



“First the bread, then the Bread of Life!”

Doug and Becky Neel ---- June 2009

1001 E. Easy Ave., Crockett, TX 75835-1709

douglas.neel@gmail.com

www.agrimissions.com

WHAT DOES AGRICULTURE HAVE TO DO WITH EXPLOITED CHILDREN? Agrimissions at “El Refugio Vida” in La Carpio, Costa Rica

The end of May we were in Costa Rica with some Mission Society missionaries to consider the possibility of becoming involved in a ministry called “El Refugio Vida”.

In Costa Rica, prostitution is legal for women 18 years old or older; but there are many illegal prostitution rings that are involved in human trafficking and child exploitation. Costa Rica trafficking is different from other countries in that the children are not necessarily “stolen” from their homes and parents, but rather are “solicited and groomed” by women in one of these rings. Once these young girls are chosen and added to the ring’s “portfolio”, they get called for by clientele, “used” by these men, and then taken back home—how horrific, sick and very, very evil. The sadness of all of this is that it supports the family and is possibly what the other women in the family have always done and know nothing different or any way out.

But there is hope at “El Refugio Vida” a center located in a very poor part of Costa Rica called La Carpio. The Refuge is enclosed in a high fence on land that is next to the city dump given to them by the government. It is the ONLY piece of property in all of La Carpio, a world of dirt and concrete, with grass. Young women from the ages of 12-18 have been rescued from a life of exploitation and have

come to the Refuge for education, counseling, and genuine care and love from a Christ-centered staff. These girls have been abused, not only by those in these rings, but even the homes they come from have not been able to nurture or protect them. One 15 year-old young woman we met only knew her first name; she had to find out who she was.

These girls represent very poor families and the center would like to start a feeding program, hence Agrimissions’ involvement by providing some garden plots and educational programs. Some of the girls have children due to their “former life” and others are the primary caregivers for younger siblings which accompany them to the center. The food program-gardens-educational courses could provide not only food, but lessons about life, and knowledge as to how the families in La Carpio, as well as those who are a part of The Refuge, might use “urban gardening” for food and possibly additional income.

As we are now in the planning and proposal phase of this project, please pray for this endeavor in Costa Rica. We will return some time in the near future to finalize exactly how this will look and be accomplished.

“I’m telling you the solemn truth: Whenever you failed to do one of these things (feeding, clothing, visiting, giving a drink) to someone who was being overlooked or ignored, you failed to do it to me.”

(Matthew 25:45, The Message)



Agrimissions Board of Advisors in Crockett – “Many Hands Make Light Work”

The BOAA for Agrimissions showed up in full force from all over the south – North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, Texas and even Australia (not really sure that is the south) to help with the “clean-up” of the Agrimissions Headquarters in Crockett. There was much work accomplished such as painting shelves and getting our office in working order, repairing benches and windows, installing security lights, cutting, trimming, and getting rid of unwanted brush, filling in holes, and cleaning out the greenhouse. But we didn’t make them work the whole time. We had some great meals at The Moosehead Café and were treated to a *real* Texas barbecue including brisket (which had to be defined to our “southern” friends) with all the trimmings. We also had a wonderful worship service which included the dedication of the property, prayer for the ministry, and great music. The work that was accomplished was incredible; but the Agrimissions family working side by side, the sweat, the laughter, and the nurturing of relationships was priceless.



We can be focused on God by loving the objects of His love—people. Not simply “enduring” their presence, but showing genuine love by encouraging, affirming, meeting physical and emotional needs, and living and working in a faith driven community. We must serve Him by serving others. (From “Think Like Jesus” by George Barna)

Gonzanama Gifts – Big Bang for a few Bucks

When we were in Ecuador in March and April, we took with us \$260 donated by a couple of churches from Texas and Mississippi. It was amazing and incredible to witness the things these gifts accomplished in the name of our Lord and Savior. Two classrooms were completed including putting in lights, windows, painting, and even paying the worker. At the INNFA in Gonzo, we purchased much needed school supplies and books for the classes and replace necessary cooking items for the kitchen.

What a witness! If only you could be with us during these times to see the faces of the children. Once you see their faces – you will never be the same – promise.

Where to Next?

We are headed to South Carolina to speak in Givhans, then on to Norcross, Atlanta for meetings at The Mission Society.

Douglas will be going to the Agricultural Center in Paraguay with Larry Williams the end of June.

We meet with dear, long-time friends to speak with their church group in the San Marcos, Texas area the first of July and the end of July we will be in Missouri with friends involved with IHOP (International House of Prayer).

The last two weeks of August we take off for Paraguay again for three weeks in order for Doug to begin the training of the future director of the Agricultural Center.