

In February 2011, a team of men and women from Redeemer spent one week in Guatemala ministering their services in the local community. The following stories written by various team members are glimpses from their time there.

Jack Haynes:

During our trip to Guatemala to work with the Fe Viva ministry, I had the pleasure of meeting Serrita, a local girl that Fe Viva sponsors. Serrita is a very special girl. At a young age, she was diagnosed with a rare and severe form of osteoporosis. Not only are her hands and feet gnarled up and unusable, but her body also rejects most forms of nourishment. The doctors said she wouldn't live more than a few years, an estimate she beat six years ago. Fe Viva discovered that her body wouldn't reject ensure, although it isn't the easiest thing to get ahold of down there. Serrita is now 24, although she doesn't look a day over 12!

We sat around and talked to her for a while, and got to know her. Like any young girl, she likes music and young handsome actors. She likes to write romance stories. She was very proud of her Hanna Montana socks!

Serrita let us pray with her for a while. Despite her condition, she was surprisingly full of smiles and joy. She loves the Lord. As we got up to leave, we promised to continue praying for her. Her sister (her primary caretaker) remarked to pray for a milk goat, because that's one thing that Serrita can digest well, plus it's full of nutrients. While walking away, that need stuck in my mind. I'm always looking for opportunities to hear the Lord speak, and who's to say he didn't just speak through Serrita's sister? I asked Nelson (one of the staff) how much a fully grown milk goat would cost. While it may be expensive for a Guatemalan, realistically it wasn't more than I would spend taking my wife to dinner at a nice restaurant! At that moment I made up my mind that if there was one thing I could accomplish before the end of the trip, that was it. I was going to find and buy Serrita a milk goat!

The next day I talked Nelson into going to town with me. Since we needed other tools and parts why not pick up a goat as well? We stopped by several agricultural shops that handled livestock, but no one had any goats. Frustrated, we headed back to the work site. After some time and a few phone calls, Nelson found out where a farmer was that had goats. We made a plan to leave early the next morning to go there. I mean, how hard could it be to swing by and grab a goat before breakfast? Well....

We got to the location and they didn't have any more goats, and referred us to another place that wound up having no goats either. Then we got a tip about a ranch that bred goats. So we got directions and took off. We probably drove for an hour on a dirt and gravel road before finding the place, and even then, we were met by a padlocked gate! After much deliberation and a warning from Nelson (apparently shooting trespassers is not illegal or uncommon), I jumped the fence and headed across the field. (After all, God DID lead me this far!) Three gates later, we saw a worker and called to him. He told us to talk to the foreman. We did get to the main ranch area and not only was the foreman much friendlier than I had anticipated, but they had tons of goats! Unfortunately the owner wasn't home, and might not be home for days, and we couldn't make a deal without him. They tried calling and radioing him, but to no avail. We waited for a little while. I started praying. Surely this is what I was meant to do, what God had called me here for. It was my mission! That's where I had it wrong. It wasn't my mission.

As I was standing there a passage kept coming to my mind (one I had learned from CLC studies). Phil 4:6-7. "Do not be anxious in anything, but with everything, through prayer and petition, and with thanksgiving, offer up your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." There I was, being anxious about getting something done. Remember what I said earlier? "I made up my mind.....something I was going to accomplish..." Oh, how I must amuse our Lord at times... To

be still and listen is what God really wants. And then to serve and be open to God's timing and purpose. So often I'm stuck on my own missions, even sometimes with the best of intentions, forgetting the whole purpose of why I am being called. Who was really going to be changed by the milk goat.....Serrita.....or me? I left the money with Nelson. Serrita will get her goat, but in God's timing, not mine.