

Building Homes Leads to Sharing Gospel in Guatemala

A commitment to meet the physical needs of Guatemalans more than 15 years ago has paved the way for the gospel to come full circle. **Paradise Bound Ministries** earns the respect and trust of those they are serving, then shares the gospel when opportunities arise.

Executive Director of Paradise Bound Dan Smith says early on, Paradise Bound identified a need in Guatemala and started doing something about it. In this case, people needed homes.

“We started out with our mission teams **building homes** and doing medical clinics,” Smith explains. “What has grown out of that—especially in the last five to 10 years—is discipleship, growing out of the impact we’re having within that village.”

As people in the village have turned to Christ, God has done something miraculous, says Smith. “**Discipleship groups** began to grow and turn into church plants without us really specifically engineering a church plant. It automatically happened as they began to grab hold of the gospel themselves.”

Next, Paradise Bound noted a need to begin placing **national missionaries** in these villages, so leadership training was necessary. Smith says that’s why the ministry just started a program. “In fact, in 2011 it was our very first lay pastor leadership training. We have 22 lay pastors and leaders who are a part of this.”

Smith says Paradise Bound is partnering with Timothy Leadership Training Institute to provide two-year training. It’s a multiplication approach to leadership, he says. “Within a year of beginning the training, the pastors and leaders are able to do the same training with others within the community.”

What's interesting is that even though the training isn't over, many of these believers have action plans. "They're saying, 'I know that village next to me needs Jesus Christ.' Somehow, they're going to get there. They're going to walk if they need to. They're going to get to that village and present the gospel to their neighbors."

These students are poor and can't afford to get to the training each quarter. Smith says, "We actually send our vehicles out to the villages on a quarterly basis and pick up the pastors, bring them to our facility, then take them back after that weekend event."