

THE CORNERSTONE FOUNDATION

"...the stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." Mt. 21:42

18384 W. Lake Dr, Saucier, MS 39574

Ph./ FAX: 228 328 1579 or (toll free) 877 277 8663

website: www.crstone.org

e-mail: kathleen@crstone.org

April 2013

"And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven:"

Genesis 28:12

A bridge is a three dimensional metaphor made of solid stuff. Depending upon your perspective, it can be a thing of utility, a functional line connecting two points. It can be a point of punctuation, a slender hyphen in the passage of life, or perhaps a point of reference, like the dash between the dates on a gravestone. A bridge is a symbol of reconciliation, connecting two sides. It can be a thing of beauty, complete and whole in its unity of form and function, or a thing of tragedy when it fails or falls into disuse. I know a funny story about a bridge nearby. Well, it is "funny" more in the sense of strange, in the way these stories from the campo often are.

Twenty-two years or so ago, when we first arrived here, the bridge over the Papaloteca River, just to the east of Jutiapa, was a railroad bridge. The Standard Fruit Company had built it, and still ran trains, with boxcars converted to carry passengers down the line to the east towards Balfate. There were no guardrails, no solid deck, just railroad ties, the narrow gauge track, and 1" x 12" planks laid end-to-end on either side of the tracks. If you had to drive a car across the bridge (the only bridge across the Papaloteca that could get you to Balfate) you had better not stray off of those planks. In those days, most every day, there were women washing clothes in the river under the shadow of the bridge (now they've moved up stream). The reason they moved--or at least the story that I've heard-- is that there was a farmer walking home across the bridge one morning, still three sheets to the wind from too much guaro (moonshine) the night before. He was weaving along, trying to stay on the planks, when he fell off the bridge, about 35 feet to the water's edge at that point. Bizarrely and sadly, he landed on one of the washerwomen, and she was killed.

The drunk man survived. Neither the sudden death of a woman innocently washing clothes, nor a drunk causing such an injury is funny. They're both tragic. That is just how most of these strange stories out here go. It makes them all hard to explain.



The Jutiapa bridge in more recent years

Well, the family of the washerwoman wanted some kind of redress from the courts for the loss of their loved one. They pressed charges. The drunk (now sober) actually showed up for the hearing before the judge. He told the family he was sorry but he didn't have any money. The family was not appeased by his apology and wanted the judge to impose a hefty fine. The farmer was as resourceful as he was intemperate, and he made the family an offer before the judge. He told them, "I tell you what, I'll stand down in the river beneath the bridge. One of you jump off the bridge and onto me, and we'll call it even." The judge thought this idea was so funny, that the intemperate farmer was let off with a negotiated fine. Every time I hear that story told among my neighbors out here, they all laugh or smile, then shake their heads and say, "que raro!" I think they are attracted to the irony in the strange turns that life takes.

Bob Lillard wrote a poem about bridges after crossing that very bridge the first time he came to see the place where we were building the hospital.

By the latter half of the 1990's the bridge had been converted, to some degree, for car traffic; but later the eastern end was washed away in a storm, and for those years only the makeshift footbridge to the eastern bank was usable. If you drove a vehicle, you had to ford the Papaloteca when it was low enough to cross. Bob saw the metaphors in a bridge. He wrote the poem after first crossing that broken bridge over the Papaloteca. He included that poem in the last sermon he ever wrote in this life, ten years later. That sermon, entitled "I am a Debtor" was found completed on his bedside table after his cardiac arrest. At the end of it, was the poem.

The City On A Hill

*A wild and untamed mountain side
On Colon's sandy shore,
Where palm trees sway, where monkeys play,
Where yearning people pass the day --
With very little hope.*

*He called his servants near and far
And set their hearts aflame
To build a city on a hill and act in Jesus' name.*

*Honduras land in pristine state
Where mountains soar, where rivers roar
And bridges built exist no more.
They've come to show that mighty span,
The bridge that's built from God to man.*

The last stanza of that poem is to be etched into his grave marker and placed where his grave now lies on a high point of land between the two deep ravines that lie between the hospital and the staff housing complex.

