

# "WHAT WAS GOD THINKING?"

By Shelby Shore

**What was God thinking** when He gave a vision of a Youth Building at Esperanza y Reforma (NCYM Mexico Mission in Matamoros) to a group of NC young people doing Bible School? They had no materials, no building skills – especially for Mexico, and very little money. However, with the help of their leaders, they chose a spot in the corner of the property, laid out a foundation and dug footing for a building.

**What was God thinking** when He inspired Mike Wall and those young people to build that little “bridge” walkway to get to the church property? Now, for the rain when I was there, that bridge was way too short to keep me out of the stinking water. But on that VBS day, those youth told God they needed Him to hold off on the determined rain clouds for them to lay those blocks; and a trouble-making Mexican boy watched doubtfully for God to work – and He did. The little bridge was completed without rain and is still there and reminds us all of God’s power.

**What was God thinking** when He so impressed upon Mike the deplorable living conditions of some people in that poor community that he just won’t leave us alone? Mike is almost *obsessed* with the idea of somehow improving their homes. So much so, that he convinced Joe, a Spanish speaking friend of his, FDS Coordinator, Wiley Shore and Superintendent, John Porter *who secretly wanted to check-in on the Mission anyway* to go check out the community and share his dream/burden.

A lot has happened since then. These concerns were all in addition to the regular work of NCYM Mission Committee, but could contribute to our ministry there. A group of Friends were called together to discuss, pray and dream in an effort to discern God’s direction. The Mexico Task Force, chaired by Kevin Smitherman, continues this work.

**What could God have been thinking** when He got me involved? It was not my choice! Don’t get me wrong, I have always very much appreciated the work of the Missions Committee and NCYM work in Mexico. But when Wiley, later, asked me to go with him, my answer was “Why?? I don’t want to go to Mexico; I don’t speak Spanish!” But ...

The Task Force decided that the first work was to complete the Youth Building and that couldn’t be done until we dried off the lot. Wiley (*who says “and Shelby”*) and Walter, who speaks conversational Spanish, were asked to go. And there I was, still not convinced... In the meantime, doctors found that our son, Franklin, had some disturbing spots on his lung and liver! Many prayers went up. Several medical tests were ordered. More prayers. Some were, “Lord if you want us to do this Mexico work, you have to take care of Franklin.” So, when the last tests were completed, there was no spot. And I said “Lord, this ride in the whale is too hard. I guess I’m ready to go to Nineveh (*Mexico*).”

I guess the Lord knew that I would see and hear things that the men wouldn’t. Once we got there, we could each see our individual tasks. While they were looking at the big picture, which was bigger and more complicated than was originally thought, the Lord must have known that my heart would ache as I watched the women and children tiptoe in the mucky/sewer street water, heard brooms sweeping rain water out of the houses, saw rain water run down the inside of our church and saw a drainage ditch full of trash. I also saw stores

and businesses along the streets where materials could be purchased (*found the Mexicans had good things and we didn’t need to always go back across the border*), noticed the cement roofs ever-so-slightly sloping and found I could share love and communication without speaking Spanish. Jorge said “Finally someone come to help de people.” The Lord made sure I wouldn’t forget the plight of those people, especially the children, and left the smell of sewer on my car when, even after two washings, the guy back home says “Where have you been?!”

NOW, after many people worked hard, contributed funds and prayed, the lot is still dry, Youth Building built, the street sewer line repaired – additional line run down our street and connected to the church and near-by homes, some repairs (funded by Missions Committee) done on the church, a family across the street has a much improved house, a new house is in progress for the church treasurer’s family and “the people” are more involved. NCYM staff, who visited the mission in preparation for 2010 Bible School, says that from what they saw, next year “the people” can do VBS themselves.

What has happened? **HOPE**. As I worked on the new building, I saw the excitement of something better – the smiles, hand gestures, glowing faces and “Gracias, Gracias!”, all seemed to say God is in this place and His plan for me is better than the way I now live. Everyone who has been there to work in recent months says the same thing.

The recent accomplishments are amazing! The Mexico Task Force thanks you for your support. The Mexico work is a joint effort. Our work there is to help them help themselves. Our work here in NCYM is also a joint effort – to pray, especially, and to pull together funds to make this happen. The most urgent need right now is for funds to complete the home of Maria Elena (the meeting treasurer) and her husband, Rodrigo. They have three children, one of which has Downs Syndrome. Their house, which looks much like an old farm outbuilding, sits in a low place and is flooded every time it rains – so much that their furniture now sits on blocks. They have no money to build a house, but are willing and anxious to do labor. We are working the most cost effective way to get a new house for them, small by our standards. A Mexico contractor has raised the ground for the new house, poured foundation and done rough wiring, etc. The family has laid cement blocks for the walls and will probably do the stucco finish. Approximately 12 volunteers will go down the first of August to do a roof and some finish work and assist some other families who need just a little bit of help.

The Task Force needs at least \$5,000 to take the small team, finish the house and help a few families in the community. Also funds for a stove and refrigerator are needed for the new house.

NOW. **What was God thinking** when He asked you to help our Friends in Matamoros?

Send contributions to NCYM marked Mexico Task Force.

*Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me ...*



1 Chronicles 4:1