

SALVANET

A Publication of Christians for Peace in El Salvador, CRISPAZ

Water Crisis in El Salvador

by Paul Darilek

For those of you living in North America, chances are that your workplace is required by law to maintain a standard ratio of Lysoled ceramic receptacles per number of employees. It is through these receptacles that clean, drinkable water flows, water that has been treated for bacteria, cleared with a settling agent, tested for heavy metals and pH, and perhaps even run through a softener. The function of this water is to safely carry your feces to plants where people with college degrees and lab coats neutralize the potentially nefarious effects of your waste (as it is called, much to its chagrin as a potential fertilizer) before freeing it into the world at large. The same is likely true for your house, which serves to protect your innocent children from disease, discomfort and disagreeable odors.

Taking into account the availability and use of water in rural communities, El Salvador once again presents us with a paradigm shift. UNICEF reports that 55.6% of minors in El Salvador live in houses without water that has been piped in for drinking—to hell with their feces. 78% of those children live in rural areas and 32% in urban centers. The United Nations estimates that only 55% of El Salvador's six million inhabitants have access to potable water. The effects of this are wide- and far-reaching. Prominent Salvadoran ecologist Dr. Ricardo Navarro have gone so far as to surmise that "El Salvador's next civil war will not be over land, but over water." What's going on?

First, the water table is slowly dropping in parts of El Salvador.

Environmentalists tell us the roots of this problem are deforestation and overpopulation. Next to Haiti, El Salvador is the most deforested country in the Western Hemisphere. Without vegetation to trap water into groundwater sources and the biosphere, rainwater quickly runs into the ocean.

Continued on page 2...

July / August

1999

In this issue . . .

National Reality
Access to Water 1-3

Crispaz Connections
• CRISPAZ Volunteer
Initiates Well Drilling
Project 4-5
• Summer Immersion
Program 4-5

Wellsprings
Volunteer's Reflections
on Solidarity 6-7

Letter to the Churches
• Medellín 8-9
• New ARENA
Government 10-11

CRISPAZ, Christians for Peace in El Salvador, was founded in 1984. We are a faith-based organization dedicated to mutual accompaniment with the church of the poor and marginalized communities in El Salvador. In building bridges of solidarity between communities in El Salvador and those in our home countries, we strive together for peace, justice and human liberation.



CRISPAZ has four programs:

- † CRISPAZ Volunteer Program (CVP)
- † El Salvador Encounter Delegation Program (ESE)
- † Communication Information Network on El Salvador (CINES)
- † Summer Immersion Program

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CRISPAZ Summer Interns:

Kristen Barker
Greta Hendricks
Michelle Markey
Michael Meyers
Diana Quiñones

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For more information about our programs or to make a contribution, please contact us at:

CRISPAZ

319 Camden Street
San Antonio, Texas 78215
210-222-2018
email: crispaz@igc.apc.org

CRISPAZ

Apartado Postal 2944
Centro de Gobierno
San Salvador, El Salvador
tel/fax: 011-503-226-0829
email: pazsal@netcomsa.com

ACCESS TO WATER

Continued from page 1...

With over 6 million people living in a geographical area roughly the size of Massachusetts, El Salvador is the most densely-populated country in Central America. This results in an over use of a limited water supply. It also means that many areas are being settled where there is *no* access to available groundwater. The country's under-funded infrastructure cannot keep up with its population.

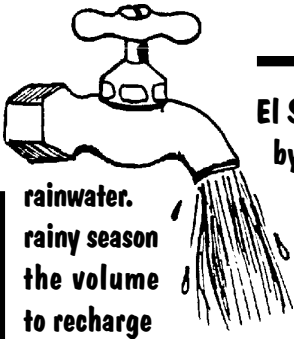
who lost his young daughter to what to looked to him like diarrhea, a runny nose and glassy eyes. One expert told me that gastrointestinal disease causes 6,000 death per year in El Salvador – only a few hundred deaths less than the yearly average caused directly by the war.

To those who work in my circles, this is an offense to the God that gave us life. If bankers

The civil war of the 1980s also comes into play in the water crisis. Thousands of internal refugees had to flee violence and settle in new areas without a trace of the social capital that had existed in their communities in the form of hand-dug wells, fields ready to be planted, and tin roofs.

Shortage of water is the mark of underdevelopment. Clean water prevents cholera, typhoid, and amoebic and bacterial dysentery among other diseases. For the rural poor, these diseases don't often get the medical attention to receive a name before they take their victims. I have a friend

and presidents spent time in such communities, their capitalist sensibilities would be offended: I have worked in communities where dozens of potentially productive work-hours (per week, per family) were lost to hauling water from a trickling spring. This lowers national production. Hundreds of more hours are lost every year due to illness caused by drinking bad water. I've seen children who haul scarce water at night sleep during their school day. I've seen countenances grow dim from the malnutrition caused by chronic illness. Whatever your religion, that is an offense.✚



rainwater. rainy season the volume to recharge

El Salvador is endowed with high levels with rainwater. Nevertheless, water scarcity is a problem felt by the entire population. This scarcity is explained by the country's inability to regulate and store water. The inability to regulate water results in a great variability in the rivers' volume. While during the rainy season the river volume is considerably elevated (provoking overflow and floods), during the dry season it is often reduced to nothing. The inability to store water is demonstrated by the weakened ability to recharge subterranean water sources or aquifers.