I received a letter last month from a friend, a nurse who reminded me that it was the tenth anniversary of the accident on one of the two cable footbridges that crossed the ravines at the time. She was on the bridge that day. Actually I hadn't forgotten. That tragedy of the failure of a bridge remains a pivotal point in her life and the lives of many who were there that day. About 18 people were gathered for a photo on that cable footbridge that day, far too many for what it had been designed for. With that much weight on the bridge, a small shift of someone's balance apparently set up a wave of self-compounding counter-reactions from those hanging onto the guard rails. The stress of the resultant torsional oscillation broke the bolts and welds that held the handrail anchors to their footings. (The actual support cables withstood the

load and, though unused, are still in place today.) Two people died as a result of that accident. Many more were injured. It was a sad and sobering time. The bridges were closed, partially dismantled, and have never been used since. A memorial cross has stood on that quiet island of high land between the ravines ever since. It was near that memorial cross that Bob was buried last year.

But though I have wanted to rebuild the bridges for the past 10 years, they have hung there for all of that time, patiently waiting for the right moment with enough money and enough energy to renew them, while the jungle grew up all around them. It finally looks like this is the right moment. But it will take more than a moment. We'll probably be working on the bridges for most of this year. Then, after more than 10 years, the places of service and work and life at Loma de Luz--the hospital complex and the housing complex--will no longer have a gulf between them.



bridge renewal in process

Over the next year new and better bridges will be put in place over those ravines (with the help of an excellent bridge engineer and the data collected from an after-action study). You see, it only takes a moment to tear down a bridge, a metaphorical one or a real one. It takes a lot longer to build one. I think it will be worth it though. Where else do you find a three dimensional metaphor made of solid stuff, a symbol of "that mighty span, the bridge that's built from God to man," a metaphor that will get you to the other side?

God's grace,

Jeff McKenney

Threat to Non-Profits in Honduras. As is so often the case in the world of bureaucracy--that world where complicated and voluminous laws that nobody has read get passed and where tribunals are set up to implement them--well, things are often a purgatorial mess. And "the devil," as the saying goes, "is in the details" (sometimes literally).

There has long been a problem of the abuse of non-profit status in Honduras. Big companies or political action committees often form an on-the-side organization for which they obtain a "non-profit" designation and which they organize and control and through which they launder money, bring in private jets or luxury items free of import tax, etc.

The outgoing government administration has decided to "do something about it." The something they decided to do is to cancel the non-profit status of all non-profits and make all of them reapply (which will bring a lot of money into government coffers via reapplication fees/cancelled tax exemptions, etc.). They are cancelling the non-profit status not just of suspicious organizations, but all of them--even those like us who were 100 % up to date on all filings and inspections. Then each one must re-apply & submit documentation of their work.

This would be just a minor headache if it only required us to submit the documentation we have always done up to this point. But the government appointed a new commission to oversee a new process, and they have come up with much more onerous **retroactive** documentation requirements in an entirely new addition to the process. The new addition not only requires each organization to give an annual report of what they did and plan to do (with corroborating spread sheets, financial reports, photos etc.), but, now, must also give a number to every person fed or given a pair of shoes, every person given any financial or educational opportunity, every person counseled, every kid involved in sports, every patient treated, every tree planted, ... with audit level documentation of every one of these things (with no guidelines as to what is considered adequate), **all retroactive for the past 4 years.** The oversight commission has been given wide discretion on whom to accept and whom not to, and the word on the street is this: 1.) The Political Action Committees/ Political NGO's are exempt from this reporting. 2.) Many big, wealthy companies or well-funded, non-religious organizations are finding ways around reporting or hiring firms to cook up the documentation, and 3.) It is the

churches in particular, many of them with decades of responsible work in the country, which are finding it impossible to document honestly the number of people counseled or fed or clothed.

