

September 6, 2009

Greetings from Costa Rica! We hope this letter finds you doing well and enjoying life in the Lord. We've had a busy summer, and we want to fill you in on the happenings of the past few months.

The biggest news is the great progress that has been made on the Methodist Children's Home project. Since May we have hosted six work teams from churches in the States, and there have been other teams hosted by our mission partners. Each team was filled with wonderful, hard-working people, eager to put a shovel in the ground or push a wheelbarrow full of concrete, and the progress they made is amazing. By late May we completely finished the drainage system for the entire property, and in June we started working on the trenches for the first house. In July, our teams began pouring the foundations and laying the first frames, but the real highlight was laying the first concrete block for the house. After over two years of planning and preparing, it was wonderful to pass this milestone in the project's development, and we thank God that we can now see such visible progress. In addition to construction work in the mornings, each team visited local churches in the afternoons to minister to children through Vacation Bible School. This schedule means that the days are very full, but God is always faithful to give the energy needed to do His work. It has been encouraging to hear testimonies from team members at the end of the week as they share how they were impacted by serving alongside us and how they discovered gifts they didn't know they had. We invite you to visit the "Recent Pictures" page on our website to see more about each team, as well as the progress of the Children's Home.

In the midst of staying busy with these groups, we've kept up our normal schedule of Seminary teaching and the kids' club in Los Guido. In June, Will taught a one-week class on the Holy Spirit to a group of seniors. This class is always a blessing for him, as he sees the students reach a deeper intellectual and personal understanding of the Spirit. He's currently co-teaching a class on contemporary theology that will conclude in October, and he also just finished teaching a 12-week course on the Old Testament at the Methodist University. Meanwhile, our Saturday kids' club in Los Guido is, as always, the highlight of our week. Ella brought our series on the Old Testament to a close, and she's now designing lessons on the life of Jesus. It's inspiring to see the children grow in their knowledge and love of Jesus, and our prayer is that each of them will one day come to know Him as their Savior. We are grateful for the chance to serve and teach them each week, as well as be blessed by their joyful, loving spirits. Also, in late June we had the honor of being asked to participate in the river-side baptism ceremony of the Llano Grande church. This congregation has always been dear to our hearts, and it was truly joyful to celebrate with them as nine new believers were baptised into the church. Visit the "Llano Grande Church" page of our website to see pictures.

On a personal note, we are thrilled to report that we've finally been granted residency status in Costa Rica! This is a huge answer to prayer, since it means we no longer have to leave the country every three months to renew our short-term visa. It also gives us a greater sense of permanency and affirms our feeling that God has called us to this place for at least the next few years.

All in all, we've had a busy and wonderful summer. It has been a real blessing to host the work teams and to see people from the US discover a gift for service in another country, as well as see them receive the many blessings that God has offered them while in Costa Rica. We feel we know more about the Body of Christ as a reality that goes beyond cultural and language differences. In the coming weeks, we invite your prayers for our last church team of the year who will be working with us this week, for our own health and strength, and for wisdom and vision for our ministry as we move towards the end of our fifth year of service. It's hard to believe that we've been here for five years now. We give thanks to the Lord for the life he has given us in Costa Rica and for each day that we are blessed to serve His people here.

As always, we thank you so much for your prayers and your support. We know that these are difficult times for many, but as Pastor Edgar from Los Guido says, "Our world may be in crisis, but our God is *never* in crisis." We are amazed at how wonderful God is to provide for us and how faithful and generous all of are supporters are. You are all our partners in ministry and we pray for you as well. We'd love to know how you're doing, so please call or write.

in Christ,

Will and Ella