season for the orphanage garden.

Preparation for school for current and previous orphanage children includes paying for early registration, finding or buying uniforms that fit and school supplies, and budgeting for periodic school fees.

Another ministry that is becoming popular is the use of audio bibles in Spanish, due to the high illiteracy rate. Ipod-like devices called BibleSticks (\$29) and free Proclaimer radios from www.faithcomesbyhearing.org are increasingly being requested by pastors and individuals.

The next trip inland to the Tarahumara Indians near Copper Canyon, Creel, Mexico will be July 23-31, 2010. By presenting a Vacation Bible School (VBS) and providing food, blankets and jackets to them, we can meet spiritual as well as physical needs. The VBS wrapup will be the Tarahumara kids' presentation to their whole families. Afterwards, every family (approx. 300) will get a blanket and a food distribution box (5 pounds of flour and sugar, beans, rice, 1 quart of oil, etc.). Individuals and families with children over 8 years old are welcome to go, especially those who are bilingual and are willing to travel and assist with the VBS and other projects. The cost will be \$300-\$500 per person which includes gas, hotel, visa, and emergency medical insurance. The price estimate varies due to one's personal expenses such as food and souvenirs, and the total

May. We provide goodie bags for the women of Palomas with a Christian pamphlet and basic personal hygiene and beauty supplies, as well as a few of the little things that make life more worth living. A typical bag contains shampoo & conditioner, deodorant, lotion, soap, washcloth & hand towel, makeup, hair care items, toothbrush & toothpaste, manicure materials, bandaids, stationary without words or sayings, pens, pencils, hard candies or gum, jewelry or small kitchen utensils, gloves, socks or slippers. Dia del Nino, Children's Day, is a national Mexican celebration featuring a festival with door prizes, cake, candy and pinatas.

We always need extra help for these large functions, so May would be a good time to go if you are interested in experiencing a weekend missions trip. You need to attend a briefing before your initial visit; email Beverly at SBJones4@wmconnect.com to arrange it. These community-wide outreach events are a great way to meet new people & begin to see God touching many lives.

OTHER NEEDS:

If you can't get away for a weekend mission to Palomas, but would like to contribute items for the monthly trips, a box has been placed in the foyer for donated goods. There are lists of suggested donation items in the pamphlet rack, as well as a general flyer about Casa de Amor para Ninos (www.casadeamorparaninos.org). Your prayers for the orphanage, volunteers, and the people we work with and minister to in Palomas are always welcomed.

Bible teaching--Tarahumara

MISSION DROPLETS

*To the holy and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ:
Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

CHACARA SECA – DRY FARM - NOT QUIT SO DRY ANYMORE

Chacara Seca (dry farm) was a community with very little water, which may be how it got its name. No one here remembers exactly, but they will tell you how dry their community is and what a challenge water has been all their lives. Ironically, they are bordered by two other communities known as Chacara Verde (green farms), and yet another Las Chacaras (the farms).

The community of Chacara Seca has been purchasing their water by the drum from a neighboring farm for the past ten years. This was not only logistically challenging but also costly. Enacal, the national water company, had drilled several wells in and around Chacara Seca, but many had fallen into disrepair over the years while others had been abandoned before the first drop of water left the pipes. The latter was the situation of Chacara Seca; no water had ever left the spout. While installing the piping the riser main was dropped and the water company was unable to retrieve it. The community felt abandoned and forgotten and soon the well was too. During the growing season corn and other crops were planted around the well area and when those were harvested, weeds grew up almost covering the base of the well.

We met Napoleon, a resident of Chacara Seca at El Ayudante, where he works as a gardener, and where we have use of a storage facility. He told us the sad tale of Chacara Seca and asked if there was anything we could do; we agreed to try. On our first visit to the well, we set up the tripod and tried to grab hold of the pipe, which we believed was at about 105 feet. Several of the villagers gathered around and lent a hand wherever they could and anxiously waited for a favorable out-

come. They were so excited that, first that someone was first there at all and secondly, that there was a small chance that there would soon be water flowing in Chacara Seca. Unfortunately, it was not meant to be and after a day of trying, we decided that we did not have the right tools to grab hold of the pipe.

After our success at Las Palmas removing 160 feet of pipe, and with new tool in hand, we returned to Chacara Seca for another try. Again, the villagers gathered around and anxiously waited to see water pour from the pump spout. After much prayer, we set up the tripod, hoist, and tool began lowering it into the casing in 10-foot sections. When we attached the eleventh piece of sucker rod, we silently prayed that we would be able to hook on to the protruding sucker rod and Praise God we succeeded! We then began the business of trying to lift the 150 plus string of pipe but try as we might we were only successful in lifting a few inches and soon noticed that the strain of the hoist and the weight of the string were beginning to bend the tripod legs. We could hear the gravel pack falling and were afraid that we could be putting too much pressure on the casing. We were then certain that the cylinder was deeply embedded into the well bottom.

