

November 2002

Dear friends,

"But, God, how will I know where to go? How will I know that I am going in the direction that you want me to?"

"Just go west and follow the caravan route into Canaan. Follow one oasis at a time along the camel trails. I will let you know when you arrive at the place."

Have you ever wondered what Abraham's conversation must have been like with God when he began to understand that he must leave family and friends and head into a "place that God would show him"? It is interesting to note that God didn't give him a detailed map of the region. Rather, Abraham simply moved westward along the caravan routes of the day into Canaan - one oasis at a time, until he heard God's clear voice saying "this is the place."

I have been overwhelmed with God's provision for me, as I too, have walked the "caravan routes" for the past several months. When I left Mexico during the latter part of August I had no idea what direction I was to go in. I knew only that I needed to be in the United States for several months in order to process my U.S. citizenship. I assumed that I should stay close to the Mexican border, so I found a place where I could stay in "The Valley" and began to attend language school in McAllen, Texas. It very quickly became apparent that this was not the oasis at which I was to pitch my tent since if I was to continue my application from Texas it would require over 2 1/4 years to process. If, however, I was to head north to North Dakota I could complete the process in about six months. This seemed to be the most logical camel path to follow since I have friends there, my parents and two of my children live just over the line in Canada, and I was assured of work and a roof over my head when I got there.

God has been so very faithful in providing for all of my needs. He has given me a beautiful house to live in very inexpensively for the winter, furniture, work, a car, and even a deer in the freezer. Like the loving father that he is, he has also given me verification that the work in missions that he has given me the privilege of being a part of is within the center of His will. Over the past months there has been one confirmation after another that the work is not dependent upon me, but rather upon God.

During October I was privileged to be a part of an evangelistic/medical team which went to Ecuador for two weeks. This team, led by Dr. Skip Lee from Georgia and Efarín Perez from Chicago, was able to minister the Gospel to the poor in Ecuador, and we saw hundreds come to the Lord. Further, we were able to minister with a number of local Churches, and a solid relationship has been established for ongoing future work there.

Arriving back at North Dakota from the trip to Ecuador I immediately turned around and headed out on a six thousand mile round trip to Oklahoma via Reynosa, Mexico where I needed to pick up Ezequiel and his daughter Keren. We were on our way to Grove, Oklahoma to participate in a missions conference where we were able to be a part of this vital Church, and to share their vision and future for missions. They have linked in a very significant way with the work in the Huasteca of Mexico, and this was a very important weekend not only for them, but also for Ezequiel and I. From Grove we headed back to the border where I dropped off Ezequiel and Keren, and turned the nose of the car back towards the snowy north.

There is much to report and to praise God for in the work in Mexico. Please continue to pray for the five fledgling church plants - Santa Rosa, Chantol, Coyoles, Los Jovitos, and San Antonio Huichimal. God has been so very faithful, and each of these infant Churches has a pastor covering the new work. There is much hunger, and souls are coming to the Lord despite direct and open opposition in a number of the villages.

Please hold up Santa Rosa and San Antonio Huichimal in a special way in your prayers. In these villages, especially, there is an open and hostile attack by a powerful warlock and some of the local leadership. God, however, is more powerful than any witchcraft, and when the warlock came out waving his magical, smoking potion in the faces of the missionaries in order to blind them, he instead was blinded and they were unfazed. In dismay he started screaming at them to get out since their power was greater than his and he was powerless against them.

The church building project has begun in the village of Solidaridad. There has been enough money to begin the foundation, and we hope to be able to complete this new building very soon. This infant Church is about a year old and is growing in strength and number, and is making an impact within the community of Solidaridad.

I am very pleased to report that there has been some real progress made in the area of permits for well drilling. You will remember that this is a whole new phase of the work which we hope to begin within the new year - drilling water wells for villages where there is either no water, or polluted and contaminated sources only. We have had a very positive response from the governments of two of the states within which we will be working, and it looks as if God is answering our prayers. You will remember that one of the greatest hurdles for this work to begin was the acquisition of government permits since Mexico considers any ground water as property of the government. We are trusting that we will be able to begin exploratory work within the new year, and that through this new thrust we will be able to bring the Gospel to many new villages.

There are new palm trees from still one further oasis looming upon the near horizon for us as well. Dan Bumstead, along with a number of brothers from Oregon have begun a missionary/discipleship training school in order to provide a practical, and biblically focused milieu for young people who are seeking God's will in their lives. One aspect of the school is to spend time in active missions work. They will spend a month in Baja California, Mexico working with a children's work there run by Luis and Patti Jimenez. The leaders of the school have asked us if we will be willing to have the students come to the Huasteca during the final phases of their missions practicum for the months of April and May. This will be a stretching time both for us, as well as for them. Please hold the leadership of the work in Mexico, as well as that of the school, and the students themselves up in your prayers. These are young men and women who will be the new laborers in the fields of harvest. Please pray that the Spirit of God will place deeply into their hearts an unquenchable burden for the lost and for those who have not heard the Gospel - the good news of salvation.

Your missionary,