



Dear Friend in Christ,

This past February was the 10th straight year that Wooddale Church sent a short-term ministry team to Guatemala. The team leaders asked us to be translators again this year. This has been something that we have enjoyed doing with the Wooddale Church's short-term ministry teams the last eight years.

This year was an anniversary year for Wooddale. A special celebratory service was held in one of the communities the Sunday afternoon after we arrived in Guatemala. One of the men who spoke was the man who has led each year's short-term ministry team from Wooddale Church. We asked Jerry if he would give us a copy of what he said—as what Jerry said more and more typifies what those who participate on a short-term ministry team are discovering. Following are short vignettes from what Jerry said:



Steve making a friend/being a friend at a construction work site.

Using Philippians 1:3-6 Jerry began: *To all the believers in Christ Jesus from Santiago Lago Atitlan, San Lucas, San Pedro, Trincha, Cayacha, Panajachel, together with the Pastors and deacons: Grace and peace to you from our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

I thank God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident in this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

These are beautiful words. They seem to reflect the relationship we have had over the years. I thank God every time I remember you.

I, like a lot others, have fond memories of you and these memories bring smiles to our faces. No wonder for we have had a wonderful 10 years working together in partnership in a multitude of ministries in numerous cities across this beautiful lake and beyond. We have shared earthquake trembles together, slept on the same church floors, rode hours in the back of pick-up trucks, shared laughter and so much more. This we would not have experienced if we did not make the trip here to be with you, side by side in ministry.

Upon our first arrival here many years ago we were told that our ministry was well placed and needed and that we would be a blessing to the people, but yet in the end we were more richly blessed. It has been wonderful.

It has been wonderful because it has come from pure joy in serving. I don't think this was an immediate outcome, but rather a process. As we served and worked alongside you we began to see another perspective – you taught us how to be more relational. For most of us, we came to get the task completed for which we were assigned. What really counted were the relationships we forged with each one of you and not the specific work – and we have been blessed!

Thank you again for your prayers and for your financial help that has given us the blessing to also experience what Jerry shared in his remarks. Those participating on short-term ministry teams are having their lives impacted, they are influencing host country people, they are encouraging field team missionaries, they are becoming resource people for their own churches, and they are joining mission agencies. We are looking forward to the possibility of coming alongside other short-term ministry teams who are planning to go to countries where there is a missionary unit who they support. We do hope that if you have never visited another country, that you will be able to do so through a short-term ministry team. God bless you.

Sincerely, in Christ,

God Uses Simple Things!

Jim and Marty Gleason moved to Asia a few years ago only to discover a remarkable fact: The Christians there had not been introduced to the idea of small group interaction. All their fellowship meetings were conducted exactly like miniature worship services!

This was more than a matter of mere methodology. The Word of God was not making its way into the hearts of the believers like it needed to. Once the Gleasons began demonstrating how people could share their own insights from the Bible and pray for each other on personal matters, God began to move in exciting ways.

One pastor, Tula Sing, was so excited to learn about this discussion format that he changed from the teaching-only method he had always used for the family's devotions. His wife, Chandra, and all the kids truly enjoyed being able to talk about their personal lessons of faith.

For two years, one of Pastor Sing's nephews had participated in the family devotions, yet had never been impacted by the gospel. But after just two weeks of this new openness in sharing and learning together, the young man placed his faith in Christ for salvation! He said that he now heard and saw for himself that God was at work in each person's life, and he wanted the same for himself.



Jim and Marty Gleason, OC missionaries in Asia.

This method has been so revolutionary that Jim now travels around conducting seminars about small group ministries. He has also written some group Bible study materials that are being used by many churches. Jim's teaching does not need to be technical, for he is merely unleashing a biblical model of ministry and the Holy Spirit is doing the rest.

Jim's comment should encourage all of us to reach out and share what we've learned: "God is good and He can use the weakest person to do a work for Him if we will just let Him lead."

Do you ever wonder if God is calling you to become a friend and teacher like Jim? If you would like to explore the possibility of becoming an OC missionary and bringing life-changing insights to eager people, we would love to hear from you. We sponsor orientation seminars on Saturdays throughout the year in different parts of the USA, and they're called "Worldview." Why not call us today, or view upcoming dates and locations at www.oci.org/worldview.htm.

Thank you for your prayer and financial partnership. By standing by your OC missionary, you are bringing hope to those in faraway lands.

Warmest thanks,



*Greg Gripentrog
OC President*