

Guatemala at a Glance

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WE WALK AND WORK, we choose and hope – now. In this moment, in this place. While hope keeps its eyes on the future, hope also keeps feet planted firmly on the ground and hands thick in the mix of life lived now. Why? Because the journey begins here. - John Indermark

For us, this is at the heart of what it means to **“bring about that beautiful order of things”** (U.S. Region/Guatemala Mission Statements). We do choose to have a communal presence in Guatemala, a presence that speaks of hope in the face of outrageous human rights’ abuses, spiralling violence especially against women, a proliferation of social problems and corruption at every level of government. At our Advent prayer table, we kept each of these concerns very present, and now, with you, we embrace with Christmas hope, the journey to which God calls each of us.



At the close of 2010, we offer a few reflections on Guatemala’s reality:

⇒ The U.N. Development Program sadly places Guatemala in first place in Latin America with the highest incidence of chronic “disnutrition” or a lack or absence of a nutritious diet for children under the age of 5.

⇒ Guatemala celebrates the 14th anniversary of the end of the 36-year civil war but, unfortunately, public opinion and journalist editorials agree that the country lost a great opportunity to establish a new social order, and the current enemies of peace (narco-trafficking, arms trafficking and human trafficking) have claimed more lives than the war.

⇒ There will be elections in 2011. The campaigns already have begun. The candidates don’t offer much hope that changes will be made, and the sad reality is that whoever is elected usually only gains about 10 percent of the popular vote.

Closer to home in our local area of La Labor, *“we walk and work, we choose and hope - now,”* even in the face of a local government which did not fulfil its obligation to grant local funds to the education Institute. Both the health project and Institute closed out the year with celebrations, which seemed a hopeful choice in the face of so many uncertainties.

Perhaps the greatest word of hope for us has been the incredible response of so many to our “miracle” fund-raising campaign. We are close to \$90,000 received, and we know that other monies have been pledged. An amazing thing to consider, Guatemalans have raised one-third of that money. We are just a few days from the feast of the Three Kings, those who came with gifts and acknowledgment of God’s great miracle. And so we, too, await the miracle-gift of reaching our goal, which enables us to continue a ministry of service to some of God’s neediest.

While we are physically present here, offering service, never doubt that each of you are a part of these ministries, through your support, your prayer and your embrace of God’s call. May each of us and all of us continue to *“... walk and work, choose and hope — now”* and into 2011. Thanks from both of us.

Kris and Dani