

August 2004 Adventures

We began and ended August with milestone events for the country of Paraguay. As we mentioned in our last report, August 1st was the date of the very tragic fire at a local supermarket in Asunción. About 400 people died in the fire, and many more are badly burned. We were coming into Asunción about 3:30 PM on that Sunday. We hadn't heard about the fire, but the city was an eerie quiet. Our friend, Christian Dixon, called us on our cell phone to give us the news. We headed back to Santaní the next day, Monday; and again, the city was eerie. Bodies are not embalmed here in Paraguay, so as many as possible had to be buried on Monday. We passed a cemetery that had funeral processions lined up to get inside. Monday was a national day of mourning, and nearly all businesses were closed. It has been a very sad time for Paraguay.

The Methodist Church worldwide is stepping up to help. The Methodist Hospital in Brazil has an expert team of therapists who work with burn victim recovery, and they are working through the Methodist Church of Paraguay. The General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church in the US has offered to help with the expenses of the Brazilian team. This type of "long term" help is so important to carry on past the initial relief efforts in a tragedy such as this.

However, we ended August with celebration! Paraguay won a silver medal in the Athens 2004 Olympics! This is the first Olympic medal ever won by Paraguay in 52 years. What a grand celebration we've had.

This month we've been able to get back to drilling. We drilled a well for the Agrimissions Center near Quinta Linea. Each well we give a nickname. This well Ed has named "The Woods" and Linda has named "Butterfly Well". As you can see below, we were definitely drilling in the woods. We also had large beautiful blue butterflies around us every day.



This well was practically a "text book" well. Except, what you see above is our second try. Our first hole was a surprise. In the middle of the second rod, about 7' down, we suddenly lost all our 6 drums of water – that's 1,500 gallons of water. It went down the hole in about 5 to 10 minutes! We guessed we had drilled into an armadillo hole. We moved the rig around to the other side of our mud pits, and tried again, this time with more success.



One aspect of drilling “in the woods” is the challenge of getting our equipment into and out of the drilling site. Yes, we made it into the site without problems. However, coming out of the site hasn’t been so easy. Our Mercedes Benz truck that holds all our equipment got stuck! It may not look so daunting from the photo, but it weighs 12 tons and sunk to the frame. We used a tractor to pull the truck out, and we are now ready for our next well.

This month, we have had a few days to be at our own home. This has enabled us to address the many projects we have on the home front. Number one being the problem of water. As we have mentioned before, we have a hand dug well, with a 125 gallon tank on top of our house, and a pump that has to be manually turned on and off. We’ve had a leak that was so bad, we had enough water to take 1 shower if the tank was full and the pump was running. Ed found and fixed the leak – a pipe had come undone under our outside sink. Now we are back in business!



One of the blessings we have with our job is the relationships we build with local Paraguayans. While drilling the Agrimissions well, we lived in the Residencia in Yrybucua. One night, after a long day drilling, the neighbor invited us to her house for dinner. She has a



very humble home, with only dirt floors. There were about 15 of us for dinner, as the husband’s family was visiting. She set a table in a central room in her house (the family usually eats outside where the food is prepared). She said to come inside as she had everything prepared

“just like a restaurant”. She only had 6 plates, 5 sets of eating utensils, and 4 glasses. She put the food in pans in the center of the table, and we shared what we needed. We had pork cooked outside on the parillia (grill), sopa paraguaya (cornbread), and mandioca (yuca). Most folks just tore off pieces of meat and ate with their hands while standing. They were so proud to be able to share their meal with us. The company and food were wonderful. It was a very humbling experience.

In September, we will be drilling at a Guaraní Indian Reservation. More later---

*In His Service,
Ed & Linda Baker*