

November, 2007

As the holiday season approaches, many of us conjure up thoughts of festivities with family and friends ... colorful decorations around home and around town ... and the excited faces of our children or grandchildren as they open Christmas presents. It is also the time when we acknowledge that we have been graciously blessed and are called to generously share our blessings with others who have so little.

Over the last decade or so, numerous mission teams from Peace Lutheran Church and Christ Community Church in Charlottesville (as well as other congregations as widespread as New York and Texas) have ventured south to bring medical, educational and construction services to a vastly expanding Christian community centered in Tegucigalpa, Honduras ... but actually spread widely throughout Central America. Gerizim ... founded by Pastor Roberto Ventura (and named after Mount Gerizim, about 30 miles north of Jerusalem, which in Samaritan tradition is the location of the Garden of Eden and the place where Abraham brought Isaac for sacrifice) ... has developed into an energetic hub of Christian mission. It has birthed about 120 additional congregations throughout rural Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and the entire Caribbean basin. Many of the pastors of these emerging congregations have been raised up in the Spirit but have little if any theological training. One of the dreams of Pastor Roberto and his staff of clergy and lay leaders in Tegucigalpa has been to build a facility on their church compound where they could bring in groups of these pastors for continuing education. In 2006, one of our mission teams serving alongside the people of Gerizim in medical and construction work, learned of this dream, and in the spring of 2007 our next mission team included an architect (Enoch Snyder) who spent several days gathering their hopes and dreams and vision and developing plans for a facility to meet their needs. Enoch subsequently returned to Honduras in August of 2007 to review and fine tune the plans with the Gerizim leaders who were thrilled that God might bring their dream to fruition.

Members of Peace Lutheran Church who have participated in global mission trips (especially those to Honduras) have committed to partnering with our brothers and sisters of Gerizim to build this facility (we will raise the funds ... they will raise up the laborers). The Gerizim Mission Home (as we're calling it at this point) will be a multi-purpose facility of two adjacent buildings with each having dormitory style sleeping capacity for 14 to 16 people (so both male and female groups can be there at the same time). There will be bathrooms, a kitchen and dining area, and multiple meeting rooms. There will be an apartment for a longer-term educator either for the clergy training or for the children's school which is also conducted on the Gerizim compound. The versatile meeting room spaces will actually be large enough to hold medical clinics or dental or vision clinics as well as having educational programs. We believe that God

is calling us to this mission to expand his kingdom in Central America ... and we are inviting (encouraging!) you to join us in this mission.

Our commitment is to raise \$125,000 ... \$100,000 for the construction costs and \$25,000 to subsidize travel expenses for mission teams to augment and supervise the construction work every six to eight weeks. A comparable facility here in the States would cost several times this amount ... so our dollars are in effect multiplied several times in their effectiveness in Honduras.

We can continue to send mission teams to Honduras (and hopefully we will), but by empowering and equipping the emerging church leaders through this Gerizim Mission Home we can effectively expand God's work exponentially in this region.

Please join us in prayer and financial support for the Gerizim Mission Home . Please make your checks payable to Peace Lutheran Church (and note on the memo line: "Gerizim Mission Home.") 1510 Broad Crossing Road; Charlottesville, Virginia 22911.

Thank you.

Grace & Peace,

David Poole, Christie Ridenhour, Michael Cernik, Russ Melton, David Veliky, Eric Schmitz, Jim Cudahy, and Enoch Snyder.