

February 18, 2002

Dear friends,

How very quickly time flies. Already things are starting to warm up into a sticky sweat and all you want to do is take a nice cold shower (at least if you are south of the tropics). For some of you this may seem a bit far removed as you yet once again haul the snow shovel out of the garage to clear the drive.

Things are also heating up in other ways around here as well. God has opened many doors and we are blessed with much work, but also abundance of fruit.

The clinics are once again in full swing. There has been some internal shifting of personnel, but as some have had to ask to be released from the clinical staff others have come forward to fill the voids. I am sorry to say that we have lost our dentist, but we trust that God will provide another if it is his will that we continue with a dentistry program as a part of the services which we provide to the villages.

An open door that is of special interest to me personally is our thrust into unreached areas to the west of here into a people group known as Pame' Indians. This tribe is very closed and distrustful of outsiders, and of anything that is not with the Catholic church. There is much witchcraft, demonic activity, ignorance, and idolatry. It is difficult to penetrate into these areas and to be accepted by the tribe. We have begun to develop a relationship with some of the Christians from this group and will be holding a medical clinic and present the Gospel message on Friday of this week. We will need to walk into the "village" - really a scattered cluster of houses, with all of our medicines. This village is only about a twenty minute walk from where we can leave our vehicle, but it is to be our first such clinic in this area. Plans are to work with contacts made with some of the local leaders who can take us into villages many hours walk into the mountains. Pray that hearts will be open to receive us, the medical care which we can provide, and most importantly, that the seeds of the message of Jesus Christ will fall upon rich and productive soil. These distant and remote villages are where my heart lies. There is certainly need wherever one looks, but the overwhelming lack in some of these more remote places is at times almost overwhelming. There one certainly gets the feeling with the Apostle Paul that one is not working soil which others have already begun to cultivate.

This Wednesday will begin a four day Evangelistic campaign into the new community of Solidaridad - several miles north of Cd. Valles and a place where the church is going to be planting a new mission church. We will end the campaign with a medical clinic. From there we will continue to come back weekly and set up the little carport tent which we use for our medical clinics in order to hold services for the village. We trust that many will come to the Lord through this outreach and that this mission church will take deep root.

Last week we were blessed to have a group come down from the States to hold an interchurch, city wide Gospel campaign. It was held in the baseball stadium here in Valles. Despite many obstacles and open opposition from the Enemy many churches and pastors were represented and many heard the clear message of God's love. Many are praying and believing for God to do a mighty work in Valles and that there will be a great harvest of Souls here in this city. God is bringing pastors and churches together in unity in a new way. Please pray that God will continue to shine his light into the darkness and sin here in this city - the doorway into, and the hub of the Huasteca.

Please continue to pray for the mundane things as well, without which the ministry could not continue. For three weeks my van was in various shops for repair. Life is different here in Mexico. One cannot simply run down to the local garage and have them run a diagnostic test on their computer. I had an electrical problem develop which was plaguing the van for months. Eventually it shorted out completely and it became impossible to use the van at all. Ezequiel and I took it from mechanic to mechanic to try to get to the root of the problem. Parts were changed and many possible solutions suggested - including changing out the transmission to one which was not dependent upon electronics, however nothing worked. Finally we were able to find a shop which had the equipment to find the problem and fix it - at least for three days. Today I had to take it back in with the same symptoms - burning out the "gauge" fuse (which so happens to serve not only the gauges but the alternator, and apparently some of the electronics which control the transmission as well). Fortunately, today they found that all that was wrong was a short behind the instrument panel, and the problem was quickly solved. I have become aware, however, in limping along without a proper vehicle for the three weeks that it was down just how much the work depends upon good, and serviceable vehicles. Like having a good work horse one simply is very handicapped if the beast will no longer serve as intended. I think that my van is back on the road for the time being, however Ezequiel's van needs a new motor very, very badly. It is currently burning almost as much oil as it is fuel - not a good sign at all. His van, like mine, is a work horse and is much needed for the ministry.

We have been blessed to have my brother Calvin here in Valles for the past two months. He has utilized his carpentry skills and has finished off a pastor/evangelist apartment above the church. It's intended purpose is to provide a place for visiting pastors and ministers who currently must sleep on the floor or find lodging in someone's home. Now they will have a beautiful apartment to stay in. What a blessing this will be. Maybe some of you will be able to be blessed by staying in it as well.

Please continue to pray for the work here. We are very much human and suffer the same weaknesses and trials which you do. It is God's grace which continues to give us strength. Your prayers are of vital importance if the work is to go on. Thank you for your faithful giving which is the nuts and bolts, the rubber on the road so to speak, without which nothing could be done. It is your faithful generosity which buys the medicines, the food for the food pantry, keeps the vehicles on the road, buys the gas to keep them running, etc., etc. God is doing mighty things here in Mexico and you are a vital part of what he is doing. May God bless you richly for your faithfulness.

Your missionary,