



Rick and Jan Waldrop, Directors

The Shalom Project International

SUMMER 2021

Dear Friends of Shalom,

This issue of our newsletter focuses exclusively on the work being done with asylum-seeker refugees on the southern border of the U.S. First, Scripture is abundantly clear regarding our responsibility to be compassionate and welcoming toward those seeking refuge from situations of violence and oppression. Therefore, our work along the border is more than just a humanitarian effort. It reflects the very heart of God who instructs us to “treat the foreigner residing among [us] as [our] native-born” (Leviticus 19.34, among others).



Children at the boarder

Additionally, what we do to “the least of these” strangers is done unto Jesus Christ as he taught in Matthew 25.

Since before the beginning of this year, we had decided to give special emphasis to ministry with our Central American neighbors to the south, prioritizing partnerships with “boots on the ground” colleagues in three border regions McAllen/Reynosa, Laredo/Nuevo Laredo and El Paso/Ciudad Juárez, all in Texas.

ALMA RUTH AZÚA- McAllen/Reynosa

Alma Ruth is an experienced Mexican missionary now working exclusively with women and children migrants along the lower Rio Grande Valley. Our support makes possible a variety of ministries that include medical attention, shoes, clothing and, more importantly, referrals to legal assessment that has assisted hundreds of asylum seekers in navigating the immigration system to enter the U.S. legally and begin the asylum process. Alma Ruth’s passion is to work with the most vulnerable women and children who arrive at the plaza in Reynosa, Mexico.



Alma Ruth Azúa at migrant camp in Reynosa

On any given day there can be 500-1,000 migrants seeking shelter in the plaza. Most of these are battered, traumatized and some are pregnant women who have little resources to deal with the violence they are trying desperately to escape in their home countries and along the long journey through Mexico.

SERGIO PALACIOS—Laredo/Nuevo Laredo

Pastor Sergio is a seasoned minister who lives in Laredo, Texas, and has a passion to reach out to asylum seekers who arrive across the border in Nuevo Laredo. In addition to his pastoral work with indigent folk at the “Church in the Park” in Laredo,



Pastor Sergio at the AMAR Shelter in Nuevo Laredo

he heads up the AMAR Migrant Shelter just across the river. Sadly, drug cartels have taken over the neighborhood where the shelter is located and two pastors have already been assassinated recently. Pastor Sergio has been assaulted, threatened and warned not to continue at the shelter, which the cartels consider to be in their territory. When asked about the risks to his own life, pastor Sergio shrugs and states that he will continue at the shelter as long as possible whatever the consequences may be. He is ready to live or die for the cause of this ministry. How can we not support a servant of God like that!



Arriving refugee women and children in El Paso

MARIBEL & OSVALDO VELASQUEZ—El Paso/Ciudad Juárez

Maribel and Osvaldo are a pastoral couple serving the El Elyon Church in El Paso. When the influx of immigrants increased dramatically three years ago, they volunteered their church facility as a “hospitality center” in order to receive and process the arrival of some of the thousands of asylum seekers who had been dumped on the streets as a result of then President Trump’s catch and release practices. To date El Elyon Church has processed over 4,000 migrants with most now reunited with family members somewhere in the U.S. Very similar to the work of Pentecostal forerunners in the Holiness Movement and The Salvation Army, the Velasquez’ continue to preach the Gospel AND work for social transformation. Migrants are received warmly and offered meals freshly prepared by a small core of church members. They are given fresh clothing, shoes, medical attention, a place to shower and sleep, and most importantly to all asylum-seekers,

assistance in contacting family members so that arrangements are made for their ongoing passage and reunification.



Pastors Maribel and Osvaldo in El Paso

WITH YOUR SUPPORT, ALL THIS HAS BEEN POSSIBLE.

It’s been my privilege to spend time on several occasions with all of the partners mentioned above, and I can vouch for the quality of witness of these servants of God! But you are also servants inasmuch as you pray for and support these efforts. The Shalom Project has been singularly blessed with some key support partners for this work! THANK YOU SO MUCH!

**GRACE + PEACE TO ALL,
Rick Waldrop, Director**

3 WAYS TO GIVE:

1. Online: theshalomprojectinternational.org/give
2. Checks made to The Shalom Project, PO Box 5616 Cleveland, TN 37320
3. Church of God World Missions: The Shalom Project No. 102-9484 PO Box 8016 Cleveland, TN 37320