

# Through the open church window. . .

you can still see the flowers blooming. Pastor Juan is reminding his congregation that one year ago the mission team responsible for providing the flowers and helping rebuild the kitchen has returned to share their love.

In 2003, when I learned that an adult mission trip was being organized, and learned of the objective to build meeting rooms for a church, I was more than ready to go, for this would be my first mission. It was perfect timing! I had just semi-retired from a landscaping company which I had started 20 years ago. I had always wanted to give my time and energy to help others. My life has been

so blessed by God that it was no longer enough for me to give verbal thanks. I had to use all my energy to give glory to God for His unfailing gifts. I least liked construction and I was burned out with horticulture (working with plants,) and meeting clients demands. I would be ready for this new challenge. I purchased 1000 landscaping stones to border my flowers beds. I worked in the full sun during the hottest time of the day to be prepared for the proposed cement block-building project for the Ensenada church.

Eleven adults arrived, full of energy, and with visions of raising walls for the Sunday school rooms. As we enter the gate at the church we saw no cement blocks or sand; a clue that all was not ready for our work to proceed. Pastor Juan met us in the courtyard, defining the project at hand. We must first remove the existing building, before new construction can begin. The eleven of us attacked the building with greater gusto than the ants that had tunneled through the wood supports in order to provide lodging for their extended families. In two days the building was down, and we thought we were ready to lay cement blocks, but instead we learned that we must break through the cement flooring, then dig out soil to pour foundations. This work was beyond the abilities of us women. What can six women do? We offer to do the exterior

stucco on these rooms. Again he says "no". Someone relates to him that I'm a horticulturist and he becomes so excited. Immediately I must go with him to the front door entrance. He shows me a plaque that he has written, located near the garden. Within this planting bed, only grass and weeds grow with 3 very unhappy plants. He wants a garden! As we walk away, I have no feelings for this dead space. I came to lay cement blocks. That night I asked God to give me strength, guidance, and to help me put my heart into it.

The next morning, as I looked afresh at the sad garden, and at all

the cement covering the walks and courtyard I thought "What plants grow in Mexico? I've not a clue." I ask pastor Juan's wife to take me to a nursery. Several women offer to weed and others journey to a nursery where we purchased 8 pots, plants, soil and fertilizer. We were able to transform a very desolate, lifeless, environment



Philippians 2:1-8

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to one mindful of God's gift of plants, with their colors, fragrance, and diversity. We all felt good seeing the visual change these few plants; and pots had made in the church courtyard. But my heart was not touched until the pastor's wife revealed through a translator how she had been baking and selling cookies on the street in order to buy pots for the windows. I began to see that God had given me her vision to fulfill. And then, during church services that Sunday Pastor Juan spoke of their joy in looking out the window and seeing God's Flowers.

By now I had begun to see more clearly, though my eyes were streaming tears. It's not about my plan, or being prepared to lay cement blocks. My purpose at El Mesias church was to listen and do the will of my Father. When we accept God's call, and "say I will go" then it's God's plan; you are fulfilling His purpose. To give glory to God, one must be obedient to His call. He continues to teach me how to become His humble servant.