

December 12, 2009

Dear friends,

With the warm breezes of Cd. Valles gently flowing through the open window it hardly feels like Christmas is just around the corner. But when I look at the calendar with the ice choked river scene, I see that indeed, Christmas is just days away. I must confess that even the lights on the trunks of the palm trees down the main boulevard, just don't seem to catch the Christmas spirit. But then, I am so thankful that the essence and meaning of Christmas is not my feelings of jocularity, or even good will, but rather the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior. May this be a season filled with blessing and joy as you worship our King.

In Cd. Valles there is much to rejoice for, and to boast of in our Provider. Let me bring you up to date...

We have found a wonderful land site for the Bible school and Vocational school. God has provided the money for its purchase, and we are trusting that within a very short period of time clearing and construction can begin on the site. We are still dealing with some small issues of title change, and other technical things, but we are confident that God has given us the land which we are to enter and possess.

On the 3rd - 5th of December Theresa and I, along with pastors Ezequiel and Veronica met pastor Fred Erb and Frank Sedeño up at the Texas border for three days of intense vision and planning sessions for the joint work of *VitW Ministries (Canada)* and *Hombres Trabajando por Criso*, the Mexican non-profit which will cover the Bible school and Vocational school ministry. While there we formed a Joint Ministry Agreement between the two agencies in order to continue the work. We were blessed to confirm that our joint visions and goals are the same. What a blessing to be able to labor alongside men and women of like minds and vision, where there does not need to be any posturing or vying for superiority or ambition. We left the three days tired, but rejuvenated in the knowledge that God is with us in this vision.

Last week we placed the security deposit on a house that we will be renting for the fledgling, computer-based English school which we are hoping to begin in January. Then, later in January, friends from Canada are joining us in order to teach English classes as well. Speaking of friends – in December we will also be joined by another couple who spent several months in Cd. Valles a number of years ago. We are looking forward to the arrival of each person, and anticipate the new perspective that they will bring to the work.

God keeps bringing little surprises along the way which pop up at the most unexpected places and times, and bring a sunburst of blessing. Things like a Houston-based water well drilling ministry having a Mexican representative located about an hour away in Ebano. An interesting God-twist, and we still must pursue this lead to see if it will indeed open. However, if we are able to somehow join in their ministry and be trained by them, then this will bring full circle a dream and vision that I had been pursuing eight or more years ago – that of training Christian, national well drilling teams to crisscross the Huasteca and place wells into the needy villages and

ranchitos. Who knows, but it is exciting to watch as God opens doors. At a minimum, this may be a way for us to get the much needed well for the Bible school and Vocational school. Praise the Lord.

During November we were blessed to have Kalen Plett, a young man from Manitoba spend a month with us. He used his computer skills to prepare sixteen computers for use in the language school, as well as the church office. Probably the biggest surprise that has come through his stay, however, is that because of his presentation of the work of the ministry, we have been promised Quality vinyl windows for the whole construction. What an amazing gift from a very generous company. We will write more about this later I am sure.

Tonight I am going to the bus station to catch the “red-eye special” to the border in order to meet a friend who is coming down to begin the surveying process for the land site. He will begin to help us place the buildings, prepare for construction, land elevations, etc. He has generously decided to come to help us, and to drive down from Houston. However, it just didn’t seem right to ask him to make the first trip down from the border alone. Tomorrow morning he will pick me up at the bus depot in McAllen, and we will head south, to be ready to work on Monday morning.

Theresa has been baking up a storm the past several weeks. At the end of November the local church held a large fund-raising event in order to raise money to begin the building of the auditorium on the land which they purchased last year. Tomorrow they hold a second event for the same purpose. At the first fund-raiser Theresa’s cupcakes, cinnamon rolls, brownies, and bunt cakes brought in around 600 pesos (about \$46.00 U.S.), not bad when you consider that most of the items were selling for under 30 cents. They went like proverbial hotcakes.

I suppose a Christmas letter would not be complete without the mention of children and grandchildren. Ours, unfortunately, will not be anywhere close to us over the holiday season. We have kids and grandkids spread from China to Winnipeg. We love them all, but count it a blessing to be a part of what God is doing in the Huasteca region of Mexico.

Our love and best wishes are with you and your family over this Christmas season.

Blessings,

Steven and Theresa