

THE MISSION OF

Casa Salazar

NEWSLETTER



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Chichicastenango, Guatemala C.A.
January-March, 2010

Reflection of 2009: A Year of Preperation
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----> **Why do we do missions?**

Obedience and to see God's name be glorified. We are everyday witnesses of God's provision, faithfulness, grace and mercy . It makes us want to share with everyone about His work and how He uses people to do things.

"For in Him we live and move and have our being." Acts 17:28

"For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me and for the Gospel will save it."

Mark 8:35



REFLECTION of 2009: *A Year of Preparation*

February, 2009:

Additions of laundry room and bathroom were completely finished and we moved into Casa Salazar. The additions were completely paid for, because the Lord provided!

Outdoor improvements around Casa Salazar: painting all of the house inside and out, new driveway, retaining wall to create a front yard, fence around entire property as well as fence for safety at edge of retaining wall.

We were blessed with several mission teams working on the above projects at Casa Salazar.

We have been able to continue our relationship with the Lemoa Orphanage and spent time with the kids in various activities throughout the year—mainly swimming whenever the weather would allow.

Jose began a new part time job overseeing concierges for a medical research program.

July 2009:

We were blessed by seeing and speaking with our Missouri supporters. We are thankful for each of them!

Fall 2009:

Shari had the privilege to return to teaching: 3 kindergarten missionary kids and 8 Guatemalan English students. She also taught math to upper elementary and middle school.

Approval for Casa Salazar by the Health Department—Important step in our paperwork.

November, 2009:

English Camp—7th year for Potter's House Ministry (located near Guatemala City Dump) to send their youth here to Chichi as a reward for the successful school year.

We have been overjoyed to see a "prodigal son" being drawn back to the Lord. Huge answer to prayer.

Two other missionary friends had baby girls as well! Rebekah has special friends only months apart from her.

Rebekah LaVonne was born on Dec. 21, 2009.

What a blessing she is!

There have been times of suffering as well, which we equally praise the Lord for—His purpose is always the best and He continues to grow us closer to Him during these times.

Rebekah LaVonne!

We were able to experience the miracle of life through the pregnancy and the birth of our daughter. We just stare at her and are amazed at this miracle. God truly is amazing to have formed her in my womb and will continue developing here now that she is here on this earth! She joined us on December 21. Shari and Jose found out 3 days before this that the doctor recommended having a c-section. Rebekah was born at 10:22 am and weighed 7 lbs 9.5oz. She was 19 in. long. She has dark hair like her daddy. We are so thankful that everything went so smoothly and that we were well taken care of in the hospital here. We are enjoying this special time of getting to know our little daughter.



A Story for Rebekah

Because we live so far from the hospital (3 hour drive) and the conditions of the roads are never predictable we were thankful to find a place to stay in the city before Shari's due date. We packed up our car and started out early on Dec. 15 because we had been warned that there would be a strike blocking the road that day. Unfortunately this group had started early and we reached the point of where the strike was taking place just 5 or 10 minutes after it had started. Now these types of strikes are typical in Guatemala, yet we had managed to avoid ever getting in the middle of one. This was our first "eye witness" account. The people striking were teachers wanting the government to increase their annual budget. Unlike in the U.S., the strikers are allowed to block off the main highway so that no one can get through. There was a police truck parked at the side of the road, but they were not interfering. Because of my condition of being 9 months pregnant, I thought maybe they would let me through—we were on the way to our doctor's appointment. Jose talked to one of the men in charge hoping to allow us to pass, but to no avail. The man was actually pretty threatening so we thought it best to turn around and go back home. Thankfully teachers in Guatemala only work half a day, so the strike ended at 1pm just like a normal school day! We were able to return home and then headed back out after the strike was over to still be able to make our late afternoon doctor's appointment. I was truly thankful that I was not actually in labor when this whole incident happened! Jose just said, "Well now we have an interesting story to tell Rebekah someday." That morning I had prayed and told the Lord that I wanted to glorify Him this day in my words, actions, and thoughts. Well as frustrating as these types of inconveniences can be, and after shedding a few tears, I had to repent for my thoughts and reflected instead on all of the things I could be thankful for even in that situation. Most of all I was thankful that I was not in labor at that moment and unable to get to the hospital! We were able to make it safely to the city and Rebekah was born less than a week later.



