

Postville Update-Pastor Steve Brackett 10/30/08.

The first piece of major news is that several men have been returned to the Postville community following their completion of the five month jail term. They are being given temporary work permits and temporary permission to remain in the country in exchange for their testimony in active investigations of Agriprocessors. It is my understanding that none of these men have yet been interviewed to discover if their testimony will be useful. We were originally told that if their testimony was not deemed important, they would be deported. Members of the raid response team are negotiating with the government to guarantee that these potential witnesses will be allowed to remain in the U.S. for one year. As of today, 22 have returned, and we are expecting an additional 13 in the near future. They need housing and they need to be supported until they find employment (something that will be difficult at best).

This leads to the second piece of major news. Because of the added cost of housing and other support for these returning workers, and because it is now obvious that the most of the women with the GPS bracelets will not be given court dates in the near future, St. Bridget's Hispanic Ministry will not have enough funds to meet the upcoming needs. We are therefore putting out an additional request for funds to all individuals and congregations who can support us in these efforts. Please send contributions to: St. Bridget's Hispanic Ministry, PO Box 369, Postville, IA 52162-0369.

The third piece of major news is that Erik Camayd-Freixas (interpreter during the court trials at the Cattle Congress) was in Postville last week and spoke at Luther in Decorah. He has new information about what happened to the workers while they were being held at the Cattle Congress that should cause us all to cry out for justice, and also declare the actions of ICE unconstitutional--not just for preventing due process for those who were arrested, but also for ignoring the constitutional separation of powers by having the Executive Branch dictate (and even SCRIPT!) the way in which the Judicial Branch processed and tried these cases. I touch on this information very briefly in my congregational newsletter for the month of November. The notes from Erik Camayd-Freixas' speech are attached. At some point the Luther Ministries webpage will have a link to the video of the lecture (<http://ministry.luther.edu>).

Finally, Rigoberta Menchu, winner of the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize (see bio http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1992/tum-bio.html) is planning to come to Postville on Saturday, November 8th. We will provide more information on this as the plans are confirmed.