The growing scarcity of water is being accompanied by a deterioration of water quality due to the contamination of superficial water (rivers and lakes) and subterranean waters (aquifers). This results from using the ground and bodies of water as receptacles for a growing quantity of domestic, municipal, industrial, and agro-industrial waste. The net result is an even greater reduction in the amount of water available for direct consumption and for production.

It is true that some global factors, such as the planetary climatic change, are causing this water scarcity . . . however, the primary reasons for El Salvador's reduced water availability are caused by internal socioeconomic factors . . . the way in which the land is used, the patterns of human settlement and urbanization, the way in which agricultural, industrial, and agro-industrial production is developed, and the survival alternatives in which the poor are forced to live are all principal factors reducing the country's availability of water.

Salvadorans are at high risk for health problems resulting from water contamination and from natural disasters caused by the inability to regulate surface water.

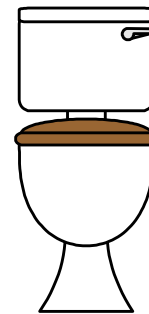
Contamination of national water is a direct cause of Salvadorans' precarious state of health. Much of the contamination results from a discharge of untreated domestic, industrial, and agricultural waste.

It has been shown that diarrhea and the resulting dehydration rank highest among the causes of illness and death of children. This is caused by the fact that a large percentage of the population drinks directly from contaminated water sources. Access to clean potable water is prohibitive for many.

Also, the population that drinks the water treated by ANDA (national water service) is at risk of drinking water that has been contaminated in the aqueducts.



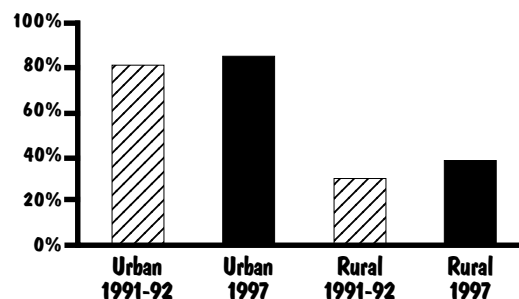
Housing for the poor is characterized by a lack of services and building conditions. In descending order, the greatest needs are: potable water, electricity, sanitary services.



There is a great difference in access to sanitary service for those living in the countryside and those living in the city. 55% of urban homes have access to their

own flush toilets, while only 1% of homes in the countryside have this same access. Three-fourths of rural homes depend on latrines which have no sewer system.

Houses with Access to Water Service



Information and statistics excerpted from *El Salvador: Estado de la Nación en Desarrollo Humano 1999 (El Salvador State of the Nation in Human Development 1999)*, National Council for Sustainable Development, UNDP.

Community Well Drilling Project

by CRISPAZ volunteer Paul Darilek

Years ago someone asked me what I'd do if I won a million dollars. I said I'd buy well drilling equipment and a bunch of Grateful Dead cassettes and I'd cruise around Guatemala hanging out with people and drilling wells. I didn't really see that happening, so instead of buying a lotto ticket and crossing my fingers, I moved to El Salvador and started spending time in one of the poorest communities I had ever seen. 26 families and I shared drinking water from a trickle that filled one five-gallon jug in

35 minutes. This trickle of a spring was a 20-minute walk from where I lived. If the spring was being used all day, we hauled water at night. This was the work of school-aged girls, 70-year-old men, pregnant women . . . in short, everyone who drank water. With time, my ears started perking up every time I heard about people who worked on water projects.

I connected with Living Water International, a Christian organization based in Houston, Texas which provided me with training and well-drilling equipment. At the same time, retired-engineer Stan Grams, with a cane and a prosthetic shoe as his angel wings, agreed to help me raise the funds to make this project work. With the support of Living Water, Stan, and my established support base, I decided to go for it.

