

July 2002 Adventures

July we thought would be a month to get caught up on some of our local projects. However, the month flew by and we still have stacks of home projects to do! The beginning of the month we had a visiting team of seminary students from Brazil at our church in Santa Rosa. Linda presented our usual Thursday night Bible study in Spanish, except this time the Bible study was translated into Portuguese by one of the students. Talk about multi-cultural experience for an English speaker! The Brazilian group stayed to celebrate Ed's birthday on Sunday, July 7th. (His birthday is really July 5th.) The church had a surprise party for Ed with cake, balloons, and a gift. The people of Santa Rosa are so wonderful and giving!

The 2nd week of July, the youth in the central Methodist church sponsored a youth conference for all the Methodist youth of Paraguay. About 100 Methodist youth attended from all over Paraguay. It was a wonderful 4 day experience for all involved.

The 3rd week in July was the beginning of the active political problems in Paraguay. We are currently in a quiet state, but plans are being made for another major political demonstration on August 15th. The American missionaries try to keep as low a profile as possible and stay calm. We now have to carry our cedula (national identity cards) with us at all times. We have heard that without your cedula, the police may put you in jail. Please continue to pray for this situation in Paraguay.

The 4th week of the month was a wonderful experience for us. We traveled with the mobile medical clinic to Colonia Guaraní. This is a small, remote area north of Ciudad del Este, on the Brazilian border. Many of the people only spoke Portuguese! Ed helped in the eye clinic and Linda kept everyone fed. We saw 425 patients in only 4 days. In addition to the mobile clinic trailer, we saw patients in a clinic built by the government, but only used once before – by our team last year. In the beginning of the week we had no electricity and no water. We slept in tents under a full moon. Sunsets were spectacular as the area was in wide open fields. The Southern Cross was prominent in the sky at night. One day we had rain with lots of sticky mud on the feet of our patients. Yes, feet, as some walked up to 10 miles with no shoes to see a doctor. In the eye clinic, many of the people couldn't read. Thus the question is, "why do you want reading glasses?" The answer – to see to pick out the "picas" (little worms) from my feet! Well – we aim to please all our patients – plus we have plenty of reading glasses.

We had a chance to visit Brazil and then Argentina. While in Argentina, we attended a crafts fair. Ginny Reyes, another missionary, bought a \$3 (US) necklace, gave a \$5 (US) bill to pay, and received change in 3 currencies - guaraní (Paraguay), pesos (Argentina) and reales (Brazil)! It was difficult to keep up with the ever changing exchange rates!

July 30th is Friendship Day here in Paraguay. This is a day of great celebration in the churches. We share gifts, games, and then food. The interesting part of exchanging gifts with your secret pal, is that you describe the person and everyone has to guess who it is. This whole process is done with everyone in the family. The games are played with teams comprised of 3 year olds to adults. Fun for all!

*In His Service,
Ed & Linda Baker*



Are there really 52 candles?



Paraguayan Methodist youth at the church camp



Ed fitting a pair of glasses



Clinic site - people came by tractor, bicycle, horse cart or on foot



*Iguazu Falls from Argentina
Don't Cry for Me Argentina!*



Friendship Day - Game presentations, there were prizes too, neither of our teams won!