

Insight Trip Report June 21 – 28, 2016

1 TRIP OBJECTIVE

- To review all aspects of our partnership with TEARS Ministries, introduce three new Canadian team members to the local leaders and to explore areas of future collaboration.
- Participants included Pastor Keith D'Eall, Judy Shelstad, Jay Campo Pastor of a Spanish Church in Calgary, Jim Klaas Author of 40 Days of Discipleship from Toronto, Vicki Janzen, Don Dufault.
- Rod Davis provided us with a ministry overview upon arrival and this was followed up during the remainder of our stay with one-on-one meetings with each of the leaders and meetings with the TEARS Foundation Board and church leaders.
- This reports will cover each of the initiatives currently supported and a summary of the future ones that TEARS Ministries is contemplating. Keith will be reporting separately on the church-to-church initiatives that he discussed separately with local pastors, Rod, Jay Campo and Jim Klaas.

2 TEARS EL CAMINO SCHOOL – CHELO AND JUDITH

- Plans are to continue as a quasi-private school, meaning that the government will be paying for the teacher salaries (once substitute teachers are replaced by full-time teachers sent to them by the government); have full control over their curriculum, and have minimum involvement with the teachers' union (that is my understanding at least). The past issues with the area superintendent and the union are in the process of being resolved following the May election. Agreements at the national level are being negotiated with the Ministry of Education (MOE). Chelo feels optimistic that a new area superintendent will be appointed as these tend to be political appointments. They are still dependent on MOE to send them teachers, but they can interview teachers and have the right to hire and fire. Eight full-time teachers are need to be hired by the start of the next school year to replace the current substitutes.
- The school has 18 teachers and 6 assistants. At the end of June, 2016 they graduated 387 students who were following full-day classes. Topics covered include academics, health, math, English (starting in grade 4), sports, art and a computer lab. The teaching complement of 18 includes 8 substitutes who are not paid by the state. During year-end interviews many of the substitute teachers expressed very positive views about the school and their teaching experience. Two of them renewed their faith as a result.
- The school year just completed focused on discipleship. A 4-day camp in mid-May resulted in 25 conversions. Greenville cancelled their team trip due to the Zika virus, so the school ran their own camp. Family outreach started 2 years ago with parents which involves bible reading and testimonies.

- The school will add grade 11 starting in September, 2016 and offer a polytechnic component – computers, language and electricity, all in an effort to provide employable skills for student when they graduate.
- We were presented with long-term plans to build a new high school for about 130 full-time students grades 7 – 12 on the TEARS lands. The two-story building is estimated at C\$420,000 and would include facilities to technical training. No doubt this will be discussed further when Chelo comes to Canada in September. This new school would then make room for the lower grades in the existing buildings.
- Overall, the school appears to be operating very well in the increasingly crowded facilities and with substitute teachers.

3 TEARS WATER SYSTEM - OBED

- The water plant is operating profitably and in a sustainable way. Current reserves for supplies, maintenance and expansion are currently at \$6,500. In the past year the physical location of the distribution point has moved from the front of the school to the back. This move was very well implemented by Obed with little loss of production. The new space is large, painted in dark blue giving it the look of a clean environment, and houses the water purification equipment, storage tanks and spare bottles and related supplies. Vehicle access is now possible via the lane between the two school/church buildings. All government licenses and permits are in place.
- Monthly reports were revised with Obed to help record monthly and cumulative production and financial statistics. For the first six months of 2016 a total of 140,721 gallons (28,150 - 5-gallon jugs) were produced for a monthly average of 23,454 gallons (4,690 jugs). About 5% of the water is donated to the school and the community. The balance is sold at 20 pesos for a 5-gallon jug, or about half the local 'colmado' retail price. Employment is created for two full-time employees, both of whom are leaders in the El Camino church.
- Water distribution to the Soto community continues to be an economic challenge in spite of efforts to find a solution. Currently, water sold to the Soto Church at 10 pesos is marked up to 25 pesos, but even then, the transportation costs are too high to make it viable. Hector again requested funding for a truck. Only 8,550 gallons (1,710 jugs) were moved to Soto to the end of June, 2016. We reviewed the economics with Hector and Obed and could not justify the capital cost of a truck. Soto church needs a marketing effort to increase volumes. A suggestion was left with Obed to consider donating the water to Soto to help increase their margin and incentive.
- Expansion of the current system. Two options are being considered: buying a small truck to deliver water locally to colmados; and start a production line to fill and sell water in 500 ml bottles. The economics for the truck are similar as for Soto, namely that moving water is likely not profitable at current volumes and pricing. The 500ml bottle option seems very profitable as buyers would come to the distribution point to pick up their orders, and the capital and operating costs would be minimal. Plant capacity is estimated by Obed to be as high as 180,000 gallons per month. This may be hard to verify, but there is no doubt that 2x or 3x current production is well within reach with no need to purchase any of the purification equipment. Only a small bottle-filling line (\$3,500) and attendant supplies would be needed.

4 HAITIAN BIBLE INSTITUTE - HECTOR

- The Institute mandate is to train lay pastors. Courses are offered every Saturday. The fourth group of 12 students graduated in April, 2016. The curriculum is teaching systematic theology in French and Creole. Graduates are sent out to work with one or more of the 37 house churches within the Soto Community that are under Hector's supervision. Some have closed due to the visa requirements of the Dominican government. Bible students all have visas for one year that are renewed in June each year and must have tent-making jobs in addition to their pastoral roles as the church is not able to provide full-time support.
- Likely funds to support the Institute will be requested this fall for the coming year.

5 SOTO CHURCH — HECTOR

- We did not have an opportunity to attend a Sunday service so our conversations with Hector centered primarily on the two following items:
- Soto Development Center. A grant request previously submitted last spring provides all the details of this project. This is still a project that Hector would like to pursue. The Soto Church School previously funded has shut down and the classrooms are currently empty. Hector would like to use this space for a Holistic Development Center and offer children a number of after-school programs such as arts, health, computers, sports, meals and a place to form community. Please see our Dropbox under Next Board meeting for details.
- The second initiative is to have the property of the church transferred into their name. It is currently owned by an organization called Meeting God in Missions, a Texas-based NGO. Apparently the founder of this mission is close to retirement and is supportive of this initiative. To have title transferred to Association des Eglises Chrétienne de Soto requires changes to the board of the Soto church as a couple of former members have returned to Haiti. A budget of RD\$18k – 20K was mentioned. We expect a grant request to be made this fall.

Don Dufault

July 19, 2016