First I had to do some training. Then I trained a drilling team of four Salvadorans:

- ☛ Chago, a recently laid-off driver for CEBES (a Christian base community pastoral center) whose family has long been involved in pastoral organization;
- ☛ Nacho, an ex-gang member and refugee from Chalatenango who came to the city at the age of eight after watching the FMLN kill his father;

CRISPAZ Offers New Summer Program

June 1, 1999 marked the first day of orientation for the participants in CRISPAZ' newest program, the Summer Immersion Program (SIP). The SIP was formed to provide people with a meaningful solidarity experience that lasts longer than a 10-day El Salvador Encounter delegation but has a shorter time commitment than the long-term CRISPAZ Volunteer Program. The program places participants ("interns") in a Salvadoran community with a host family and finds them a volunteer opportunity with a local grassroots organization. This year's program began with a week-long orientation before the interns initially went out to their communities. Group reflection sessions are held every 10 days, and the program will end with a closing retreat in August. The 1999 SIP is running from June 1-August 12. ❖

Meet the Summer Interns!

- ★ Kristen Barker is from Cincinnati, Ohio and will be a senior this year at Xavier University. She is living in the Christian base community of Jardines de Colón in La Libertad and is volunteering with the pastoral team.
- ★ Greta Hendricks is from the Chicago, Illinois suburbs and will be a sophomore this year at Loyola University in Baltimore. She is living in the community of Santa Marta in Cabañas and is volunteering with a pottery workshop run by local women.

☛ Santos, a guitar player in his church choir and the son of a long-time community organizer;

☛ Elmer, a refugee from Morazán and the father of three at the age of 20.

We went to work in *Tierra Nueva*, the community where I used to haul water from the trickling spring. We drilled three dry holes and never found water. We lost some equipment down a hole. The project's truck, which had already been stolen, disassembled and rebuilt, was crashed into in front of our office. I dented the rental truck, then promptly caught Dengue Fever and followed that up with a severe urinary tract infection. Satan obviously had a beef with this project. Without small blessings like seeing the drilling team gathered around a dry hole under a starry sky praying to be able to bring water to the people of *Tierra Nueva*, I just might have grown discouraged.

Our next stop was the *Bajo Lempa* zone, in the southern part of the department of Usulután. As you may remember, this was an area severely affected by Hurricane Mitch. During flooding caused by the hurricane, as in floods past, all the hand-dug wells in the region were contaminated. We were asked if we could create a system of sealed wells that pump into tanks that sit on towers, safe from

floodwater contamination. Based on our three dry holes we said . . . yes.

The results? In *Tierra Nueva* we converted an empty hole, hand-dug by the community, into a sealed tank which collects water in the rainy season without collecting surface runoff.

That water can be treated with chlorine for drinking. In Usulután, the water systems described above are already in use in three communities. We've drilled wells in three more communities and the tanks and towers are being constructed as I write. The water systems built thus far benefit a community center, a church and a pastoral center. All the water is accessible to the general public. Next week as I tour in the United States to promote the project, the crew leaves to drill several more wells.

We're truckin'.✚

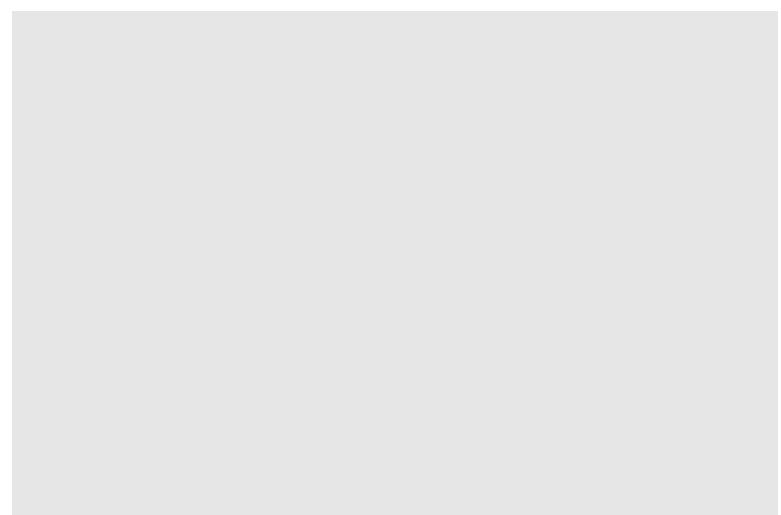


The well drilling team at work!

★Michelle Markey is from outside of Richmond, Virginia and will be a senior this year at Davidson College. She is living in the community of El Barío, near Suchitoto in Cuscatlán, and she is volunteering with the popular educators in the local popular school.

★Michael Meyers is from Oregon and graduated from Whitworth College last year. He is living in the community of Los Naranjos in La Libertad and is volunteering with the local agricultural cooperative.

★Diana Quiñones is from Oakland, CA. She graduated from UC Berkeley last year and was an HIV/AIDS counselor prior to coming to El Salvador. She is living in Soyapango near San Salvador and is volunteering with the Archdiocesan AIDS team.



Summer interns: Michael, Kristen, Greta, Diana, and Michelle

**Letter from CRISPAZ
Volunteer Julie Gerk who
recently finished her term
of service in El Salvador
and has returned to live
in the United States.**

Dearest CRISPAZ friends,

Solidarity... I have spent much of the last seven months contemplating this concept in the communities of Morazán, El Salvador. What does it actually mean to be in "solidarity"? Does it end once I leave? How do I maintain "solidarity" even when I am disillusioned?

