

# INTERNATIONAL PROJECT PROPOSAL

PROJECT 0907



**Cross International**

*Delivering Food, Shelter and Hope in the Name of Jesus*

# Esperanza de Vida

(Hope of Life) Housing

— Zacapa, Guatemala —



Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 4:16



## We are a ministry

that mobilizes the global Church to transform the poor and their communities materially and spiritually for the glory of Jesus Christ.

Rather than create new institutions to distribute aid, we support existing ministries and churches already serving the poor. In addition to being the most cost-effective way of helping the poor, empowering these ministries allows us to support the Church's spiritual mission and its important position of leadership in poor communities.

We consider every gift we receive as a precious resource from God. We direct every donation to its intended project, provide honest and accurate reports to our donors, and keep overhead costs to an industry low. We handle funds with utmost integrity and hold our ministry partners in the field to the same high standards by asking them to document costs and the impact of their outreach.

We invite you to join with us as we seek to transform the lives of the poor materially and spiritually — ways that please the Father and glorify Him in Heaven and on earth.





## Project Synopsis

### Description

This project seeks to help build three houses, freeing 21 needy people from extreme poverty, blessing them with the opportunity to live safer, healthier and more dignified lives. Thanks to generous donor gifts, most of the funds have already been committed for this year, but there is still a **small funding gap** and you can help us meet that need!

### Purpose

To protect families against storms and other threats to their safety and security, while lifting up the poor with the hope of Christ.

### Location

Rural villages in Zacapa, Guatemala.

### Cost

Each home costs about \$4,400 to build, but thanks to generous donor gifts only an **additional \$880 per home** is needed to build three durable new homes for three families.

### Highlights

- Esperanza de Vida (“Hope of Life”) brings God’s love to rural villages in the Zacapa area by meeting the urgent needs of the poor through baby rescue missions, medical care, food and housing projects.
- This year, Cross International wants to partner with Esperanza de Vida to build three houses for extremely poor families living in Zacapa.
- The standard Esperanza de Vida houses are assembled from cement and stucco, topped with corrugated metal roofs. They will keep families that are living in unsafe conditions dry during rainstorm and help families live more dignified lives.
- Your generous gift is needed to cover the cost of materials and skilled labor.



*Children walk through Los Limones, a village near Zacapa, where residents lack safe, sturdy homes.*





## The Need: Crumbling Homes in a Forgotten Village



Los Limones is a three-and-a-half-hour drive from Guatemala City. It is located in the Central American Dry Corridor, a drought-prone region that extends from southern Mexico to northern Panama. In the mid-2000s, the dusty village experienced an influx of unemployed farm workers who migrated from the surrounding mountains in search of work after a coffee rust disease destroyed most of the country's plantations.

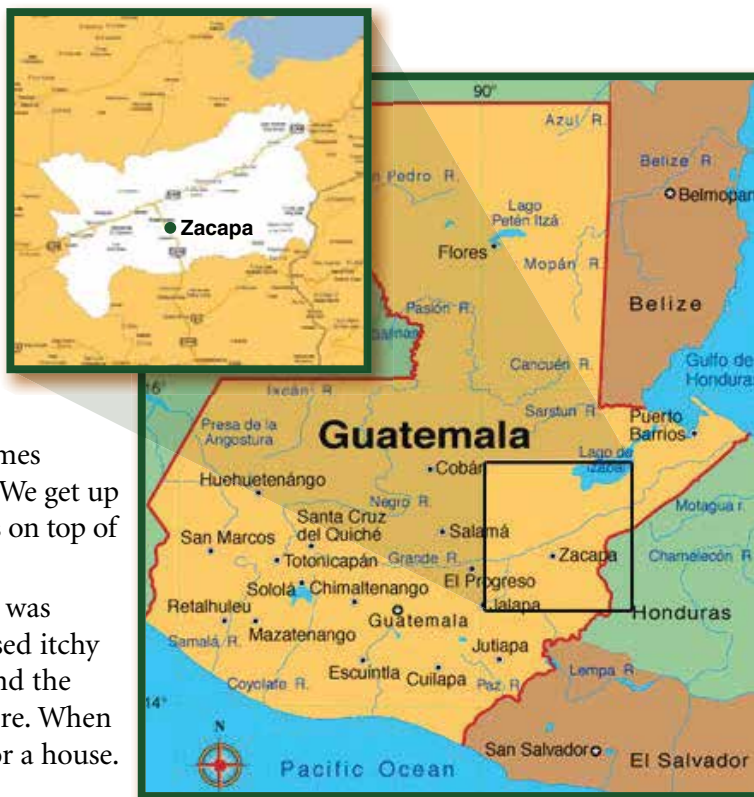
To help these workers, the government said it would provide small plots of land for basic housing but then abruptly stopped the project, leaving residents homeless. With no money to construct a home, most of the poorer families were forced to live in makeshift dirt-floor shacks that provided little protection from the elements. Nearly a decade later, with the worst drought in

recent history plaguing the region, work has remained scarce and residents remain trapped in their poverty.