Exhausted and saddened we decided to abandon the attempt. This well has never been out of Dennis' mind. He has prayed and petitioned God for a resolution, and his prayers were answered. Dennis received an idea about using an alternative method of repairing the well by going past the obstruction. Success did not necessarily mean complete recovery of the pipe, we could give the villagers water without removing the dropped pipe string. It was not optimal, but it

would have water flowing in Chacara Seca. Last year while repairing another well we had recovered a small diameter PVC cylinder. It was in good condition but in need of a good cleaning and new cup leathers. Brad sent us the cup leathers and Dennis and the team rebuilt the cylinder.

This past week we returned to Chacara Seca with a small team and the PVC cylinder for our third attempt at recovering the well for the villagers. This time, understandably, there were no on lookers but we were optimistic. Again, we set up but not for a recovery, rather for an installation. We lowered the small diameter cylinder into the casing and 10-foot section by 10-foot section began lowering the new string into the ground. When we reached the 11th piece, we began to pray silently, some with heads bowed others on their knees, praying that we would be able to slip the cylinder past the fallen pipe and reach the water. The cylinder hung up for a moment and we all inhaled and continued to wiggle the pipe and it dislodged and began lowering again, the 12th piece and each one after went in slowly as well. Occasionally, one would catch on what was more than likely a coupling but with gently persuasion, it was lowered down, until all twenty pieces were in the ground. We all sighed a great sigh of relief when the last piece was in place, but we weren't ready to celebrate yet.

The team attached the spout and head and sealed up the pump. Now for the moment of truth! A few more villagers had now gathered and one of them stepped forward to begin pumping the well. Counting each stroke the man pumped the handle up and down 220 strokes, but there was still no resistance on the handle. Something was wrong;

no water was coming to the surface. Dennis stood in thought looking at the well. He pumped the handle a few times and then instructed the team to remove the head. With a five-gallon water bottle, he began to pour water down the riser main. They resealed the pump and another villager stepped up to pump the well. At this time, you could see the disappointment beginning to appear on their faces. Dennis explained that we had installed an auxiliary foot valve and adding the water might help in priming the cylinder/pump. The man pumped and pumped and mentioned that the handle was becoming heavier with each stroke. A few pumps later water came flowing from the spout of the well. Praise God for His love and mercy! The faces of the villagers changed very slowly from disappointment to disbelief and then to joy.

The stream flowing from the spout was not a great one and the well is never going to be a gusher, the cylinder is just too small for that. However, it will help quench the

thirst of the people of Chacara Seca. We hope some day to return with a different cylinder to see if we can improve the flow rate. Until then we are grateful for any water that is accessible to this community. Mark 9:23 says "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."

Susan

STATUS OF WELL REPAIRS

The weather is turning a little warm as we head into February, maybe just plain hot. We had a team visit us from the states and I believe they had a good time while they were here. We also had a mission group of young ladies visit us at a school repair site. We gave them an opportunity to check out some of the different work that we do and to

participate in hygiene lessons.

As Susan wrote above, this month we had a true blessing - a well that we started working on approximately one year ago was completed. We were able to slide a small diameter cylinder past the blockage and to get into the water of the well. Miracles do happen!

Susan and I will get a chance to visit with some of you as we return to the US again. I need some additional medical tests from a surgery I had when we were first coming to Nicaragua. Please pray for a clean bill of health. God has been so good to us and we praise His Name for all that He has done for us.

Dennis

PRAISE & THANKSGIVING

We are so grateful for the team we had this month, and for the visit we had this past week with missionary friends. We are also thankful for having had the opportunity to attend the Orality Seminar sponsored by Living Water International. We are especially grateful for the added blessing of sharing a day in the field with 12 high school girls serving with International Partners in Mission.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please continue to pray for

- the people of Nicaragua, for the political unrest, and for the economy
- the people of Haiti
- guidance and direction in our ministry
- for Phil & Chris Wilson as they begin their ministry on the east coast of Nicaragua

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Providing a Cup of Water in Jesus' Name

