



The Silvas in GUANACASTE

February 2009

Earthquake

New year, the same God!

*“ You will show me the way of life,
granting me the joy of your presence
and the pleasures of living with you forever”*

Ps 16:11

We were able to spend Christmas and New Year with Salla's parents from Finland, who gave us a huge hand with the construction. We also had a cousin visiting us and a friend who came to help with Troy's and Julia's Finnish schooling for a month. At the same time at the base we hosted an outreach team from YWAM Wyoming. Their base is called “Western Frontiers” and has a special cowboy-focus. We didn't really know what to expect from this team or what kind of ministry to organize for them, but it wasn't a problem. Here in Guanacaste they were definitely in the right place – we are surrounded by farms and a strong cowboy culture. The team helped local farmers by milking, fencing, branding... They organized rodeos, rode horses etc. We were amazed at how they used their passion and skills to share the Gospel in a way that would normally not be the first choice of many missionaries. But it worked! They were able to impact many lives that we haven't during 3 years in our home community. We really hope they will come back and help us develop a permanent cowboy-ministry here!

With their influence Troy became a little cowboy and even started riding small bulls! And Julia fell in love with horses even more than before...

On January 8 we were watching TV news when the news reporter in San José started strangely jumping up and down the screen. At the same time little bit more to the north, close to the volcano Poas, in small mountain towns, the earth shook vertically during 22 seconds and after that the life of the people was never the same.

The earthquake of 6,2 Richter destroyed roads, produced huge landslides, destroyed houses, killed 30 people and left 2300 homeless. With Diego we were able to go to the earthquake-zone for the first time 11 days later. The rescue workers and government officials had already left the zone and the locals were already then pretty much alone in the middle of the disaster. It is hard to really understand or describe the destruction and what the people are emotionally going through. Many people who have worked hard all their lives to get what they have now lost everything. After that first visit Diego has worked in the area for about 11 days with different groups. We are participating in a joined relief and reconstruction effort of all the Costa Rican YWAM bases. The goal is long-term help and support to the area, including building houses and creating job opportunities. Many people in the zone are strawberry farmers. Our teams have mostly been helping them, replanting the strawberries, fixing the broken waterlines and protective plastics so that the famers would not lose their income. Even 100 persons



can depend on one functioning strawberry farm, there is 80 of them in the area. We want to stand by the locals, support them in a way or other, showing them that God is close, caring about what happened. We are about 5 hours away from the earthquake area, so it is not that easy to be traveling there all the time, but we hope to be able to continue taking groups from Guanacaste and offering meaningful help. Next weekend Diego is taking a group of 30 men to build a prefabricated concrete house for one family. In the zone we are working together with a church that is organizing construction of houses for families that lost theirs. A simple concrete house costs \$ 4000 and a wood house \$ 7500. The wood houses are stronger in case of another earthquake.

2009!

New year has already begun. Even though guests, construction, flues, Troy's and Julia's summer vacation, home school and house work has taken a lot of our time and energy, it is time to look at this year and get ready for new challenges.

Our personal dream is to finally finish our house and move in! Right now our need is windows and \$1000 for tiling of the floors.

For ministry, this year we are again expecting several outreach teams and with them many different kinds of ministry in villages, schools and churches. For that, we have to put lot of work into planning, organizing and preparation. For the summer we are again receiving summer staff, who will help us with local ministries as well as hosting teams (There is still room for more, if you are interested!)

The coming weeks we are looking forward to starting to work with a new group of pregnant teenagers in a local high school. We are planning an enviromental awareness and education program for local families and schools, which we would implement together with the YWAM base in Heredia. In July at least Salla

and the children will travel to Finland. For Troy's and Julia's school it is the only possible time of travel, but on the other side it is the busiest time of the year in ministry for us, so it is difficult for Diego to take time off.

Bibles

The biggest project for this year is Bible distribution. Our goal is to give a Bible to each home in Guanacaste by the end of year 2013. There is 93 400 homes. The distribution will happen with the help of outreach teams that come and with local churches and ministries. We are working on the planning and preparation for this project; looking for sponsors, deciding how to do this and finding out where to get almost 100 000 Bibles for a good price. Why are we doing this? Inspired by God through hearing a message of the founder of YWAM, Lauren Cunningham. ...AND "for the word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpes knife, cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are." We believe this is really going to have a spiritual impact on Guanacaste.

Carolina

In the beginning of January we sent Carolina, a 26-yr old girl from our home village, to a YWAM Discipleship Training School in Heredia. She was Nic Markus' nanny for about a year and during that time God completely changed her life. Our prayer is that during this school she would grow, be rooted and mature in the Lord. Another prayer request is that she doesn't have all the needed funds for the school.

Thank you for your support and prayers!

Salla ja Diego

Troy, Julia, Nic Markus

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