Francisco Vasquez is one of the village's more fortunate residents. After years of working on a plantation with inconsistent pay, he and his family moved to Los Limones and he quickly found work feeding cows for \$8 per day. His wife, Olga, stays home with their four children. "Home" is a crumbling, rotting wood shanty they built when they moved in six years ago. To replace rotting pieces of their walls and roof, they use a patchwork of items — a table leg, branches, palm fronds — anything that will keep the water out.

"As poor people, we look for what we can to fix it but it costs a lot," said Olga on a recent Cross International visit to the village. "They didn't nail the roof down very well, so when it rains, water comes in all over. Sometimes when it rains, we get scared. We get up to check on the children. They sleep with plastic bags on top of them so they don't get wet."

Olga worries most about her family's health. She was recently diagnosed with a skin disease that has caused itchy splotches on her face. The children are often sick and the family doesn't fit into their one-room space anymore. When she prays, Olga asks God for healing and, one day, for a house.





## Ministry Description: Hope of Life

“I was tired of being poor,” says Carlos Vargas, who grew up in an impoverished family in rural Guatemala. So, at the age of 16, he went to the U.S. to seek his fortune. “I called it the promised land,” he says. Carlos landed a menial job polishing costume jewelry in a factory and quickly rose through the ranks to run the company by age 20.

Although he was living the immigrant’s dream, Carlos was haunted by memories of the extreme poverty into which he was born. He knew others in the world were suffering and living in deplorable housing made from shoddy materials, with dirt floors and leaky roofs.

Carlos eventually started his own jewelry manufacturing company, supplying large chains including Walmart, but this continued success still left him feeling uneasy and unsatisfied. Then his life fell apart. He was diagnosed with a painful, chronic skin condition with no cure. He lost his fingernails, patches of skin, and the ability to walk or use his hands. Certain he would die, Carlos returned to Guatemala to spend his last days in his hometown of Llano Verde. There, at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, he prayed for three days and three nights. It was a heartfelt plea for forgiveness and mercy. “If I walk, I will dedicate my life to the poor,” he told Jesus. And God heard his prayer.

The next morning, Carlos was miraculously healed. After he got dressed, he walked to the end of the block where he saw a piece of land for sale. Seeing it as a sign from God, he immediately bought the plot with the intention of glorifying the Lord by building a nursing home for the elderly — his first act of ministry. Today, the ministry born in his hour of desperation, Esperanza de Vida, is transforming thousands of families and entire communities through its baby rescue missions, medical care, water projects, feeding programs and housing projects.

“I think in the beginning it was more like a business deal with God. I was looking for benefits for me — his mercy, his healing. But now this ministry is my passion. It’s not about me. It’s about God’s Kingdom.”

Carlos wants to build homes in poor Zacapa-area villages for impoverished families. They have yet to see that God cares for them so much that he is providing them a safe, sturdy house. By supporting this housing project, you can join Esperanza de Vida to free families like Francisco and Olga’s from crippling poverty and simultaneously demonstrate Jesus’ abundant love!



