

Hal and Cheryl Large

Ministering in El Salvador

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When God called Jeremiah to speak his word to his people, he was appointed, "to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (*Jeremiah 1:9,10*). There were two stages in his ministry: to break down and then to build up. It is necessary first to plow the field before the seed is sown. I can cry out as did Jeremiah, "Your church, oh Lord, has been plowed as a field and become ruin" (*Jeremiah 26:18*). However, they were the hard clods of an unrepentant heart and a cauterized conscience that were plowed. What became ruin was our self-righteousness, pride and fleshly self-confidence. The year 2007 was an unforgettable year of revealing sin and bringing about repentance (*we had asked for it with much prayer and fasting the year before*) by the sovereign work of God, in grace and truth. It was a year of brokenness before God, not to be experienced and then forgotten, but to be treasured as now part of our very life. A new year has begun. The purpose of plowing is to sow the seed and receive fruit. The old is torn down to the very rock foundations that something totally new can be built in its place. The year 2008 is the year of building and planting in righteousness, mercy and faith.

Our theme for this year is "**Let Us Build A House For Our God**". It not only involves the purpose of raising a new church building on the land which, by God's grace, was purchased last year. It is also the year to build in our hearts, in our families and in our church. The ministries of the church are being set in order with structure and discipline. The theme of ordering and establishing a good foundation is felt even in the details of starting on time, educating the people to turn off cell phones, not talk in the back, not getting up during the service, taking the babies to the nursery, etc. etc. We are also dedicating Wednesday night meetings to ordering our homes according to God's will, in the power of the Holy Spirit, under the headship of Christ. Attendance has almost doubled on Wednesday night. People are getting involved in reaching out to the poor and needy with personal visitation, assistance and ministry - not as some program of the church but as the fruit of setting things right before God in their own spiritual life and walk. Pray for us as we build, bringing discipline and order into our lives and God's church, the fruit of obedient faith and Godly fear.

We have seen people come to know the Lord during these past months. Last night in my living room, Carlos (a pharmaceutical representative whose family owns a hospital) received Christ as his Savior. It is a long story but we have been ministering to his wife on and off for over three years and praying for his salvation. God took them both through a terrible experience to plow the hardened field of their hearts and so be able to sow the seed of repentance and faith.

Last week, I was in a hospital visiting Lillian, a member of our church who has cancer. During a Wednesday night meeting in January she thanked God and praised Jesus for caring for her during the past year when the doctors said she wouldn't survive. She has suffered much in her life in poverty with two small children and an alcoholic husband. Her greatest fear was to die and leave her children alone. The very next day after her testimony (as if Satan was taking vengeance upon her), she had a convulsion, lost consciousness and was taken to the hospital. New tumors were found in her brain. She lapsed into a coma. However, her husband, Ernesto, came to her side during her suffering and that next Sunday in church he received Christ as his Savior. Ernesto was with me last week as I was visiting Lillian. She had spent weeks hooked up to machines. Her body was emaciated by the disease but she had regained

consciousness, was growing stronger and last week there was a big smile on her face as she looked at me and Ernesto. I thought of all she had gone through and how the Lord had used her suffering to bring her husband to Christ. Yesterday, she was released from the hospital. Ernesto has not touched a drop of liquor and is growing in the Lord. On Sunday, they plan to be in church together as a family.

This last Sunday, the father of César (the young man who runs our sound system) received Christ as his Savior. Two weeks ago, a couple we had contacted in January when an evangelistic team from Greenwood, Indiana was visiting in their neighborhood, received Christ as their Savior after attending services for three weeks. During that same campaign, the sister-in-law of Dr. Caceros (a member of our church) was saved in one of our services. Her husband and children were attending as well but have not as yet received Christ. Leonel is starting a weekly Bible study with these two families to share the love of Christ. He also has started another small group for evangelistic purposes with Martha Palma (a widow in our church) whose grown children have shown an interest in the Gospel. Pray for souls to be saved.