Casa Salazar



photo courtesy of Casa Salazar

- 1. Health Department:** As we mentioned in our previous email, we were very happy to have our inspection completed. Then we had to send that approval to the health department in Guatemala City. We assumed it would be a quick final approval, but as we have seen nothing seems to be very quick. The health department was on strike for about a month and so nothing was being approved out of their office. Thankfully right before Christmas they did end the strike and let us know that our paperwork is completely finished with them.
- 2. PEI: Education Department:** This was not a simple step. They required about 80 pages of information focusing on our educational plan for our children, especially before they enter school. We met all of their requirements and they approved us in January! Only one more step to go!
- 3. CNA: National Council of Adoptions:** This is the organization that gets the final say in approving us so that we can officially open our children's home. They also have our paperwork already turned in to them and had been waiting for the health department and education departments' approvals, which they now know we have. They will have to make a trip out to Chichi to inspect our home as well. Jose attended a seminar put on by the CNA recently and was encouraged by the changes they are making in children's homes for the better of the children. We pray that they get to us soon, because this is our last step!

As always it is hard to estimate how long before we are able to receive our first children into Casa Salazar. But based on what we are waiting on, it really could be soon. Please continue to pray for the first children that we will receive in our home. So much preparation has gone into making it a home for them, we pray that we will be guided by the Lord in our daily work in their lives as well.

Prayer:

We are so thankful for all the Lord provided in 2009!!! He met all of our needs and more! We are thankful to the supporters who were used of the Lord! Thank you!

Casa Salazar paperwork: Praise the Lord for our approvals by the Health Department and Education Department (PEI). We pray that we will soon have our final approval by the National Council of Adoptions (CNA).

Which children to receive first into our home

Our Neighbor Children—to know the Lord/ Language barriers in communicating with them

The youth from camp as they begin a new school year (end of January): That they would have the determination and strength to do well even in difficult life circumstances.

Alcoholism has a hold on so many in Chichi--please pray for freedom through Christ

Missionary Community in Chichi--That we would be unified and be light in the midst of darkness—Women's and Men's Bible Studies have started up again. Please pray for growth!

Sacrifice...

Shari SALAZAR

I have been living in Guatemala for more than 7 years. I have always felt like it was easier for me to be here than it is for some missionaries. I did not have some of the same “sacrifices” that others have had. For example I moved here right after college, so I didn’t have to sell a home or give away a lot of possessions. Yes, things here are different than the U.S., and I cannot not get some of the same things here as there, but I really wouldn’t call giving up Mountain Dew a sacrifice. In the beginning when I came here I thought I might have to sacrifice by being a single missionary for the rest of my life, but then Jose was brought into my life.

Often when I would hear others talking about the sacrifices of being on the mission field, I could not relate. I love this country—the people and the landscape. I think Guatemala is beautiful. I really enjoy living here, and even though I miss my family, I had adjusted to living so far away. But then I had a daughter... I was thankful my mom made the trip out here to be with Rebekah as a newborn. However, dropping my mom off at the airport was one of the hardest things I have done. At the moment it hit me that I was making a big sacrifice for my daughter as well. Of course I had thought about it before, but truthfully I had focused more on the birthing part—should I give birth to her in the U.S. or Guatemala? I had not focused on much after that.

But I realized how I was sacrificing my family for her and she would have no say in this. She will not get the chance to go to Grandma’s house once a week or grow up with her many cousins. This is something that I have been struggling with these weeks since my mom’s visit. I have cried at how this will cost her. Yet, Jose and I could not be more sure of our calling here. We know this is where the Lord has us and He of course knew this aspect of it. So I need to trust Him and His purpose for Rebekah’s life. If this is where God has called Jose and I to be, then this is where He wants Rebekah as well. He knew her before she even left my womb and this is His plan for her.

So the question is, “Do I trust my Savior?” I must love Him more than my family and rest in Him even though it is hard. I know that as believers, we are guaranteed suffering, so I guess I should be surprised that I haven’t had more before this, instead of balking at one sacrifice.

“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.” Luke 14:26-27

Casa Salazar web page:

<http://www.missionsfrontier.org/casasalazar.html>

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We would love to hear from you!



top left: Rebekah lying next to a fresh carrot from market

top right: Portrait of a young Guatemalan boy

middle: The family of three, at Casa Salazar: Jose, Shari & Rebekah (She will not be a single child for long!)

bottom left: Camp Lake Trip, 2009

bottom right: Neighbors!