As could be expected, I have traversed countless phases in regards to my feelings on this subject. I, like most fresh-off-the-boat volunteers, experienced a romantic phase at first, carried away by the stories from the war, stories about the unity, the dignity, the cause, the righteousness of the struggle. I felt with such passion that the Truth about the war needed to be disclosed to the entire world. It seemed so clear then.

Of course, I had set myself up. Viewing the campesinos as if they were somehow "perfect" in a spiritual sense and projecting my desire to find meaning in life onto the revolution and continued struggle was not the easiest perspective to maintain. I went through a stage of tremendous disappointment when I returned to work and coordinate on a closer level with the committees with whom I had lived for my first few months. Internal conflict, corruption, lack of commitment and apathy plagued my vision. It seemed unfathomable how the people around me fought a revolution or created a refugee community together, side by side, for 12 years and could not even reach consensus at a meeting on the same topic. There were sudden accusations of corruption and neighbors, who once stopped by when they had extra tamales, abruptly stopped talking to one other due to something they supposedly heard the other say and there seemed to be no hope of reconciliation. Tiptoeing around conflict and trying to wade through the rumors became a daily ritual for me in every community.

I became sad and disillusioned with the amount of mistrust people harbored against one another and the resulting community polarization. The thought "if only we could just resolve this dispute we could move ahead" ran through my head incessantly. At all cost, I tried to maintain my neutrality. Unfortunately, for a period of time it

did have a cost. During the head of one particular conflict a couple of months after my return, certain community members felt like I was betraying them because I maintained contact with their "enemies" and refused to take a side. This was an extremely difficult time for me. I asked myself, "What in the world am I doing here? I am hardly effective, none of the projects I am working on can get off the ground due to 'petty' disputes, and now, I am not even inspired by what I am witnessing. I just want to throw in the towel and forget about solidarity."

Looking back on it now, months after everything has settled down and the conflict actually resolved itself for the better (miraculously), I think that it was a valuable experience for me. It gave me insight into what community leaders experience, working so hard and facing a constant barrage of criticism and a lack of trust. At any point, I could have left and escaped the gossip, indirect communication and tension while others do not have this option. One campesino told me that he no longer wants to be a community leader because the attacks on his character were too emotionally damaging.

So why don't people just "work together"? Why can't they overlook their personal differences and unite? I mean if they just worked together, they could move ahead, why can't they see that? First, I must say that living in community is about one of the hardest things to accomplish in this life. I cannot tell you how many times community organizers or solidarity groups would stress that the campesinos have to stick together in order to get ahead. It is true, any oppressed group needs to organize so that their voices have more power. But this is easy to say when most of these workers go home to their singular family unit and put their "community" work aside for the day. Why is it that most overseas volunteers, including myself, need their own house and space? Simple. It is a lot easier to live by yourself. We can take or leave community anytime we want. It is a choice, not a necessity.

It helped me tremendously when I began to face my own faults as a person striving to live by Christian ideals and I put myself in my fellow community member's shoes. Not only is it an incredible task to build a sustainable community wherever you are in the world, it is an even greater task to do this in a post-war environment. Imagine fighting 12 years with black or white, life or death, enemy or ally, good or evil guidelines, always. How do you shut off this mentality especially when the black and white definitions begin to fade? How do you identify who is really on your side when you are suddenly a civilian again, living in "peace"? Is it possible to just let go of your fear and begin

to trust with an open heart after you have witnessed some of the most inhumane brutality of the 20th century? War is an evil thing. It ends and there is no way of erasing its mark.

Moreover, while campesinos were encouraged to organize, they were never given administrative, organizational or conflict resolution assistance. Cooperatives, communities, pastoral teams, and committees, were formed and basically left to fend for themselves. Having lived under a strict regiment during the war, these groups were suddenly in the position to govern themselves with practically no training. It makes absolute sense why the base communities are fraught with conflict. And it makes sense that there is so much mistrust. Besides the inherent, enemy and ally mentality, the mistrust lies in the abandonment many FMLN fighters felt when their leaders used their power to personally profit from the Peace Accords.

We, the CRISPAZ team, discussed this issue of conflict at length in regards to the delegations. Almost every volunteer I have ever met has experienced a phase where the community enamors wears off and the darker side is revealed. So when presenting to a delegation, how do you balance the reality with the vision in such a way that you maintain solidarity? Ultimately maintaining solidarity is the goal, especially during this period of post-war, post-hurricane reconstruction where there is more need than ever. Unfortunately, disclosing internal community problems is an unattractive process and often turns people away. It is understandable that people want to support a righteous people, a unified people who are oppressed only by an outside force. But this is an ideal, not a reality. As Dean Brackley SJ writes, "It is not that the poor are all saints or cuddly. They can be just as petty and selfish as the rich. The point is that they are just like us and do not deserve to suffer this injustice."

