

August 2009

Dear friends,

I bring you greetings from a very cool and wet Manitoba. Both the coolness and the dampness have been a relief for Theresa and I, but a frustration for the farmers I am afraid. It is very discouraging to see the ditches and fields covered with water now when the wheat and corn should be ripening and swaying in hot August sunshine.

Theresa and I returned to Canada in order for me to have surgery done to correct chronic esophageal reflux. I was on the table on the 13th of August, and have had an excellent recovery. In fact, just today I had my post-op follow up and got the complete thumbs-up from the surgeon. We have been extremely thankful for answered prayer in this matter.

During our time here in Canada we have been very busy in seeking God's direction for the Bible School and Vocational School which is on the drawing board for Cd. Valles. At the end of July Dr. Charles Nichols, Professor Emeritus of Providence Bible Seminary, hosted representatives of *Voice in the Wilderness Ministries* in two days of intensive planning and direction-seeking sessions. Out of these came new focus and intensified vision for what God is calling us to do in the establishment of the Bible School and Vocational School. We feel that the direction of *VitW Ministries* has been solidified, and we can hardly wait to return to Valles to continue the work.

Theresa and I have also been busy meeting with various Christian tradesmen in the Steinbach area. A draftsman is volunteering his time to do the blue prints and drawings for the Bible School. An alternate heating/cooling specialist is interested in working with us in designing ways to make the new schools greener and cooler. We have also met with a young couple who specialize in concrete stamping and staining. All of these tradesmen are interested in not only helping us in the planning stages, but are also hoping to come down to Valles to teach and train as well. God is putting together a team!

Passion is growing for the development of the Vocational School as well as the Bible School. As was mentioned in a previous letter, the concept developed out of an obvious need to train pastors in vocational and practical trades as well as in a sound biblical foundation. The dream began several years ago with the realization that many pastors, especially in the smaller villages, are completely destitute and unable to even feed their own families. It has become the desire of Ezequiel and Veronica to provide practical work skills to pastors and students so that when they do return to their villages to minister, they will be able to find paid employment, and possibly even the ability to begin a small business. In this way they can pastor the local church and also provide for the needs of their own families.

The excitement and impetus is growing. To date we have had six Pfaff sewing machines donated for vocational training. Wes Penner and David Neufeld of PowerLand Computers in Winnipeg, Manitoba have donated fifteen computers which will be used

for the school in teaching English (TEFL), and computer repair courses. We have a young man who is willing to come down to set up the computers and begin some training. Very quickly we envision developing a Vocational School which will be able to train students in areas such as: Welding, Mechanical repair, Auto body repair, Upholstery, Concrete staining and concrete stamping, Computer repair and programming, English as a foreign language (TEFL), Carpentry, Basic agricultural training / fish farming, Basic business essentials, Sewing, Cooking / baking / culinary skills, and in the Catering business. We envision multiple vocational classes working out of shipping containers modified into classrooms and workshops. Even more exciting, we foresee small businesses developing from the vocational training segment of the Bible School which will be able to develop for-profit trades which can support the Vocational School as well as the Bible School. These for-profit businesses will begin to decrease the need for foreign support, and work towards making it possible for the Bible School to truly be a Mexican school for Mexicans.

In order to begin to accomplish what we believe God has placed before us we need to be able to purchase a suitable property. We have come to the realization that the property that had been purchased years ago in la Pimienta is no longer adequate. We have found a property close to town that will be ideal for the schools. It is a parcel of 5 hectares (11 acres), and close enough to bus service to be well accessible for the students. Our need now is for \$25,000.00 to purchase this property so that the work of building can commence. We are believing, and praying for the generosity of Christian brothers and sisters who have caught the vision for a training center for pastors, and who will give generously so that this work can begin as soon as Theresa and I arrive back in Mexico.

We anticipate leaving for Mexico on the 10th of September. It is with excitement and anticipation that we return to the field. God has clarified and brought our vision and mission into focus. Both Theresa and I look forward to returning to our friends and fellow workers in Mexico.

If God lays it on your heart to help us with this need for funds to purchase land so that the Bible School and Vocational School can begin in Cd. Valles, please know that nothing can be done without you. Also, practically speaking, all donations are tax deductible.

Blessings,

Steven and Theresa