The Cornerstone Foundation of Honduras (APAH) and Loma de Luz have been very diligent to keep good records and documentation. Even though what can be documented to this degree of scrutiny is probably only half of the actual impact of Loma de Luz, by God's grace, we are likely to be able to present overwhelming documentation of our positive impact. Please pray that we pass through these trials successfully.

But we are even more worried about our brothers and sisters doing Kingdom work here--both Honduran nationals and foreign missionaries. We fear for the churches in Honduras and for the less rigorously run charitable organizations here--many of whom have nonetheless been doing real and important work for the Kingdom for years. We fear that they just won't be able to come up with what the government is asking for and will be shut down permanently. Please pray for them.

News and Needs

Bilingual Primary School Expansion The Bilingual Kindergarten is growing into a Bilingual Primary School, by God's grace. And as it grows, so do buildings. This photo below was taken during a rainy day recess recently when some of the first graders and kindergartners at Escuela Bilingue El Camino explored the planned site for a new classroom building.



The school children inspecting their building site
We are intending to build a three story building there--one with 6 large classrooms (2 per floor

with a large central courtyard corridor between them). We estimate that the building will cost about \$140,000 when all is said and done. But we have a way in mind to build it in modules, allowing us to complete and use the ground floor classrooms (second and third grades) for only about \$50,000 while slowly growing the rest of the building. Please pray for God's provision and blessings for the school people-wise (the needed teachers, the children, the missionary and local staff, the children's families, etc.) and for His blessing on the building.

Construction engineer. We need an engineer who would be willing to come for a one week volunteer trip to survey the current school buildings and the planned future ones and to make a site survey to submit to the Honduran Ministry of Education for our licensing purposes.

Pediatric supplies. Dr. Judy has asked for pediatric supplies--ones which you will recognize as consumable ones. One constant need is newborn clothing for both normal-sized newborns and premature newborns (they don't have to be new--gently used are fine). Swaddle blankets, baby hats, and lanolin cream for breastfeeding moms are also things we need and use on a regular basis.

If you are interested in helping in any of these ways, contact Kathleen Jones at the Cornerstone US Office (her contact information is in this newsletter's letterhead).

Meet the Missionaries

For anyone who is new to the Cornerstone newsletters, we periodically include a "Meet the Missionaries" section featuring one of Loma de Luz missionaries or missionary families. We have done them in the order of appearance on the field (as long term missionaries). And this time we'd like to introduce you to the Tumlisons. Some of you, if you have served on a volunteer trip in the past few years, may have already met them in person; but for everyone who hasn't, it's our pleasure to introduce Joel and Cinthya and family.



The Tumlisons

Joel and Cinthya Tumlison joined us at Hospital Loma de Luz in November 2008. Joel, whose home town was Conway, AR, serves as a full-time family physician at the hospital and has met many needs and filled many voids in many non-medical areas as well. Cinthya, who is a mom and was educated as a teacher, hails from Tegucigalpa, Honduras. She, with Joel's help, leads *Honduras al Mundo (Honduras to the World)*, which is an effort to mobilize Honduran believers for missions to unreached parts of the world. They are blessed with three joyful and active children: Linda (3/29/05), Lisa (2/11/08), and Lucas (1/9/12).

*Our thanks to
you who read these letters...
to you who pray...
to you who serve.
May the Chief Shepherd and
Bishop of Our Souls refresh you
and give you a second wind.*

Sally Mahoney for Cornerstone Foundation

p.s. At the time this letter is going to press it appears that the initial (verbal) response from the government regarding our charitable status is positive, but keep praying; we have not received the written notification yet. Also, the McKenneys will be in the US during the month of May. Should you need to get in touch with them during that time, call Kathleen at the Cornerstone office.