I think the real test of solidarity is to stick by people when it is not popular anymore, to stand through the hard times. It is much easier to jump on the current popular international crisis bandwagon, and deal with the glamour (for lack of a better word) of emergency rather than the drudgery of reconstruction. The present situation in El Salvador is dire. The homicide rate is now higher than it ever was during the war and delinquency is a growing community threat. Overwork, unemployment and lack of decent health care and education are self-perpetuating problems.

There are so many forgotten voices that need to be heard, that deserve to be heard. Solidarity is essential to El Salvador's period of reconstruction. But how do we create it in a realistic, responsible, and enabling way? In my opin-

ion, one of the most important things we as communities in solidarity can do is to continue building bridges which move away from the ever-present model of "third world" dependency and promote self-reliance. What does this mean? We should insure that the ideas and execution of projects come mainly from the community itself, with feedback. There should be a clear system of accountability. Solidarity should encourage transparency and honest communication. There should be an emphasis on the spiritual/emotional connection over the monetary connection. Although financial assistance is an obvious plus, I see how much the actual friendship is esteemed, especially now that solidarity groups are few and far between. Last but not least, we must avoid romanticizing El Salvador or "sanctifying" the campesinos. I say this only because I myself fell victim.

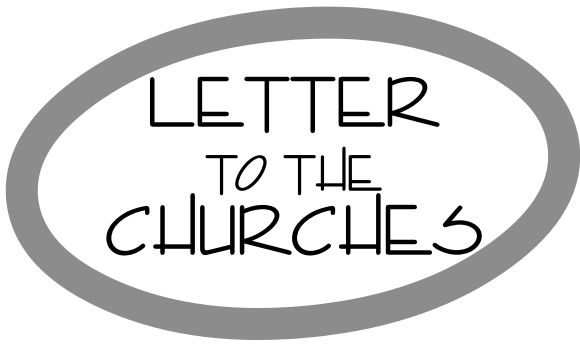
My experience the last several months, although very challenging, did not result in disillusionment but in a grounded enlightenment. I believe that I was destined to go through some reality-shattering phases because I gained a much more realistic view of the world and of myself. What resulted was better than I could have ever anticipated. There were so many beautiful moments, triumphs, causes for celebration: watching a divided community finally pull together and manage a scholarship project (restoring my faith in conflict resolution), hearing 9-year-old Yoelita read at a level more advanced than her parents, teaching someone to make mango pancakes in exchange for a soy donut lesson, feeling loved and loving back despite culture, despite language, despite conflict. I am now fluent in another language, have a family of friends in another country and carry heavy boxes and bags on my head instead of in my hands. I have witnessed incredible human strength, faith, and endurance as well as the inhumane effects of war and poverty. And my life perspective has been transformed because of it. I am so grateful!

I have so much respect for the commitment of CRISPAZ and the vision which has been and continues to be "over the long haul." I want you all to know that my experience as a member of CRISPAZ was one of the most positive of my life. I truly felt (and continue to feel) part of a beautiful community of people whom I respect and love deeply. Thank you for making this experience possible. You all serve as a motivating force for me as I now try to re-enter US society and start my life anew.

You will be in my thoughts and prayers, always.

In solidarity,

Julie Elizabeth Gerk
16 de junio de 1999



from E Salvador

We are persecuted but ever abadoed;
struck dow , but ever eft to die.
(2 Corithias 4:7-8)

□ INFORMATION SERVICE OF THE PASTORAL CENTER, CENTRAL AMERICAN UNIVERSITY, SAN SALVADOR □
EDITED ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Letter to the Churches is a bi othy pubicatio of the Archbishop Oscar Ro e ro Pastora Ce ter, Ce tra A e ri ca U i versity (UCA), Sa Savador. These are etters of fesh ad spirit, writte fro o e Savadora co u ity to a othe ad fro the Savadora Church to the U i versa Church. The fo owi g are excerpts fro this pubicatio.

Medellín: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

by José Comblin

Medellín is not just a reality of yesterday, it still lives today and it certainly will continue to live tomorrow. But it lives in very different ways! "Yesterday," 1968, an air of freedom was breathed in the Church. In Medellín, the air of freedom invaded everything. In this freedom, everything assumed a different air. It was unlike the environment of oppression, in which everything becomes sad, insecure, and powerless.