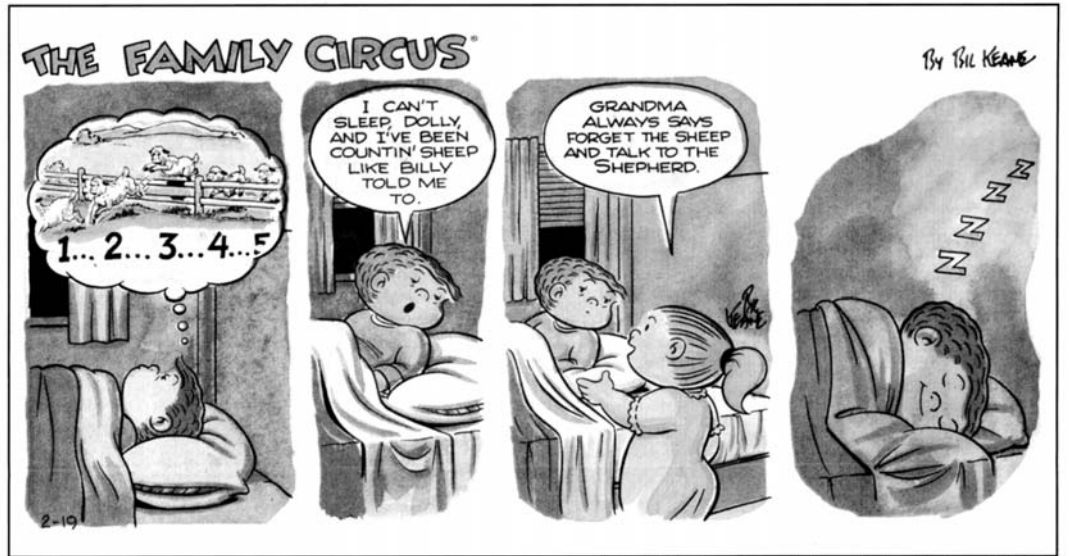


LENTEN DEVOTIONS

Los Alamos First United Methodist Church and Los Alamos United Church cooperate in offering a joint series of Lenten Devotions starting at Noon each Thursday during Lent 2010. The theme thereof will be the seven "I Am" statements of Jesus found in the Gospel of John. A light lunch of soup and bread will be served at each gathering. These will continue through Thursday, April 1st. March 4, 18, and April 1 will be at United Church. March 12 and 25 will be in our Friendship Center. Please join us for this special Lenten 2010 spiritual emphasis.

SPECIAL MARCH DAYS

Birthdays:		Anniversaries:	
Ruby Meaders	03/05	March 31	
Fran Ring	03/09	Don & Kathy Siebe	
Cleo Byers	03/10		
Don Siebe	03/10		
Claire Harmon	03/12		
Thomas Beery	03/13		
Emma Barefield	03/19		
Vicki Ricketts	03/20		
Rachel Granzow	03/23		
Pam Hundlley	03/27		



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First United Methodist Church called to:

Seek God,
Share Christ's Word,
Serve His World

The next edition of Visions will be dated March 19.
The deadline for articles is Wednesday, March 10.

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United Skates
First Session:
3rd graders & younger
5:30 pm - 6:45 pm
Admission \$2:00
Second Session
4th graders & older
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Admission \$2:50
Sunday Services & Activities
8:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship
9:45 a.m. Sunday School
11 a.m. Traditional Worship
Wednesday Activities
Chancel Choir 7 p.m.

UPCOMING EVENTS Highlights

Sermon Titles

Sunday, March 7, 2010 - Holy Communion will be observed.
Pastor Ring's Communion Meditation: "Why Do We Do This?" Gospel Scripture Text: Luke 22:7-19

Sunday, March 14, 2010 - Pastor Ring's Sermon Message: "The Best Shepherd" Gospel Scripture Text: John 10:11-18

Methodist Men's Breakfast

Friday, March 5, 6:30 am in the Friendship Center

Roller Skating

Friday, March 5, 5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall

MF

Sunday, March 7, 4 pm, SH

Missions/Outreach

Monday, March 8, 6 pm in the Library

Trustees

Monday, March 8, 6:30 pm in the Asbury Room

Disciple III

Monday, March 8, 6:45 pm in the Friendship Center

Staff

Tuesday, March 9, 10 am in the Library

Christian Education

Tuesday, March 9, 6 pm in the Friendship Center

SPRC

Tuesday, March 9, 7 pm in the Asbury Room

Newspaper Articles Due

Wednesday, March 10

Disciple III

Wednesday, March 10, 1:30 pm in the Friendship Center

Adult Bible Study

Wednesday, March 10, 6 pm in the Friendship Center

Choir

Wednesday, March 10, 7 pm in the Sanctuary

City-Wide Worship & Prayer

Thursday, March 11, 11:30 am in the Sanctuary

Noon Lenten Study

Thursday, March 11, Noon the Friendship Center

Boy Scouts

Thursday, March 11, 7 pm in the Fellowship Hall

1st Light

Thursday, March 11, 7 pm in the Sanctuary

Roller Skating

Friday, March 12, 5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall



Time Change

Saturday March 13, Midnight--spring forward

MF

Sunday, March 14, 4 pm in the Senior High Room

Disciple III

Monday, March 15, 6:45 pm in the Friendship Center

Staff

Tuesday, March 16, 10 am in the Library

Ark Board

Tuesday, March 16, 6 pm in the Friendship Center

Finance

Tuesday, March 16, 7:30 pm in the Library

Disciple III

Wednesday, March 17, 1:30 pm in the Friendship Center

Adult Bible Study

Wednesday, March 17, 6 pm in the Friendship Center

Choir

Wednesday, March 17, 7 pm in the Sanctuary

City-Wide Worship & Prayer

Thursday, March 18, 11:30 am in the Sanctuary

Noon Lenten Study

Thursday, March 18, Noon at the United Church

Boy Scouts

Thursday, March 18, 7 pm in the Fellowship Hall

1st Light

Thursday, March 18, 7 pm in the Sanctuary