Jon and Kelly visited a country school in a poor community near Santa Ana just two days ago and the doors were opened to us by the Director to hold a VBS with their 190 students in August. This is a school we have visited with evangelistic teams on a number of occasions and God is putting the burden on many hearts to reach out to the poor and needy. Kelly will be teaching English twice a month at the school so that she can meet the parents. May God open doors for the sharing of the Gospel in this community. Its name is Chaparrón (which means a torrential rain or downpour). Jon has also restructured the Bible Institute into eight modules and started



classes with seven students. This month, another Bible institute is beginning in a sister church in San Salvador with Jon's assistance. Jon and Kelly have been such a blessing to us and to the church, meeting every two weeks with the young marrieds and every two weeks with those couples engaged to be married. (We have five couples now making marriage plans.)

The men have started meeting together on Saturday morning at 6:00 for prayer, devotions and to encourage each other to be priests in their homes. We also had an overnight camping trip for the fathers and sons two weeks ago with seven visitors present. The ladies had an overnight prayer meeting on Friday with the theme of forgiveness. They are ministering to each other in prayer and coming before God with thirsty hearts. God is putting in their hearts the burden to care for the poor and sick with food and clothing distribution, as well as providing school materials to those in need. A new ministry has been started to visit in the government hospital twice a week with a team who goes from bed to bed sharing the love of Christ, praying for the sick and proclaiming the Gospel. They have seen many saved.

We now have a master plan for the construction of the new church building. It was in February of 2006 when I wrote you concerning the purchase of the first property. You remember how God put in my heart to trust Him to pay for the entire property, by faith, in a period of three months. In three months and two weeks, over \$70,000 was raised. It was truly a miracle of God, accomplished by His power. Last year, the second property was purchased; again, according to the command of God, paid for in a little over six months. We now have before us the challenge of raising up a building for the glory of God. I am still waiting on God for the exact plan, how He would have us see this accomplished. I know it



will involve faith in Him and be something impossible for us to accomplish in our own strength and wisdom. Pray for me as I wait upon the Lord. The false prophet is he who speaks according to his own heart's desire, saying "the Lord says" when the Lord has not, in fact, given him His word or showed him the way. This must be a work of God through His people, according to what He wants to teach us. He knows what is best. We want to

build upon the foundation that is Jesus Christ so that all eyes will look upon Him and adore Him. Pray that God would give me a submissive and attentive heart which listens and receives His command. For those who receive this letter by the internet, I am attaching a file that shows the design of the three-story building which has office and storage space on the first floor, six classrooms for 180 children on the second floor and an auditorium for 220 people on the third floor. In my heart, I am asking God to provide for the construction of this house dedicated to Him during this year of 2008.

Lastly, I would like to mention a situation that would solicit your prayers and giving, as God would direct you. While staying a night on the beach, we met Iliana, the granddaughter of the man who keeps the house and is a poor fisherman. He is a strong and faithful Christian man, as is his daughter and son-in-law. This three-year old child suffered high fevers as an infant that left her mentally retarded and affected the development of the muscles in her legs. She is as yet unable to walk. The condition is something which could be corrected with an operation. I have a good friend, Dr. Roberto Pineda, who is an orthopedic surgeon. I contacted Roberto and then took the family to see him. He told me he wouldn't charge anything, but the hospital costs would be \$300. She will also need another operation in the future. I was able to raise the \$300 and she was operated on last week with great success. However, the hospital and medical costs were over \$600 and she also faces another operation in the near future. If you would like to help this little girl receive treatment, please contact me and we will use the funds for that purpose.

Thank you for your prayers for us. Please remember to pray for God's covering over us as we minister. Pray for health and healing for our bodies. There is always the price to pay in our flesh as we are announcing Christ's victory over Satan and sin. Our car blew its engine on December 17th and we still have not been able to get the parts to repair it. I hope to pick up a used cylinder head next week while in Birmingham, Alabama for a Latin American Directors' Meeting being held at World Reach. We really need to replace the car. Also, our daughter, Lisa Sangster, and our daughter-in-law, Michele Large, are both expecting to give birth to girls the first part of April and we ask you to remember them in your prayers. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and lift us up before God in prayer. Pray we may speak boldly, in God's Spirit, as we ought to speak. May Christ be glorified in our lives.

Yours for Souls,

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