

# HIM Update

Newsletter of Humanitarian Interfaith Ministries

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## HIM Helps Address Crisis in Guatemala

This past year HIM has established some new mission supported projects in Guatemala in Central America. After a trip there in October, we found a major crisis going on in this very poor Third World country. Every year, thousands of babies, toddlers and children were being adopted from Guatemala. Last year, there were more than 3,000 children adopted. This past year, because of a new government policy, fewer than 50 children have been adopted. This is the reason why large numbers of babies, toddlers and children are backing up in orphanages that are struggling to care for them. Please help us to do what we do best; support well run, loving orphanages that care for orphaned and abandoned children so that they can care for additional children that no one seems to want. Children who also have a "Right to Life".



*Orphaned and abandoned children living at La Fundacion Remar Orphanage in Guatemala City, Guatemala.*

These are some of the reasons for this child crisis in Guatemala. Like most countries in this region, it suffers from extreme poverty. Nearly 80% of rural families and well over one half of all Guatemalans live below the national poverty line. Guatemala is no exception to the rule that poverty and a lack of opportunity breed serious social problems such as homelessness, illiteracy, and crime among others.

For many years, Guatemala has had a reputation for being a free market for adoption of babies and small children. The main reason for this is that the adoption process has had very little oversight by the government. One benefit of an unregulated process is that children can easily and quickly be placed with loving families capable of caring for them. Over the past 10 years, more than 90% of Guatemalan adoptions were to American parents. So many Guatemalan children have been adopted that currently one out of every ten children born in Guatemala is now being raised in the United States by American parents.

Under pressure from the United States government, Guatemala ratified an international child protection treaty. This treaty required the creation of a government agency which now regulates all adoptions. The intent of the treaty is to end some of the high profits and abuses that were made on the adoption of children. While children are, in fact, being protected by the treaty, it has had some harmful consequences as well. The bureaucratic red tape has brought the adoption process nearly to a halt. Only a small fraction of the children who legitimately need someone to care for them are now being placed in families capable of doing so. This means that more and more children are being neglected and abandoned rather than adopted. Authorities predict that many of these children will likely become homeless. All of the orphanages in Guatemala that care for homeless children are privately funded receiving no financial support from the government. Therefore, they are limited in the number of

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**HIM is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization**



*Volunteers at the Fundacion Remar Orphanage operate a small factory producing cleaning products which they sell door-to-door to help pay expenses of caring for the children.*

children that they can take in. As is often the case, the victims of greed and corruption are the innocent, helpless children.

On the October mission trip to Guatemala, one orphanage that cares for homeless and abandoned children was selected for support from HIM. The Remar Foundation Orphanage is located in Guatemala City, and is operated by a group of mostly Evangelical Christian volunteers who live as a community with the children. They also rely primarily on private donations. In addition to donations, they operate a small factory producing cleaning agents which they sell door to door.

Lack of funding is the obstacle this orphanage faces in helping the many children that will likely soon become homeless and at risk of living on the streets. To enable them to care for more homeless and abandoned children, HIM has made a commitment to help pay the

monthly expenses of a number of the children. Any amount you are able to send to HIM in support of their mission projects will be deeply appreciated and we assure you that more than 95% of your donation to our all volunteer organization will go directly to help the child.