

Excerpts from Three Letters

“The years before 1986 were disastrous for me and my family. I cultivated the land but I didn’t harvest enough to feed my family. I also drank liquor frequently and I knew nothing of a spiritual life. I lived just to survive. As far as my family and I were concerned, what we were living was a punishment from God.

In 1986 I came to know a group of people who were living in San Luis, Comayagua. They were a North American couple, Lorenzo and Juanita, that had arrived to San Luis together with a Honduran, Aguinaldo, with knowledge about soil conservation as well as many other things. They were here to give us ideas about how to improve our harvests and care for the land. I remember them inviting me to be with a large group of other “campesinos” (small-scale farmers) in a village close to where we live. I was so excited about what they were teaching that I paid close attention to every one of the classes they offered.

This team of people knew how to treat others with care, respect, confidence, humility and wisdom and in a short period of time they were able to convey to us their ideas. Soon they had various groups organized in different villages in the municipality of San Luis.

Before Larry, Joni, and Aguinaldo arrived, for each pound of beans we planted we harvested 5 to 6 pounds. With them we learned we could harvest up to 100 pounds with a pound of seed planted. We learned how to improve the soil, not to burn, make compost, plant legumes for green manure and cover crops to enrich the soil, and control erosion on the steep hillsides we farm. My family learned how to prepare different foods like the soybeans we were producing. Today we eat better, we have better hygiene in our house, and the children are healthier.

But there is something more. With them we came to know about a spiritual life. They taught us in an indirect way. They taught us to read the Bible, and after that we congregated with a denomination together with my family.

Today I can proudly say that I am a promoter for Tierra Nueva. I take what I’ve learned to others. We are a group of 18 promoters, and we take the good news to other campesinos as we have been taught. Aguinaldo continues to help us and provide technical support. When he acquires new information he comes and shares it with us.

As small farmers we need support . A lot of money comes to Honduras to help campesinos, but it all gets spent in pure ole bureaucracy. It all ends up going to the rich, and the poorest of the poor do not have the privilege of having access to loans or technical support. Tierra helps so that we, the promoters, can each get out to the villages nine days a month, but there is still a need for more help to the farmers.

I hope that all of you who have supported Tierra Nueva continue to do so. I assure you that a lot of campesinos and their families are learning how to have a better life, are eating better, live healthier and are learning to know God because of your help.

A greeting to all who have had a chance to read these humble words. The peace of God be with each of you and may you prosper. God's blessing to all of you."

Arnulfo Mejia Palma and family

"In 1986 I came to know the program Asociacion Tierra Nueva through my father Arnulfo who is a promoter for Tierra Nueva. Tierra Nueva trained me in nutrition, sewing, cooking, baking, natural medicines, how to work with people and in biblical studies. When I first got to know Tierra Nueva, even though I was 18 years old, I had not finished my primary school education, and through the help of the program I was able to do this. I am very grateful to La Asociacion Tierra Nueva, and to the people who have directed the program, Lorenzo, Juanita and Aguinaldo, who have shown us trust, care, hope, and respect.

I am working as a promoter in a number of communities. I am working with the women so that together with their families they can learn how to create healthy and happy homes. I feel very committed to sharing with other women what I have learned with Tierra Nueva."

Olma Ondino Mejia

Dear Larry,

I was in Honduras this past semester and spent a week in "el campo". I lived with Raul Flores and his family. What wonderful people! They had great things to say about you, and are so very thankful for your friendship and work with TN. I spent much of my semester wondering what the role of North Americans should be in the work of development, and suddenly I had my answer: something like TN. I saw the effects of your good work in the lives of Raul and his family. They are transformed people. So I want to thank you for your work, your love, and your inspiration. Good fruit is being produced. gracias a Dios.

Christine (Christine is a college student. As part of her semester abroad program she lived with one of the Tierra Nueva promoter families for a week. Spring semester, 2005)

Thanks to all of you who have given support to Tierra Nueva in this past year. If you want to continue to support the work in Honduras, we have a very serious need for financial support at this time.

If you send any donations they should be sent to me with the checks made out to Tierra Nueva. On the bottom MEMO line put *HONDURAN PROJECT, SAN LUIS*. Send the checks to *Larry Sell, 23471 Petite Lake Rd., Lake Villa, IL 60046*. The checks will then be forwarded to Tierra Nueva in Burlington, Washington where they will be deposited.