



**MISSIONARY TO MEXICO**



CMF INTERNATIONAL PRAYER NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2010

**My Dear Friends and Partners,**

Greetings from Guadalajara. I hope you are all having a great 2010 with many blessings from our Lord.

I thank my God every time I remember you, always praying with you for all of you. I thank God for the help you are giving me: prayers, encouragement, and support.

I have been in Mexico for over a month now, and I wanted to let you know about the marvelous experiences God has given me. He is incredible and amazing! He is really Jehovah-jireh; He has provided for all my needs – physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

He was with me as I drove first to Texarkana, AR; then Tyler, TX (to visit some friends who were in Eritrea when I was there); then Seguin, TX (near San Antonio), to meet the parents of my daughter Tami's best friend; then to McAllen, TX, where I met my teammates, Greg and Vicki Syverson, and their sons, Benjamin and Matthew. Greg and Vicki helped me through customs and escorted me to Guadalajara (a 9-hour drive). We stopped and spent the night in San Luis Potosi. I was able to see a lot of Mexico while I was driving to Guadalajara. Driving in Mexico is not like driving in the US. There are 4 lanes with a median between the two directions people are traveling in.

You have to be sure to stay close to the shoulder because cars whiz past on the left lane very fast. There are many toll roads the route we took because the toll roads are much better. However, I was amazed at how many times we had to stop to pay a toll. Not cheap! I think I paid about \$40 in tolls. Everyone says if you ever travel on non toll roads, you are happy to pay the fees when on the toll roads.

He has provided me a wonderful place to stay. It is a house that I share with another student



**Ana Lucia.**

(Bethany) and our sweet landlady, Ana Lucia. Actually she sleeps and has an office in a separate residence behind the house. She doesn't speak English, but she is very good at helping us say what we want and understanding what she is saying. We share a wonderful kitchen,

and I get to cook every day (unless we go out for tacos— which are quite cheap). I share a bathroom with Bethany, and it works out very



**Bethany doing laundry.**



**Kitchen.**





well. My room is very nice with a sliding glass door that opens to the garden. Isn't our God amazing?

He has provided such incredible opportunities to see His beautiful mountains, lakes, and all around Guadalajara city. On Liberation Day (like our 4<sup>th</sup> of July), a holiday,



Antonio.

Bethany and I got to go with one of our teachers (a Mexican pastor) and a few from his congregation to Matameitla, a small town (pueblo) in the mountains. The drive there was so beautiful, and the town was very quaint and picturesque. The youth pastor, Antonio, and I had a great conversation. He practiced his



English on me and I practiced my Spanish on him for about 2 hours. We had breakfast, spent about 6 hours there, and came back. It was rainy, but we had a great time.



Antonio's son, Nehemia.

Saturday, Bethany and I took the bus to downtown Guadalajara (Centro) to see the sights. The bus ride was about 45 minutes from our house. The downtown area is steeped in history and Catholicism. The cathedral (catedral) is the center of town. Many of the museums hold relics and icons of the church and pictures of the saints and bishops. We ate lunch at an outdoor

restaurant. It was so nice, especially since the past 4 days have been non-stop rain. The sunshine and eating outside was very welcome.



Bethany and me at outdoor cafe.

Language school has been difficult, but I am amazed at how much I am learning and how much I can say and understand. We have 2 American teachers and 3 Mexican teachers. All of them are very patient and are good teachers. The Mexicans can speak a little English, but we mostly communicate with them in Spanish. My fellow students are a lot of fun. Dewey and Sarah are an older couple (late 50s). He was a pastor for a long time and now is a missionary to the Baja. Mark and Beka are a young couple, just married about 4 months ago, preparing to be missionaries to Peru. Bethany is my housemate. She is 27 and has wanted to be a missionary to Mexico since she was a child. She doesn't know exactly where or with which organization she will be. Natasha and Sienna are 2 girls ages 11 and 8 who are here with their grandparents (who are in a higher level than we are).

We are all in the 1<sup>st</sup> level. There are 2 people in the 2<sup>nd</sup> level, 2 people in the 3<sup>rd</sup> level, and 2 people in the 4<sup>th</sup> level. We finish the 1<sup>st</sup> level with finals, February 22. I have to make a grade of 80 to move on to the 2<sup>nd</sup> level. So far, my grades on various exams have been in the 90s, but it is getting harder with each week.



A church in a town on the way to Matametla.



God gave us a rainbow.



A street in Matametla.



The one thing that helps the most is to practice speaking with Mexicans. My landlady, Ana, is very good for that. She speaks very little English, but we talk with her every day, and she invites friends over so we can speak with different people. We also get practice at Walmart, the small meat and vegetable store on the corner, restaurants, taco stands, and at church. We practice hearing the language while watching DVDs in Spanish with English subtitles.

We have visited 4 different churches (all Spanish-speaking). I think we have found one Bethany and I both want to continue with. The pastor is an American missionary, and he is easy to understand. He usually uses PowerPoint to illustrate his sermons, which helps us understand. Today he stepped on my toes by preaching about taming your tongue. The songleader speaks English, but really wants to help us learn Spanish. He used to teach Spanish to English speakers. The church, Nueva Creacion (New Creation) has about 50 in attendance, including children. Today, after the service, we celebrated the birthday of one of the members who is 90 years old. It was a great time to get to know people.

It has been unseasonably cold here — I know, not anything like the Midwest, but there is no central heat here and unfortunately I brought clothes for warmer weather! I am so glad I brought a warm blanket. The temperature has been in the 40s up to 75 since I have been here. It doesn't get up into the 60s until afternoon. It rained from last Sunday to Wednesday non-stop. We were so glad to see the sun again! All the people here have been complaining about the weather because it has never been this cold and rained this much this time of

year. So much for "global warming"! The past 2 days it has been warmer, for which we are truly thankful!

The first session of school is over February 22. I plan to go to Mexico City by bus to join in some CHE training. I will be there until March 5. Bethany is going to go with me. She will spend some of the time in Puebla (a town about an hour's bus ride east of Mexico City) with a friend who lives there, but then she will come back to Mexico City and stay with us. We look forward to seeing some of the sights of Mexico City. I might be able to visit Pachuca for a couple of days during that time. I hope to be able to see some of the people I met when I was there last, maybe even go to the new church that was started last May.

Bethany and I are really looking forward to the break. We have had a lot of pressure learning about 200 new words, 36 grammar rules, and conjugating 125 verbs (20 of them irregular) in 3 tenses. We need to rest and recuperate! PTL for that opportunity.

Thank you so much for your faithful prayers and support. Our friendship and partnership is very precious to me. Please continue to pray that I will learn quickly and be able to start the work in Pachuca soon. God is answering your prayers. I am praying for you and would love to hear from you. God bless you.

Much love,  
  
 Ram Akihiro



Mountains and lake.



Cathedral.



Guadalajara Centro.