



## Bearing the Fruit of Transformation: Los Abelines

APRIL 2010

The remote area of Los Abelines, located in the northeastern mountains of El Salvador, is comprised of 11 villages. The closest town is well over an hour's drive away or a three hour walk. More than 75 percent of the villages' inhabitants live in extreme poverty, making less than one dollar per day. Historically, the area has never had access to health care or clean water, and only a few people have had sanitation facilities.

In 2001 ENLACE began work with the extremely motivated *Iglesia Piedra Angular* (Cornerstone Church). Since that time, radical transformation has taken place as the church has worked incredibly hard to serve its neighbors. As a result of this church's example, the entire region has been impacted and dozens of other churches in the area have been inspired to seek ENLACE's support to transform their own communities. Currently, we are working with 10 churches here, but need your prayers and support to meet the growing demand.



Pastor Victorio Paz (left) of *Iglesia Piedra Angular* talks with Francisco Gonzalez, ENLACE agronomer.



Pastor Virgilio (right) and his church in Cirigual will implement latrine initiatives in 2010.



Three churches in the region have already installed more than 300 latrines.



In 2008 the community finished a clean water initiative benefitting 271 households.

### Snapshot of Progress

- 3 Health Committees
- Health Clinic
- Medical Teams
- Nutritional Programs
- Improved Stove Projects
- Clean Water System
- 2 Agricultural Committees
- More than 60 New Home Gardens
- Community Center
- More than 300 Latrines
- 4 Pedestrian Bridges
- More than 50 New Homes
- Electrification Project
- Improved Roads

### Measuring the Impact\*

- **Infant mortality rates have dropped from 47 per 1,000 to two per 1,000 per year.**
- Insecure housing rates have decreased from 32% (110 of 341 houses were unsafe) to 14% (48 of 341 houses are unsafe).
- Access to clean water has increased from 1% (4 of 341 households had access to clean water) to 79% (271 of 341 households have access to clean water).
- Access and use of latrines has increased from 33% (113 of 341 households used latrines) to 93% (316 of 341 households use latrines).
- Access to electricity has increased from 0% to 95% (324 of 341 households have access to electricity).

\*Impact estimates since 2004

# Profiles of Transformation: Vilma and Nelson\*



***“We’ve seen amazing change... Now it is rare to even hear of children with diarrhea and vomiting.”*** -Vilma Membreno



## **Vilma Membreno**

Vilma Membreno, a 30-year-old mother of four, was a leader in the *Piedra Angular* church and one of the founding members of the Abelines health committee. Vilma says, "In Abelines, we were taught many things about creating a healthy community. We've been taught in order to teach others." And that's exactly what Vilma did. After moving to the neighboring hamlet of Cirigual, Vilma became a leader in her new church home and became one of the founding members of their health and agricultural committees. After many years of working Vilma says, "We've seen amazing change... Now it is rare to even hear of children with diarrhea and vomiting."

She says that her motivation to work for the health of her community has grown as she has seen the impact over the years. Vilma also stresses the change she has seen inside of her church. "Before people rarely visited our church and didn't trust [us]. But through all of the initiatives, we've built relationships and have all grown closer."

## **Nelson David Paz**

Nelson David Paz is a dynamic young leader who has earned respect in the Abelines region. Nelson was also one of the founding health committee members in Abelines. Upon seeing the work of *Iglesia Piedra Angular*, he motivated his church in the neighboring hamlet of Pajigua to get involved. He comments that working with ENLACE has helped to quench his "thirst for more knowledge of the Bible" while giving him the motivation to form relationships in his community. "Too often church leaders are asleep to the needs around them, but this is what I like most about ENLACE...They help wake us up as church leaders to see that we can make a difference."

In addition to being a church and cell group leader, he also serves the agricultural and housing committees, water board and serves as Secretary of the Pajigua Community Association. "I never thought we would be able to achieve all that we have. But when you are given the tools, you start to say, 'We can do this!'"

\*See Vilma and Nelson highlighted in our 2009 Annual Report and video interviews at [www.enlaceonline.org](http://www.enlaceonline.org)

## **Get Involved**

In Abelines we have seen the infant mortality drop from **47 per 1,000** per year to just **2 per 1,000** per year. In 2010 ENLACE will work with churches throughout El Salvador to implement eight latrine initiatives (214 latrines) benefitting **1,000** people for a total cost of **\$43,000**.



**\$43 Provides a Latrine for One Person**

**DONATE TODAY**  
at [www.enlaceonline.org/support](http://www.enlaceonline.org/support)