

September 2003 Adventures

September came with surprises. The first being the temperature here in Paraguay! It was 104°F when we got off the plane in Asuncion; and it was only the 2nd day of spring. After leaving a pleasant fall day in Atlanta, the temperature here was a surprise. Welcome home!

We concluded our visit to the states during the first part of September, saying farewell to family and friends. Ed returned to Paraguay, while Linda stayed in the states to attend the wedding of her nephew, Keith O'Toole.

Ed's return to Paraguay was brief. He was only in Paraguay for 5 days before heading to France for a Mission Society team leader's meeting. These meetings are held every other year, and it is a wonderful time to share with other team leaders across the world, within the MSUM family. This year the meeting was held in Melun, France. Our home church at Cannon UMC was well represented in France, as both Ed and Steve DuBose (CFO of The Mission Society and member of Cannon) attended the meeting. Their Cannon shirt wearing day was totally unplanned, what a surprise!



We had a pleasant surprise as our schedules allowed us to meet in Miami, and continue our trips on into Asuncion, Paraguay, together. The flight from Miami on into Asuncion is about 10 hours of flying, so knowing your seat companion is a blessing.

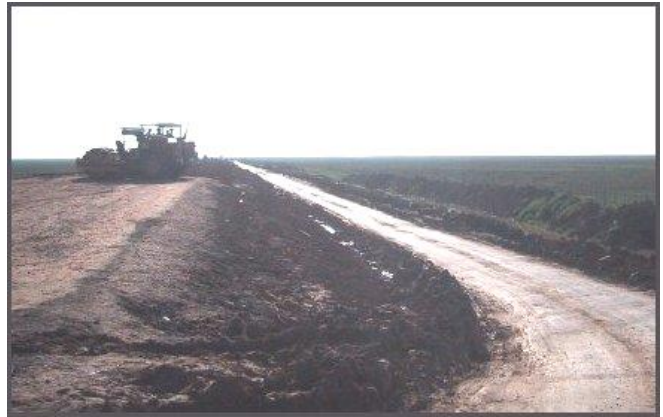
We were both surprised as we traveled from the airport in Asuncion to our home in Santani. The surprise was - we weren't surprised! It seemed as if we had never been gone. Things do not change here. No new construction, no new roads, no new homes or stores. It is somewhat comforting to get back "in the saddle" so quickly and easily.

We were home in Santani for only 2 nights and 1 day before heading back to Asuncion for meetings. We had a chance to meet with Pastor Pablo and discuss our upcoming schedules. We also had our monthly pastor/missionary meeting. During this meeting, Pastor Pablo loves to sing old Methodist hymns. He also likes to hear the hymns sung in different languages. As we were singing "How Great Thou Art", he looked at the English speaking missionaries and said "In English?" What a surprise as none of us could remember the words in English! He went on to Korean, Portuguese, then Guaraní before coming back to us. We did finally remember the words and sang out strongly.



Our month ended by returning to our home in Santani. There are 2 routes for this trip, 1 being only 2 hours but with 5 kilometers of unpaved road (under construction). The longer route takes about 4 hours. We had rain for 2 days, but the day we left Asuncion was bright and sunny. We headed for the shorter route with high hopes. What a disappointment as we arrived at the end of the paved road and there was a long line of trucks *attempting* the 5 kilometers of unpaved road. We predicted there was at least a 3 hour wait for our turn, so we turned around, returned to Asuncion,

and took the long route. Our 2 hour trip was then extended to 6 hours, with the last 2 hours in the dark. We really try to avoid driving at night as the roads are very dangerous – vehicles with no lights, cows on the road, and no lines on the road! This makes driving a challenge. When we haven't had rain, the road is still somewhat difficult.



The well at Puerto Indio (see May 2003 report) has finally been completed. We hired a local driller who uses an air hammer drilling rig to penetrate through the basaltic rock. He was able to drill a successful well, which now has 30 meters of water above the pump and produces 1,500 liters per hour. We hope to make a trip out to the area in October to finalize all the other construction and dedicate the well (see our web site www.aguadevida.org for photos and details).

Until next month we remain...

*In His Service,
Ed & Linda Baker*