In the world at that time, the air of freedom was being breathed. The third world was on the rise — full of hope — because decolonization had been virtually completed and only the Portuguese colonies remained. With this freedom, hope was born. It seemed as if all of Latin America would wake up after 500 years of sleep and this created tremendous hope. Additionally, the first world was going through a period of optimism. In Europe, the structures of the well-being of the State had been put into place through the alliance between the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats. In the United States, Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society" project reigned, finalizing Roosevelt's "New Deal." The Democratic Party seemed as if it were going to win. And in the Soviet empire, Khrushchev's reforms seemed to announce a new time, though it was quickly contradicted by the spring repression of Prague. In Cuba, the revolution still shone as a light of hope for the Americas.

In those years, some used the words reform and development, while others used the word revolution. But everyone talked of the future. Everyone wanted to prepare for the time to come and everyone was sure that the future was going to be better than the present. Many people were enchanted by the formula of "revolution in freedom" or "socialism through democratic means." Each one was free to choose. Medellín occurred precisely at the moment when the elite began to oppose these movements. They were in disagreement and they took recourse through the creation of military regimes.

This air of freedom lasted until 1973. Pinochet's coup in Chile was a sign to everyone and it was felt all over Latin America. Hope was lost and has yet to be reborn, despite the formal restoration of democracy. This new democracy does not generate hope because it does not provide people with freedom.

The 1970s was a time of transition from an era of freedom to an era of renovated oppression. The United States reaffirmed its imperial vocation and tried to take back control of Latin America. This mission was entrusted to the Latin American militaries that had been carefully trained in U.S. schools and military bases. The armed forces had to open the doors for financial capital, to multinationals, and to all of North American culture. They did a good job and when they finally left they were able to say: Mission completed!

As Christopher Lasch, one of the sharper analysts of U.S. society, said that there was a "rebellion of the elite" which began in the 1970s and was brought to fruition in the 1980s. It was a revolution that was actually a counterrevolution. It was led by Presidents Reagan and Bush and by the Republican party, all of whom were motivated by the "new right," a movement full of aggression and a spirit of triumph. They declared a war against the poor and initiated political programs that were designed to crush popular organizations and movements. This war continues and, though he was elected under a different program, President Clinton has had to cede to this movement and act as if he were a Republican president. This is seen in the fact that the Republicans won the majority in both houses of Congress.

In Latin America, the changes in the United States have had profound repercussions. The new right in the U.S. waves the implacable neoliberal flag. Their idol is Milton Friedman. Neoliberalism invaded Latin America from all sides: through the universities (especially in the schools of economy), through the governments, through cultural media, and through the multinationals and all of their propaganda. This invasion announced a new era of happiness and prosperity.

In Chile, neoliberalism was introduced in 1975. In other countries, it came into full force at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. Neoliberalism razed the land like a hurricane. It crushed social workers' movements and it imposed its law onto governments. The triumph of the bourgeoisie was arrogant and cynical. It was the great revenge of the rich over the poor, because the rich had been scared for a moment between 1960 and 1973. It was, and still is, a great war of the rich against the poor.

This reality has remained very clear in a drama that has not ended. As I write, Pinochet is being detained in London. For the past three months, members of the Chilean bourgeoisie have been hysterical. They are so angry because they feel impotent to defend their idol. The hatred of the rich towards the poor has never been seen with such clarity: the man who gave them more than wealth — opulence — has been detained! All of the scorn that is usually hidden below the fabric of society is coming out. It reveals the hatred of the rich for the "broken" Chileans.

And at the same time, the government and the parties of the *Concertación* (The "Agreement" Coalition), consisting of the Christian Democrats, the Socialists, and the Radicals, are in a total disagreement. They have discovered that though they govern, they have no power. The power continues to be held by Pinochet, even as he is detained in London. They continue to be scared of him today. And the same is true for the popular masses that still feel the presence of his dictatorship.

The same drama does not exist in other countries, but the situation is the same. It is the great revenge of the rich, the cynical triumph of the traditional elite. And the neoliberal ideology offers the justification: according to this doctrine, the selfishness of the rich will liberate the poor. That is how economists, the new magicians, explain things.

For these reasons, the air that many now breathe is an air of fear, disagreement, and hopelessness. What most destroys hope is the message that is repeated one thousand times over: There is no other alternative, no other way.

The Church has had a parallel evolution. At the time of Medellín, the Church also breathed the air of freedom. The principal result of the Vatican II Council was the introduction of the air of freedom. Pope Pius XII's time as pontificate, a time in which the air in the Church had been made almost unbreathable, was coming to a close. Fear invaded everything. It was present in the clergy, among the religious, among the theologians, and among all of those that should have pronounced a word. The reign of the law was total and absolute. Father Lyonnet lost his cathedra in Rome for having expressed Saint Paul's message of freedom and the law.

This was the context in which Vatican II came about. It gave the impression that each individual could think and express their thoughts in the Church, something that had disappeared since the time of the Trent Council. At Medellín, the bishops were also under the impression that they could speak freely, make proposals, and make decisions with freedom. But at Santo Domingo (1992), exactly the opposite was true. The bishops were given the impression that they could not express themselves, much less make action proposals. The Roman machine maintained absolute control. This produced on-going bad feelings. Freedom had been suppressed.

