

Guatemala II

Return to Central America

The continuing saga of Bill & Suzanne Smith,
Individual Volunteers
in France and Guatemala

Wow! What a trip! The exploratory excursion to Guatemala was *fantastic*! Through it God has shown us that not only is there truly a need but also that the vision is His, not ours. It was great to see old friends again and share this new ministry idea with them and watch them get excited about the possibilities. We had the opportunity to speak with Juan Pablo Ajanel, the president of the Methodist Church of Guatemala and explained the concept to him. He verbally approved the project and said that the “Gringo and Tourist population” was one group that a Guatemalan could never reach.

Let me regress a little and explain the vision that God has given us so far. God’s new ministry that we will be carrying out will be called “Porch de Salomon”. In Acts 5:12-16 Solomon’s Porch, on the East side of the New Testament Temple, is described as a place for the Believers to meet and to carry out their healing ministries. It is also used as a sending point for them to take Christ’s message into the world. While in Guatemala this past week, we were looking for a location that we could use not only as a club or coffee house, but also a place to house teams and individuals as well as ourselves. We would use the coffee house as an outreach to the tourists and displaced and unwanted Americans and European population that now resides in Panajachel. We would be in direct competition with the bars and night clubs there but offering a culturally current, more wholesome alternative with live music and probably free, non-alcoholic drinks (coffee, soft drinks, lemonade, etc.). The team aspect of the ministry would be directed more at the Guatemalan population surrounding Lake Atitlan. We would host Faith-sharing (Bible School, Puppet Ministries), Medical and Construction teams and help them find appropriate locations and facilities to carry out their work. This brings me to another ironic blessing. Señor Ajanel told us about a Methodist Church in a town on the lake that has been closed for some time. His idea was that we could use this building with teams and such! We have our first mission before we even have our main location!! Gloria a Dios!

Now that we have been there, we appreciate the concept better than ever before. It is not going to be easy because in Panajachel, there is not only the apathy toward Christianity like here in the U.S., but a genuine opposition to anything of a Christian nature coming to the town. People have been burned by past experiences and they’re bitter. We know the Lord will be with us as we work through these challenges – all the more reason to go! There is plenty to be done here before our estimated January 2005 departure. Last week we were at the SEJ-UMVIM Rally passing out brochures to develop interest in the project among the many team leaders who attended. It was a blessing to talk to people who really understood this idea. Because this ministry is somewhat progressive and – ok, a little crazy!- we have figured out that it takes people who are not only mission minded but also forward thinking to comprehend it. Please pray that the Lord will help us find the words to better explain this ministry. Also, pray for us now as we begin our fundraising for the next year’s finances. Besides having an additional mouth to feed, the project will require us to raise a little more money than just our living expenses. We are going to try to live at the mission so that we will still only have one rent and one utility bill to pay, but our budget probably will be about \$500 per month higher than it has been in the past.

This is a collective revelation and through His divine guidance, the Lord has given us a partner family! That’s right; Suzanne’s brother Lloyd Monroe, his wife Melanie and their kids Hannah (18), Daniel (16) and Asa (13) are joining us in this adventure. How awesome to share our passion for missions with people we love so much! God Rocks! It has been truly amazing to see how the Lord is assembling this team. There are many other people who are interested as well and we think our numbers will increase as people catch this vision! Maybe even you!!

In His service,

*Bill, Suzanne
& Liam*

GOD told Abram: “Leave your country, your family, and your father's home for a land that I will show you.”

–Gen. 12:1