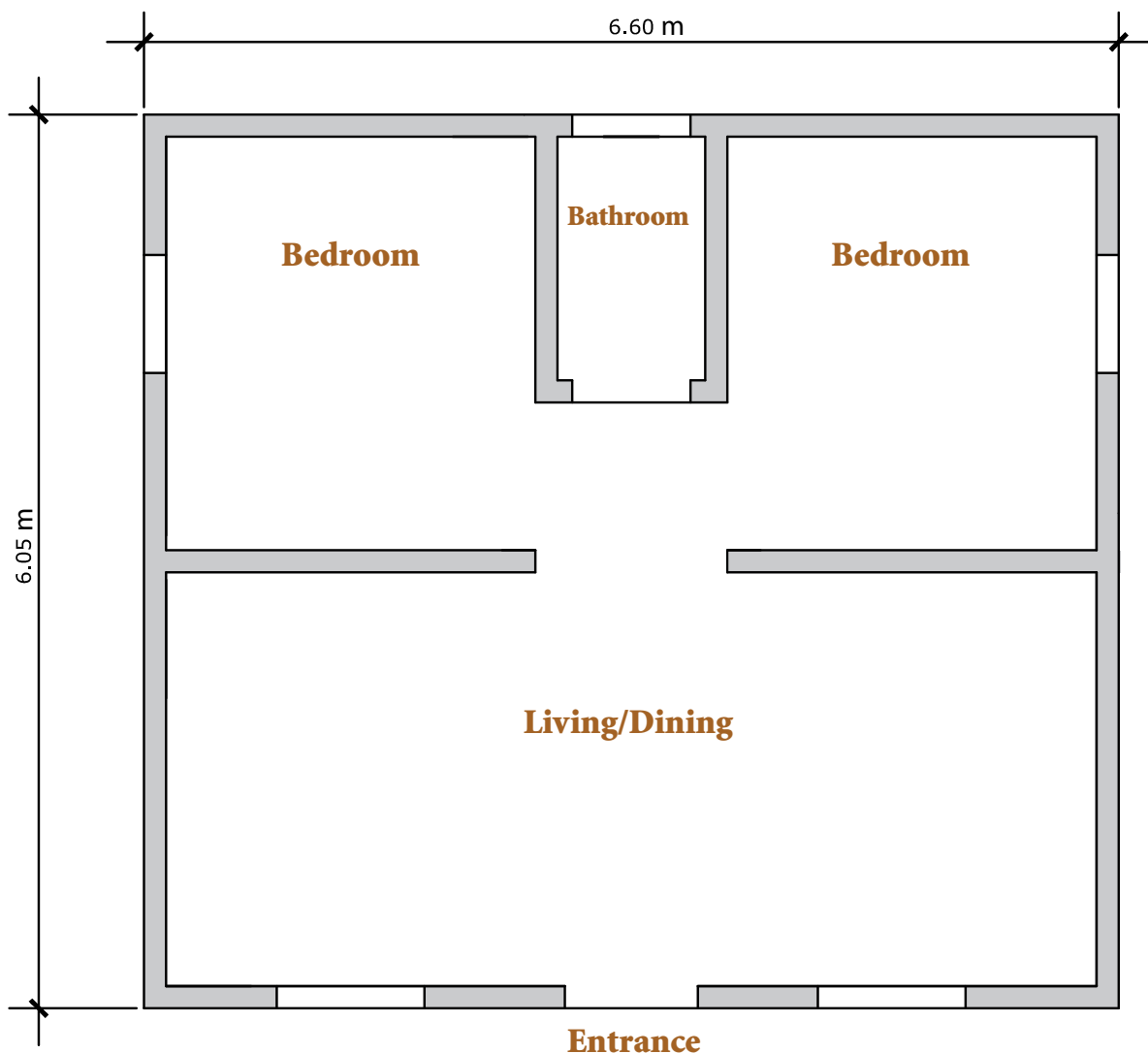
*Carlos Vargas, founder of Hope of Life International.*



## Typical Floorplan

The homes you provide will be built out of cement and stucco, reinforced with rebar and topped with corrugated metal roofs. They will have sturdy doors and windows with solid shutters. During heavy rains, these homes will remain dry inside. For the first time, poor families will be able to sleep through a storm!

Hope of Life houses typically have two bedrooms, a living/dining room space and a small bathroom or utility room, and measure nearly 40 square meters. For areas where abundant water is accessible, a toilet and septic tank are installed. The toilet flushes when a bucket of water is poured into the bowl. For those areas where water is less accessible, outside latrines are built instead. This is critical because proper sanitation facilities translate into healthier children, healthier communities and a dramatically improved quality of life.







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### Give Now!

For years, poor villagers in Zacapa have hoped and prayed for safe shelter. *Now you can give it to them!*

Please join us today in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in need! Give a gift that will deliver them from their extreme vulnerability to the rain, wind and disease! As the ministry builds homes, it will also build God's kingdom. Each benefiting family will receive a Bible and they will hear the Gospel message through a local pastor. ***Your generous support through Cross International will provide a permanent solution — a durable concrete home — that will stand as a lasting symbol of Christ's love for the poor.***

“How can we get someone to believe in God's love? By meeting their physical needs first,” said Carlos Vargas. “When we return to visit a family whose house we've built, the family is back in church. Every person who donates becomes a preacher of the gospel to these families whether they know it or not.”

***Please let the Lord use you to answer the prayers of the poor and usher in their miracles!***

If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

**1 John 3:17-18**

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### Our Promise to You!

Proceeds from this campaign will be used to cover any expenditures for this project incurred through June 30, 2018, the close of our ministry's new fiscal year. In the event that more funds are raised than needed to fully fund the project, the excess funds, if any, will be used to meet the most urgent needs of the ministry.