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## Building Blocks of Opportunity

### A Story of Transformation *by Leanne Geisterfer*

Yum, vegetables!!

This isn't something you commonly hear in Honduras. Rice, beans, cheese and tortillas are much more appreciated – and of course, when available, meat is king. **But, groups of women in the urban community of Nueva Suyapa are taking advantage of every opportunity for learning about the importance of vegetables and how to grow them, and introducing them into their families' diets.**

The women started with training in communal gardens. Groups of women worked together and shared what they produced. Many of them transferred the learning to their own patios, using old tires, broken buckets, and whatever else was available to create mini-gardens. A couple of the leaders had an “aha moment” when they took advantage of the opportunity to visit the rural gardens of another World Renew partner and learn about “polytunnels.” Polytunnels are small greenhouses typically made of polyethylene plastic that offer the protection and microclimate of a glass greenhouse, allowing farmers to grow fruits and vegetables out of season and offering excellent protection from adverse weather, bugs, and other plant diseases. Inspired, the women then applied for a grant from World Renew for materials and training in how to build and maintain polytunnels, and how to adjust their gardening practices to this new

method. The polytunnels have been a success. Plants that are more resistant to disease and bugs are still grown in the open, and more delicate plants are flourishing under cover. **Vegetables abound for the women and their families.**

**But these groups of women don't sit still.** Seeking more opportunity, they found a way to build upon their existing success by selling their produce. Another organization is willing to teach them how to plant in stages, so they have a steady stream of produce. Best of all, this organization can connect them to one of the larger supermarket chains that is looking for organic produce. To take advantage this opportunity, however, they needed more polytunnel space. So World Renew, with your support, provided the funds to extend the existing polytunnels, almost doubling their planting space. We're anxious to see where this investment will take them next.

**Yum. Soon we'll all be eating vegetables!**



# A community like none other.



by Caspar Geisterfer  
Church Consultant  
Resonate Global Mission

*I give this reflection in lieu of a traditional update because I suffered a back injury in July and I've been restricted from traveling to the places where I normally work. Bouncing on the rough roads could complicate my condition, and so, I'm working more from my desk.*

I've borrowed a title that Walter Brueggemann uses for his commentary on Exodus. Brueggemann suggests that what makes the community of Israel unique are four distinct characteristics. Israel was:

- The recipient of God's liberating power
- The practitioner of God's sovereign Law
- The partner in God's on-going covenant
- The host of God's awesome presence.

(Brueggemann, Walter; "The Book of Exodus", the New Interpreter's Bible, Vol 1; pp679-80)

This short statement is one of the best I've found to describe who we are as a community of faith. It echoes what we declare in our confessions and it should drive the way we are as a community of faith. My work in Honduras is about the transformation of communities of faith – transformation from simply being church, to becoming a community of faith like none other.

Recipients of God's liberating power. Through the work of Jesus Christ, we have been liberated from the death of sin, from the shenanigans of the devil. In Honduras, God's community of faith – the church – seeks to receive liberation – liberation from control of the gangs, liberation from corruption, liberation from fear, and liberation from the image of a God who does not act.

## Practitioner of God's sovereign law.

We are called to love God with our whole being, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Moline CRC in Michigan has a program called "Love in Action." As an expression of their love for God, the Moline community of faith puts their love in action to their close neighbors in Moline, but also to their neighbors in Guatemala and Honduras. Moline, in partnership with the Mangulile CRC, has introduced "Love in Action" to Honduras.



**Partner in God's on-going covenant.** Some consider this the "already, but not yet" syndrome. As we patiently await the return

*Strong Family Program, in Villa Nueva, Honduras. Mother of a youth impact club member taking a home economics type of training.*



*Young People being trained as mentors. This part of the training focuses on working with the opposite gender.*

of Jesus Christ, we participate with God in his work of redemption. We have the privilege to show to the world OUR God. Through programs of Christian education, we work with God in shaping the community of faith. Biblical literacy, Bible study leadership, and the application of biblical teaching to the way we live are all part of being covenantal.

**Host of God's awesome presence.** Our doors are wide open and our arms are stretched out to those who have not yet experienced the powerful liberation of God. Training Christian young people to mentor at-risk youth shows the presence of God. Bringing light into the darkness of gangs and corruption demonstrates the presence of God. Providing sanctuary to the victims of violence and abuse brings the victims into the presence of God.

## The Least of These...

For almost five years, through the generosity of a grant from Global Affairs Canada, four of our partners in Honduras have been blessed with additional funds to step up sustainable livelihoods programming, such as literacy programming and the organization of savings and credit groups. But the most successful activities in Honduras have been related to food security – improving and diversifying production, so families have a more nutritional and substantial diet. In a recent meeting of Honduran agencies that receive GAC funding, **World Renew's partners were recognized as really getting to the most vulnerable population.** It's great when others recognize the way we're responding to a biblical command.

## Please Join Us in Prayer

- that vegetables will abound in Nueva Suyapa, to be eaten and sold.
- for healing of Caspar's back, so he can return to the work he loves and overcome the challenge of working from the city.
- for the healthy arrival of our greatly anticipated grandson, September 27
- for the implementation of a program to train churches in responding to the myriad issues of domestic violence.
- for Emily Cole, who just arrived as a volunteer with the "Cohort of Missioners" program, and is preparing for a year in Honduras. She'll work in partnership with Ashley Rodriguez, learning about cross cultural ministry. Emily and Ashley will be based in Mangulile, Honduras.
- for the funding of the different programs of Resonate Global Mission in Honduras.
- that World Renew's partner organizations are able to find other funding as the GAC grant ends.
- for World Renew as it currently responds to so many disaster events: refugees in Sudan, the Middle East and Bangladesh; hurricanes in the US and the Caribbean; earthquakes in Mexico. Pray for all the victims, that there will be many who can reach out and show them love. Pray also for generosity, so we have the means to respond. And pray for wisdom in knowing how to invest the resources.



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