

February 24, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Oakridge Bible Chapel,

We want to thank you for giving us the privilege of accompanying the team on the mission trip to Paraguay.

For our part, we are convinced that this trip was a success to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is a brief overview of some of the many blessings that we are cherishing in our hearts and thoughts:

1. The Lord's leading!

From day one, when we arrived at the O.M. base to analyze all the renovations the buildings needed, the Lord filled us (*Paul, Steve and Rodrigo*) with His peace about the projects we would choose. God would continue to help us focus on the job at hand and what we would accomplish with the team over a one-week period.

2. God can do more than what we ask for or imagine!

Penny-Jane found herself out of her comfort zone when she realized that she would be the person in charge of meals (*lunch and dinner for the team*). Faced with this challenge, she asked the Lord to grant her the assistance of a sister from Paraguay with whom she could communicate in English to accomplish this task. Well, the Lord gave her 5 sisters from Paraguay who could communicate in English to assist her as needed and we ate very well! We were even able to experience food from different cultures.

3. In all circumstances look to the Lord!

During the week of preparation before the team's arrival among many other things, we had to pour a concrete slab for the floor that was to be redone in ceramic. We soon realized that we'd need to hire local people to assist us. We took this request to the Lord and made the announcement via the media networks. Four students aged 17-18 responded and worked very hard with me to accomplish the task. These young men were unknown to the people of O.M. previously. And with the help of a sister to translate, we shared the gospel with them and offered them each a gospel of John which they gladly accepted. May the Lord use this appointment to draw these young souls to Himself.

4. Praise God for working out opportunities to share about Him!

Just around 2 blocks from the O.M. base where we worked, there was a hardware store that we must have visited countless times for purchases and advice on the different products used in Paraguay. The people who owned the store were a great help, and we were able to develop a trust with them that opened the door for us to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with them as well!

5. The work accomplished.

The projects planned and carried out by the team focused on the first building, which included a laundry room, a small kitchen, a bathroom, a bedroom, a library, an office and a study room.

Walls were scraped and repainted inside and out. Several electrical repairs were completed, including the addition of lights in several of the rooms. The bathroom was completely redone, including plumbing and a new larger door. A flat roof was stripped and redone to prevent moisture from getting inside. The floors in 4 of these rooms were refinished in ceramic with the help of local people we hired. A low brick wall surrounding a garden of plants in the middle of the courtyard was removed and resurfaced to enlarge the courtyard to make room for cars and gatherings of people for meetings. Only a few small finishing touches remained, which Rodrigo and the O.M. team would be able to complete after our departure.

6. Team harmony and camaraderie.

All team members worked with zeal and perseverance to accomplish the tasks before us. It was a great blessing to get to know each other, to forge new bonds and to work together for the glory of Christ.

We were blessed to start each day with a word of encouragement from the Word of God, which Steve led us with. My brother and sister-in-law, Léo and Agathe, shared their appreciation of these times spent together in the Word of God.

7. Your contribution filled a great need.

As I understand it, (*Steve and Esther have the exact expense figures*) we spent about \$8000.00 from the fundraising for this first part of the project. A trusted contractor from Paraguay referred by a faithful brother Heino, with whom Steve is involved with, came when we were on site to examine and give an estimate on the repairs to the walls that have cracked due to the lack of an adequate foundation on the second building. Of which is a 2-storey house. They'll have to break up the floors on either side of the walls, dig and pour new foundations to secure the walls; then repair the cracks and redo the floors. This is a job they've estimated at between \$8,000 - \$10,000. Then there's the tiled roof of the building we'd been concentrating on that needs to be redone. All which should cover the balance of the funds. So **the good news** is that your generosity has provided for the restoration of the O.M. base. This in turn provides a strategic presence and location to train, encourage, and provide lodging for Christ's disciples, who are committed to spreading the message of Christ's Good News.

8. Our brothers and sisters in Paraguay were greatly encouraged!

Praise be to God for His guidance, for your great generosity and for all those who participated in this mission on the ground and at a distance, via your prayers before the throne of grace. The brothers and sisters who serve the Lord with the O.M. ministry have been greatly encouraged by the sacrifice of love that Oakridge has shown them. Sometimes missionaries can feel forgotten and overwhelmed by the challenges that are part of the battle of faith, in which we are all called to be engaged

as followers of Christ. This investment towards them has been a practical and concrete way of meeting a need and reminding them that they are not forgotten. Also that they are deeply loved by the Master and by the members of God's household. Rodrigo and Steve shared with us that they witnessed a joy and an excitement that was rekindled among the members at the base.

Thank you, Lord, for this testimony of love that served to revive and encourage our brothers and sisters who labor in the work of the Lord!

9. Everyone got back home safe and sound!

We want to thank the Lord for watching over us and taking care of us from the moment we left until we came back home. (Psalms 121) God is faithful!

10. The greatest blessing!

The greatest blessing of this operation was to meet the saints of God's household – the Church from another culture, another language who love and adore the Lord Jesus Christ; and live for Him and for His glory. Although distance, languages, traditions, and cultures may separate us, to find that the bond of the Holy Spirit received through the Gospel of Christ crosses all these barriers and unites us as brothers and sisters...

Wow! We can once again affirm and proclaim the words of the apostle Paul, who under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit says in Galatians 3:26-29 [*So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*]

To God be the Glory!!!

This is just a brief summary of some of the blessings we treasure and you'll undoubtedly hear many more from the team members who were part of this excursion.

From the day we arrived in Toronto to begin this trip to our return, Greg and Catherine Penny accommodated us and assisted us in getting us to and from the airport. We praise the Lord for the continuing love and friendship they share with us.

We then took a few days to visit our children and grandchildren before returning to our responsibilities here in Northern Quebec.

Thank you for the wonderful experience you allowed us to experience, which has been such an encouragement to us. Thank you for your support, your prayers and your generosity towards us which is blessing us abundantly.

In our Lord Jesus,
Paul and Penny-Jane