Once again, fear prevails in the Church, and only a handful of retired people feel free. Each year, new controls, new warnings, and new condemnations come from Rome. The reign of the law has come back to take control. From this a great disagreement and environment which lacks enthusiasm has arisen on the part of all of those that believed and had hope in Medellín. Now many doubt their feelings and ask if they had not chosen the wrong path.

In Medellín the push from *Populorum Progressio* was present. It was an invitation to support, to participate, and to commit oneself to the initiatives of development that had come from this time. But when neoliberalism brought about the great victory of the elite and the profound defeat of the poor, almost nothing happened. Santo Domingo said something, but in such a discreet way that no one even noticed.

In Medellín, Paulo Freire's ideas of liberating education were present at least spiritually if not physically. The Church was concerned about the problems of education and many priests and nuns worked in the field of education. In this context, Paulo Freire's message was a revelation. Many felt that Catholic education had only supported the most conservative sectors of society. But Paulo Freire offered an alternative. Liberating education echoed with great intensity. The bishops at Medellín felt as if they were participating in a school of liberating education.

Today not only has liberating education died, there is not even any type of popular education. There are still schools, but education for the poor does not exist. After the advent of Medellín's freedom, fear has returned. Medellín subsists, but in a clandestine and marginalized way, as if it were the suspicious sector of the Church. But it continues to survive because the situation of the people of Latin America that brought about Medellín does not just subsist, rather because it has, in many ways, worsened.✚

The Inheritance Left to the New ARENA Government

The Plays Made by Francisco Flores

The Legacy of Former Presidents Cristiani and Calderón Sol

On June 1, Francisco Flores took the presidential office. With this act, the ARENA party began its third consecutive term in the executive office. Obviously, Flores did not appear out of nowhere. He comes from an economic, social and political context whose most important elements have been forged into the framework of the two previous administrations. What inheritance was left to the new government by these previous administrations?

The Francisco Flores administration receives the following from the former ARENA governments:

- a) A national economy that is disjointed in its three fundamental sectors: financial, industrial, and agricultural
 - b) A framework of neoliberal economic policies, which has resulted in concrete actions such as the privatization of the power company, the telecommunications system, and the pension fund
 - c) A framework of social policies which has had limited success at a structural level (i.e. the reduction of poverty) but has had relative success in the specific areas of education and the expansion of basic social services in rural areas (i.e. water drainage, potable water)
 - d) A disconnection between economic policies (and their macroeconomic gains) and social policies
 - e) Debilitation of the key institutions working for the democratization of the country, including the Human Rights Ombuds Office and the National Civilian Police
 - f) A political and economic strengthening of the Cristiani "group," which has helped this group to become an important and unavoidable pressure on the new government
 - g) The unresolved problem of public security in which the Minister of Public Security, the leadership of the National Civilian Police, the Public Security Academy and the police force are all involved
 - h) An intermeshing between the ARENA party, big business (especially the financial sector), and the State
- Given this set of circumstances, the unavoidable challenge facing the new government will be to:
- a) Re-articulate the national economy by formulating a medium- and long-range national development plan and by forming of an institution that guarantees the execution of such a plan.
 - b) Achieve a minimal coherence between economic policies and social policies. This calls for a redefinition of the political framework of the previous administrations. It also requires the State to be more intentional about channeling macroeconomic achievements towards solving structural problems such as poverty and the socioeconomic marginalization faced by the majority.
 - c) Continue to institutionalize democracy by taking back the original ideas behind the Human Rights Ombuds Office and the National Civilian Police and by rethinking the role of the Ministry of Public Security in the democratization process.
 - d) Break apart (or redefine) the connections between ARENA, big business, and the State.
 - e) Diminish (or "break") the economic and political domination of the Cristiani group.
- What are the possible scenarios that can be seen for the immediate future? Here are three:
- 1) The ARENA party is redefined, affirming the autonomy of the State. This would include an articulation of economic and social policies in function of the most urgent needs of the majorities. In profiling this scenario, conflict between the government team and the Cristiani group would be inevitable. The resolution of this conflict would depend on economic support (by the industrialists and the agricultural producers) and political support (dependent upon the composition of the Legislative Assembly following the elections in the year 2000).
 - 2) The neoliberal program inherited by the new administration would deepen, furthering the gap between economic and social policies. This would represent a preservation of the current ARENA profile. That is to say, more of the same. The risk of this scenario is the negative effect that it might have on the ARENA party. However, this does not necessarily translate into political

failure, which would require the existence of a viable alternative, something that cannot be seen in the near future.

- 3) A mixed formula would be implemented. This would be characterized by moderate ARENA reform: maintenance of the basic neoliberal program which has been inherited and strengthening of social policies which were already under works by the previous administrations.

