

December 23, 2001

"...you will find a baby lying wrapped in his swaddling clothes, in a manger." Luke 2:12b

"When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand upon me and said, 'Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last, and I am the living one; for I was dead and now I am alive for evermore, and I hold the keys of Death and Death's domain'". Rev. 1:17,18

Dear friends,

Blessings to each of you over this joyous Christmas season. What a wonderful time of the year as our minds turn to peace and joy, love and goodwill. These are days filled with family and friends, lights and laughter, tinsel and gifts, and above all – the Christ Child born in a stable and laying in a manger. This is, and was, God's greatest gift to mankind – God became flesh and dwelt amongst us – deity incarnate, dwelling among us. But praise God, the story does not end with the baby in a feed trough, as beautiful as this is. Jesus, God's Messiah is not the eternal baby, but rather the risen and eternal King – Lord of all, and holding the keys of Death and Death's domain. He is the First and the Last, the eternal living one – the one before whom every knee will bow and declare His name as Lord and Ruler of all. Praise God for the baby, but let us never forget that this infant child – "Mary's baby boy" is the one spoken of in Psalms 2 where it declares "you will break them with a rod of iron, you shall shatter them like a clay pot". Our Lord is no longer the babe in the straw, but the glorious, majestic King of kings and Lord of all lords.

As the year 2001 draws to an end it is time to reflect back over the past year in order to see if God's hand has been evident in the work in Mexico. It is important, I believe, to evaluate what has taken place and make sure that what we see bears the evidence of the fruits of God's Spirit and is not merely the work of man's endeavors.

This year has seen the development of an evangelistic arm of the local church in Cd. Valles in the form of a well-oiled and smoothly running medical and dental team. We have ministered throughout the Huasteca region of Mexico and many have come to the Lord as a result of this outreach. A very significant aspect of this ministry has been that the pastors have been lifted up and encouraged. Many times in the past they have felt abandoned and alone. Now they feel encouraged to go on with a new zeal and vigor. There have been many reports of pastors moving closer together in unity, seeing the "big picture" rather than the small "turf issues" often associated with church politics. Pastors in many of these villages have received a new vigor and are now moving out of their comfort zone and planting new mission churches in their surrounding areas.

This year there has been a church building constructed in the village of Zaragosa through the generous donations of Northside Church in Vanderhoof, British Columbia. It is not yet completed, and as many of you know there is still a need for finances in order to finish it. However, two weeks ago there was a pastor and his family ordained into the work there. They do not have a house to live in, and there is as yet no roof on the church, but the ministry is advancing in this strategic location.

Over this past year we have seen God's mighty hand draw many new believers through the ministry of home groups throughout the city of Valles. A powerful tool in this outreach has been the food

pantry which has allowed house group leaders to help supply the needs of the poor in their area of the city. This has opened many doors, and brought about a great harvest of souls. This food ministry is funded and made possible through your gifts and donations. Also, through the generosity of North Georgia Christian Center in Calhoun, Georgia we have been blessed with a direct donation of food which will be distributed as well.

Through the medical and dental thrust we have been able to assist in the planting of a Church in the village of Tanlacut. Through going back monthly for clinics over a six month period of time we were able to work with Carlos and his wife - missionaries sent out from the church in Cd. Valles.

This past summer pastor Ezequiel, Luis Jimenez, and I spent about six weeks in Canada and the U.S. visiting and being encouraged by friends and the Church throughout these two great nations. We saw the clear hand of God as he lead us through our journey and the birthing of a vision of what will probably be a new direction for the work in the Huasteca.

Also, as you know, I sent almost two months ministering in the state of Chiapas over the months of October and November. We saw the powerful hand of God at work as we were able to minister his love and acceptance throughout the mountains of this blood-soaked state. God has been faithful to himself, as he always is and the blood of the many martyrs has not been shed in vain. Chiapas is reported to have 40% of it's population evangelical Christians, and the Church is Jesus Christ is advancing with great strides across the mountains and valleys of this beautiful region of Mexico. I will be going back in the beginning of April to assist in an evangelistic campaign to some of the outlying regions again. God has opened many doors for the work in this region.

While we were ministering in Chiapas God worked many miracles for me personally as well as in the people to whom we ministered. I asked Eloy, a friend and fellow worker from Chiapas to write down some of his feelings about our time there. Eloy is an engineer and a linear thinker as is reflected in his "report", however I believe that it will be a blessing for you to see how God miraculously blows doors open for his work as we move in his will:

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

I am writing to salute you and greet you in the name of Jesus our Lord. I bless God that he has touched you hearts with the gift of giving, and above all that you have been obedient to his voice. Through your faithfulness in this area it has been possible for our brother Steve Frey to bring the ministry of medical clinics to many secluded and isolated communities within the state of Chiapas. The significance of this outreach has been that the seeds of God's Word have been planted into the hearts of many of the patients who didn't know the Lord Jesus as savior. Thanks be to God, I was able to accompany and serve as a guide and pharmacist. The most marvelous part however, was that the Lord Jesus sparked in my own heart the calling to serve as a missionary among my own people. The job that gave me the most joy was to see how the Lord Jesus used us to liberate and set free the sick, the spiritually oppressed, and those attacked and tormented by demonic spirits, through the declaration of his powerful name.

The municipalities of Chiapas, along with the individual villages in each region that we visited were:

- 1 Berriozabal:
 - a) Vista Hermosa, b) Caracol, c) Chacacal, d) San Antonio Bombano, e) Berriozabal.
- 2 Ixtapa:
 - a) Hidalgo, b) Emiliano Zapata, c) Concepcion, d) Alta Gracia.
- 3 Chenalho:

- a) Chenalho, b) Pohonichin, c) Tzabalho.
- 4 Yajalon:
 - a) Yajalon, b) Tzola(two days), c) center for alcoholics and drug addicts (Yajalon).
- 5 Margaritas (zone of Indians driven out of their communities for the sake of the Gospel):
 - a) Nuevo Chiapas, b) Chacala, c) San Jose, d) San Antonio.

Results:

total number of patients:	881
total number of clinics:	20
total number of conversions:	113
total number of miracles:	13
total number of days in Chiapas	42

I want to let you know that you have a home here in Berriozabal if you can ever come down - mi casa es su casa. May God bless you, Eloy Ricardo Hernandez Peña

I hope that this letter/report from Eloy has been a blessing and that you have been able to see how God used the outreach in Chiapas to advance his Kingdom.

God is opening new doors and new directions for us for the coming year. I believe that there will be a new move of God in 2002 such as we have not witnessed to date. We covet your prayers. Please hold us up in prayer as we seek God's direction and will for the coming year.

Thank you for your love and prayers and your generous financial support. You are a vital part of what God is doing in Mexico and we cannot continue without your faithfulness.

Please make sure that my name is not on the checks that you send in for Earthen Vessels. Place "Mexico outreach" in the memo section since there are two separate accounts under the Earthen Vessels account and this will assure that it goes to my account, however IRS does not want a personal name on checks to non-profit organizations. This will assure that you have no difficulty when claiming for income tax purposes.

May God bless you richly in this coming year as you serve him.

Your missionary,