

The Guatemala Trip Report

May 22-25, 2003

I. Purpose of the trip.

The original purpose of the trip was to attend a mission's conference, meeting people, build relationship with leaders in Guatemala and see if God would have strategic plans through them.

II. People I met in Guatemala.

1) **Armilca**, 33, found New Hope Missions International, an affiliate of SEAPC in Central America, is now connecting hundreds of churches (there are 18,000 churches and 22,000 pastors birth out of a revival 15 years ago), mainly to motivate and provide resources for mission projects throughout the world. The focus this year, along with last year is Asian missions. Mark Geppert is one of the main net-workers in this conference.

After the three days of meeting people, observing, I understand that although Guatemala has been through over a decade of revival, many churches have grown big (more than 5 churches in Gua. City are over 10,000 people, many others exceed 1,000), there are also good net-workings in the city, they do not have concept of reaching out to other nations, they even consider themselves so poor in finance, that it is nearly impossible for them to send and do missions through their own resources. Currently, the few missions they have involved with are mainly resourced by the Western-World churches.

Armilca's job, therefore, is to build relationships, educate, motivate, find path/connections for church leaders to be encouraged and have channels to initiate missions and send their own people out into the rest of the world. Within three years, he has found favor from many of the most significant leaders in the nation as well as hundreds of churches willing to learn and receive help in area of reaching out to nations. We had a lunch with a few lead pastors in the Gua. City churches (with congregations about 50,000). Mark gave an exceptional challenge and invitation. He has it all prepared if anyone responded yes. (as he often taught me, inspiration, information, invitation and follow up plans...)

My relationship with Armilca has just initiated. He is willing to do anything to connect and to cooperate, but I haven't seen clearly a contact point for New Hope to move in yet. I'm still waiting for the Lord to give me further instruction.

2) **Hector Zetino**, 50, is Armilca's spiritual father. He was also Mark Geppert's first disciple back in 1976 when Mark just came to Guatemala as a new missionary. Hector, currently reside in Arkensal Louisiana, had been through some trauma in his life including the death of his wife 15 years ago. He had to raise the three young children by himself, and that was when he decided to moved to the States, with Mark's help. Mark asked me to spend time with this man, connect, minister to, and see if there can be further relationship developed.

Hector was born and grew up in a very, very rough neighborhood called Limonada. Robbery, killing, street violence, drug dealing,... were daily activities. To the people lived there, it would be natural if a person lived today and ceased to exist the next. This is a place even police and army would not touch. Before Hector knew Jesus, he was part of the gangster's clan. During the years when Mark was in Guatemala, he was saved and became a strong disciple. Years later he started a church in the middle of this crime area. Hector loved every one lived in that neighborhood, many of his gangster friends were delivered, saved, healed, ... there were stories after stories of nearly death been healed, robbers saved and become deacons/ elders,...

When Mark asked Hector take me to see Limonada, several people (include Hector himself) warned me that 'it is very dangerous to go there,' 'you might not be able to come back' ... I sensed the complete peace in me. I was reminded by the Lord of my prayer that morning: 'Lord, send me some miracles, I want to feel your heart here.' Here we are, Hector and I walking on the streets, lanes and allies of Limonada. We met people on the street telling us that this morning there were couple guys killed a policeman for his shot gun. Remember that this is 15 years after when there was a first church. Limonada is still a place people despise, crimes still happen frequently, but the used to be shelters became brick houses, lanes and allies filled with holes and gullies became concreted roads, you can see kids playing soccer on the street, a few people came to us and say 'Dios De Bendigo' (God Bless you). There are two churches now in the allies attracted neighbors with still happening miracles. I heard a story about a couple of teen-agers looked through window into a church service mocking and joking, the Holy Spirit stroke them on the ground, people had to carry them inside to set them free.

Hector then take me to see the pastor of this second church a few ally down. Pastor Alvero was called to this area 5 years ago to fast and pray. The Lord gave him a vision of transforming this desolated land. He received the calling and moved to the neighborhood. In three years he didn't see one soul saved, his house had robbed a few times instead. Frustrated and ready to give up, the Lord reminded him of the vision he first saw. Without much expectation he stayed. Now the church has 250 regular attendance, 50 of them are 17 year old and younger. Alvero showed me the construction that is going on next door. He is extending the building, planning to build a three-story complex in the middle of the small ally, make it a school for neighboring kids to come (regular school will not take them), a place young people can gather, hang-out, be disciple. (Sounds familiar? Just like our Joshua house) We talked, dreamed, prophesied for three hours. By the time we needed to leave, Alvero asked if I can stay and preach to the congregation. I came back the next evening, we danced, cried, laughed, prayed, battled, prophesied, proclaimed, ... my heart was melt and I was in loved with these people who have broken but full of hope and destiny.

The Lord showed me that Limonada will be transformed, the young ones will be raised up, reach their own community, they will be sent out to their own nation then many other nations to testify what the Lord has done in this men-despised area. Young people will come from other nations to join with them, then go out join forced, into the harvest fields in the world. Alvero, becoming a general, will build bridges from one

society to another, then high ways to nations, along with many apostles. The Lord is going to use these least important brothers and sisters to reach many unreachable.

I also had a chance ministered to Hector for God's healing, renewing and restoration in his life. What he had done was tremendous for those people in Limonada, a reward must await for him in heaven. But the Lord is going to lead him into a whole new path regarding evangelism and training young people with international apostolic teams. There is a long way ahead of him, but I believe that what Antioch has will help him move into the destiny God has designed for him.

III. Conclusion

Above was the 'Acts' that I read and experienced in Guatemala. Two great men I met were grown up in the most hopeless community. Started from an inexperienced missionary (Mark Geppert, 27 years ago) risked his life to bring in the Gospel, and influenced some lives, one of the disciples (Hector) broke the ground, sow the seed, also lay down his own family for people he loved; his spiritual son (Armilca) not only climbed out of the pit, but become respectful net-worker preparing churches of his own nation to be able to reach out to the rest of the world.

It is a great story, but I'm amazed to find that it is only one little episode in all the mighty things that God has done and is still doing on the whole Earth. Be encouraged and persist, church. You and I are all part of the on-going Acts of the Holy Spirit in the history He has not done writing.