



(Christ King)

Cristo Rey is a new settlement located east of Managua. To get to Cristo Rey, you pass the Managua International Airport, and then travel about 5 miles to the small town of Tipitapa. From here, Cristo Rey is another 3 miles, just past the Tipitapa city dump – literally; you drive through the dump to get to the settlement.



Note, the road is on the left

Watching the kids & adults as we drive through the dump has been interesting. They check out the trucks carrying trash as the trucks drive in. The folks attack the bags on the trucks with long sticks. On the end of the sticks they have put nails for opening the bags. The people are looking for anything recyclable, or any food that may be edible. Needless to say, the bags of trash rarely make it to the hole dug for the garbage; it ends up on the sides of the road.

Cristo Rey was “opened” by the government about 3 years ago. Individuals or families applying for property are given a piece of land $27\frac{1}{2}' \times 82\frac{1}{2}'$ – that’s just about 2,200 square feet. Many homes in the United States are larger than 2,200 square feet! The new property owners have 90 days to erect some type of structure. These structures range from just sheets of plastic, corrugated tin, or some combination of plastic and tin. Most homes are about 12' x 15' or 180 square feet. A few individuals have funds to build a cement block house, but there are few of these structures. You will notice in the pictures the “bathrooms” are just poles stuck in the ground with fabric hung around them. They have not yet built latrines for the settlement. If the new property owner cannot build a structure within the 90 day limit, they can pay 20 córdobas (that’s about \$1) to extend the deadline for another 90 days. After that the land is considered “abandoned” and someone else can apply for the homestead rights.



Aerial view of Cristo Rey



House made of tin



Combination plastic & tin



Notice the "bathrooms"

As jobs in Managua and the surrounding area have decreased, the need for families to move to Cristo Rey has increased – at least here they don't have to pay rent. As of this writing, there are 2,500 families living in the settlement, with 30 new families moving in per month – that's a family a day! The process to receive a "lot" is to prepare a letter that states you are not currently a property owner. This is presented to the mayor's office. Research is done to verify that you do not own property. After your letter is accepted at the mayor's office, you then present yourself to the Political Secretary – or Community Coordinator. This person decides if you will receive a lot or not, and where in Cristo Rey the lot is located.

With such a rapid increase in population, needs have increased greatly. There is currently only 1 little elementary school in the settlement, which a small number of kids attend. The school only has a roof and no walls, so when it rains, everything gets wet. The secondary school is located in Tipitapa. Few kids can afford the bus fare to attend, and it's a long walk. This leaves many teenagers with nothing to do all day. One 14 year old teenage boy told us he quit school in 3rd grade. Crime and petty theft have been a serious problem. One youngster wrote his name on our truck with a rock! We've also had the metal words "Hilux"

that were riveted to the side of our truck pried off and stolen. There is taxi service from Tipitapa into the settlement, but not at night. We also will not drive into the settlement at night.

I (Linda) was playing with the kids during the plumbing of the well. I was surprised at what little education the children had received. I had children from ages 7 to 14. I would ask simple questions: what is the capital of Nicaragua, what are the colors in the flag of Nicaragua, what countries border Nicaragua, how do you spell silla (chair), what is 3 times 4? Very few of the children could answer these simple questions.

The area is 560 acres and had 3 or 4 old wells located on the property. However, these wells were in great need of repair. There is also a property owner before Cristo Rey became official that has a hand dug well. The well is shallow with only about 2' of dirty water in the bottom. This person has been selling the water for 2 córdobas (that's about 10¢) per 5 gallon bucket. That doesn't sound like much, but how many buckets of water does a family need a day and its dirty water! Also – most folks in the community don't have jobs, and those that do only make \$5.00 or less per day. Therefore, 5 buckets of water per day cost 10% of your income – if you HAVE an income!

