

in Honduras

Janet Alcántara

Violence. Violence often impacts the lives of participants during our workshops—and it happened yet again during the Assembly.

Tegucigalpa delegate **Bessy Vargas** received the stunning news that her boyfriend Roberto was shot through the heart while trying to save his younger brother from being beaten by gang members. He had just left a message on Bessy's cell phone—which she heard only after the report of his death. He told her he was on his way to pick up some of his mom's freshly-made tamales as a treat for Bessy and her family.

How these tragic moments make us long for the promise in Isaiah 60:18, *"Violence shall no more be heard in your land..."*.

With both the Women's Spirituality Group and the Health Care Volunteers this month, we began working on non-violent conflict management techniques—something really needed by our leaders, and which we hope to work on church-wide in the new year.



¡Fútbol! "You can't talk about Honduras without talking about *fútbol* (soccer)," a taxi driver confided to me this month. "It's very important!" This month's win (1-0) of the game against Mexico certainly helped boost the Honduras team's traditionally low self-esteem, since Mexico is always resentfully perceived as The Best at everything—be it business, culture, or of course, sports. But Honduras qualified to go on to the next round. *Go Honduras!!*

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"O God our Saviour, gather us together...so that we may be thankful and praise your holy name."

-- 1 Chronicles 16:35

The **National Extraordinary Assembly** of the ICLH gathered on Nov. 7-9, with all but two communities represented.

We undertook the gruelling task of overhauling the **ICLH By-laws**. The last time these were revised was in 1987, despite many changes in the church. The job required endless hours of concentration and discussion, but we **reached the goal** of revising all 31 Articles. What a sober undertaking: shaping the present and future of the ICLH!

I served on the two-person team taking the Minutes; later editing (15 pp.) took an extra chunk of time this month.



Assembly finish: church leaders from nearly every ICLH faith community join together for Holy Communion.



(Above) At Cristo Liberador ("Christ the Liberator") in Olancho. (Below) Children engage in the adults' project, "Where I Fit in My Community and My Church."



The program vehicle made its **maiden trip** this past week taking Eva and I over hours of bone-rattling roads to the congregation of *Cristo Liberador* in Olancho (in eastern ranching country). All the bumps shook loose the battery connection so when we stopped, the car wouldn't start--an easily-fixed problem. This was the **last** of our *Women of Faith and Political Action* **regional workshops**.

The last of this month there's a big push to finish all projects and reports in time for our **year-end evaluation** on Dec 8-9. The ICLH offices **close** on Dec. 12 for the traditional Honduran Christmas vacation period.

In faith and service in Christ,

--janet