The period of time between this recent presidential take over and the legislative and municipal elections in the year 2000 does not likely hold any great surprises or institutional political changes in store. Perhaps the most important movement towards one of these three outlined scenarios will happen after the elections. In the mean time, it will be important to carefully follow the repositioning made by the ARENA tendencies and sectors. This should be viewed in light of the future electoral process in which ARENA will not only have to face the FMLN, but will have to face itself.

Francisco Flores' Capabilities

There is little doubt that the one thing that cannot be questioned with regard to the recently-elected President is his ability to gain favorable public opinion. The first example of this was seen in the launching of his pre-candidacy. There was great optimism generated by the idea that Francisco Flores, who comes from the new generation of ARENA and has no ties to the old chains, represented renovation for the ARENA party.

However, "Paquito" (Flores) does have connections to some of the "tough hands" of his party, including the Armando Calderón Sol group. The first sign of Flores' astute political maneuvering did not only highlight the "freshness" of this young, exciting ARENA party member. It also inspired Salvadorans to perceive "Paco" as an intelligent aspirant for the presidency.

Once elected, "Paco" mocked the naiveté of public opinion by announcing that cabinet appointments would include feedback from all social sectors. There was a new wave of optimism: "Paquito" went against ARENA tradition (as practiced by his "enemy" Cristiani) and offered proof

that his intentions to rethink Salvadoran politics were sincere. Following this wave of new optimism, a new disappointment: the polemic cabinet appointments were far from what was expected.

Unarguable evidence that this appointment process ended up being just one more of Flores' plays to promote himself as a lover of democracy is seen in the slate of cabinet members. Flores accepted—or had to accept?—Mario Acosta Oertel to continue on as the head of the Ministry of the Interior and appointed Mauricio Sandoval to the direction of the National Civilian Police. These appointments contradicted much of what was believed regarding Flores' renovating impetus, his interest in being independent of party lines, and his desire to democratize. Nothing in the trajectory of these appointed functionaries—who now hold decisive roles in the consolidation of democracy—shows that their ideals coincide in the slightest with what "Paquito" has claimed to defend.

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ARENA's death squad history
continue to monopolize power only
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That individuals so closely tied to ARENA's death squad history continue to monopolize power only serves to create serious doubts that Flores will comply with his promises. We do not expect any great changes from the old ARENA friends that will continue to hold governmental positions. As far as the new officials who do not have a long history with ARENA are concerned, we can only say that this, in and of itself, is no guarantee of change. Many of those who are tied to ARENA, though they do not run the party or have a long history with the party, are still ARENA party members. It is yet to be seen whether Francisco Flores is anything more than a well-placed facade that has allowed his party to free itself from deterioration and once again win the presidential seat.✚

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SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS UPDATE

SOA Watch Seeks SOA-Labor Research Volunteer

SOA Watch is seeking a volunteer to research and write a report linking the School of the Americas with human rights abuse, violence and intimidation against labor organizers and workers in Latin America.

SOA Activist Father Roy Bourgeois 1999 Speaking Tour Schedule

Wells, Maine	July 9-11
San Diego, California	August 13-15
Philadelphia, Penn.	August 20-23
Akron, Ohio	August 31- Sept. 3
Burlington, Vermont	September 12-14
U. of Montevallo, AL	September 22
Minneapolis, Minnesota	September 24-28
Syracuse, New York	October 3-6

Nunca Mas! Never Again!

November 19-21, 1999

Main Gate, Ft. Benning, Georgia

We need 10,000 People to Stand Vigil 5,000 to Cross the Line, 100 to Risk Arrest!

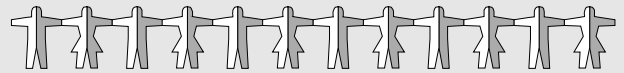
For more information, contact:

*School of the Americas Watch
P.O. Box 4566, Washington, D.C. 20017-0566
(202) 234-3440
soawatch@knight-hub.com
<http://www.soaw.org/#act>*

¡Que Vivan los Mártires de la UCA!

Join the Commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the Jesuit Martyrdom

CRISPAZ is scheduling delegations around the November 16, 1999 anniversary. If you, your church, or your school are interested in joining a delegation, please contact us before August 31, 1999.



CRISPAZ staff Jeanne Marie Ridders will visit the United States from October 1 – 20, 1999.

She will be available to speak with groups about El Salvador's current reality as well as how to become involved with the work of CRISPAZ through delegations/study seminars or by becoming a short- or long-term volunteer.

For more information or to reserve a speaking engagement, contact:

Jeanne Marie Ridders
011-503-226-0829
pazsal@netcomsa.com

Stan deVoogd
210-222-2018
crispaz@igc.apc.org

CRISPAZ

319 Camden Street
San Antonio, Texas 78215

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