About 5 months ago, the government came and repaired one of the exiting wells. The area did not have electricity, so the government put a gasoline generator to power the submersible pump. Cristo Rey was then divided into 4 sectors, each sector having about 625 families. Each sector is allowed 1 hour of water in the morning, and 1 hour in the afternoon. However, the sector must provide gasoline to run the generator in order to receive the water. As you can image, frustrations can arise! Who pays, who gets water, how much water, what size is the family? These and many other issues have created lots of friction in the community.



The government covered the well site with a roof. The man standing in the center of the picture controls the water distribution.



Here the people are lined up to fill their buckets. The water comes down the central white pipe, and is then divided into 2 “faucets”, which allows for more people to fill their buckets at the same time. Note the water pressure is very good.

This well has been a benefit to the community, but what about the people who don't live very close to this well? This is where we were “invited” to become involved in the community.

George Flores, with his wife and baby daughter, moved to Cristo Rey about 5 months ago. He speaks fairly good English. He became a part of the MEFEL camp as a translator. We met George, through Ronnie & Angi Hopkins, and he took us to Cristo Rey to show us the need for a well. We explained that we drill for churches or schools, but not for individuals. An Assembly of God church was started behind George's house, so the criterion was met!

The homes aren't large enough to have a “house church”, so this lot was donated to the Assembly of God. It's a humble beginning, but the important part is that it is a **beginning!** PTL



We drove to Cristo Rey to start the project on September 1st. It had been raining for a few days before our arrival, which meant the area was covered in sticky mud. We are using a Deep Rock rig owned by Amigos for Christ. It's a large, trailer mounted rig that got stuck in the mud. The people were not deterred – they pushed the rig into place!



We sometimes think that God is just “all over a project” and this was one of those projects. We were able to drill to 220’ in just 1½ days, and then set the casing at 212 ft.! While on site, the ladies prepared our lunches. This is always interesting to accept food and drinks from the locals, knowing they don’t have potable water – that’s why we’re there! However, we brought the food each day for them to prepare. What is fascinating is the opportunity this gives us to peek into the houses and get a glimpse of their lives. This particular family cooks inside their 12’ x 15’ house, which makes it very hot inside. I asked why they didn’t prepare the food outside and was told they hadn’t built a cook house yet.



Cooking inside the house



Our wonderful cooks

Finishing a project can be a mixed blessing. The area has received electrical service, so we wanted to put an elevated tank with a submersible pump. But, who is going to pay the electric bill? This has been a major concern of ours, we don’t want to create more conflict in the area, and we don’t want to drill a well that won’t be used due to lack of funds. The people wanted the submersible pump in lieu of a hand pump. We asked that they come together as a

community, sign a contract regarding use of the water and payment of the electricity. George has coordinated this effort, so we did install a tower and elevated tank. The tank is a 3,200 liter tank, with a 1/2 hp submersible pump which produces 17 gallons per minute.



Overall view of the tower with the tank



We're cleaning out the well and folks are lined up to get the water, even before it's clean!

When we finish the well and install the tower and tank, we then have the plumbing project to complete. Here in Cristo Rey, we put a spigot in front of the church with 2 spigot heads, the same arrangement on the street behind the church, and installed a wash station for the ladies of the church.



Spigot with 2 sides to fill buckets



Neighbors lining up for water

After we finished the project, we had a dedication service, with members of the church and members of the community. Ed spoke on John 4:14 (the Samaritan woman at the well); Tomas, the Water Project Coordinator for Amigos for Christ spoke about the issues of the community cooperating with this well; George spoke about the formation of the Water Committee; and the pastor of the church led in singing and prayed.



Ed preaching on John 4:14



The church's new wash sink – the pastor is the man standing on the right

We don't know what's in store for Cristo Rey, but the people are hopeful. They envision paved streets, schools, water running to each house. They have selected the area that will be the future "mall", the central church with plaza, and the future "real" school. We hope this project will help them in their desire for a better life. To God be the glory!

People of Cristo Rey

