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SERVING WITH WORLD INDIGENOUS MISSIONS

MERRY CHRISTMAS

I'm so sorry for the long delay for this newsletter. About four months ago, I moved out of pastor Adonías' home into an apartment in Comitán. Comitán is about an hour from Adonías. It's beautiful and, until recently, a very safe city. I've been here dozens of times over the last year and have been assisting Brother Guillermo teach a small home Bible study here. He is another Mexican missionary who Adonías' disciples for many years. I also attend a local church of Adonías' denomination and help out with their youth group. One of the things I love about this church is their love for God's people. For example, one time Guillermo could not travel here for two weeks. So, I asked the pastor if he would help the family in the home group who does not own a car to pick them up and bring them to church. He said he would be happy to do it for free. The church's representatives noticed that there was a large number of children in the family and offered to bring all of them to the church every day for their VBS and to feed all of the kids.



I've also made a point of visiting churches from other denominations to learn more about the church culture from other points of view here. Every day, I continue to walk around and interact with people to practice my Spanish and share the gospel. I have still been making a point of giving the Chuck Smith Through the Bible series in Spanish on audio files to many, and it has continued to be a wonderful way to reach out. I also contacted one of my teachers from when I lived in Oaxaca.

She now tutors me online, and I am getting a great deal out of the immersion in my current level of Spanish.

One of the wonderful things about this apartment is that it has an extra room that, with the help of another brother, I have made into an area where we can have a Bible study. One of my neighbors from El Salvador asked if we could start a Bible study with his family. Unfortunately, not long after getting started, he ended up moving to northern Mexico where his family is. I still continue to serve and reach out to people. Now that I am living alone in a city, I am cautious about letting a complete stranger in my home without my Mexican brothers. But I'm always looking for ways to love people and build relationships with them.

One of the main reasons I haven't been sending out more updates is that I am part of a community. It's not much different than when I was living in the States. Now, I don't travel as much for short-term mission trips. It's about getting to know people and evangelizing by building relationships that, God willing, will lead to discipleship. I have conversations with people nearly every day. However, I feel it can be very inappropriate to elaborate on a lot of the personal conversations I have with people. Unfortunately, too many times, I see missionaries talking on social media about the last alcoholic they witnessed to, and I believe that is very inappropriate when building a real personal relationship with anyone, much less representing the Lord.

Please be praying for safety, not just for me, but for the people of the city and this general area. Unfortunately, very dangerous northern drug cartels have come to this area because of the proximity of the Guatemalan border. Unfortunately, as recently as two months ago, the army had to go in for a second time to fight the violence in a town that I have been to many times before. To be clear, this is still the safest state in Mexico. The things happening here are nowhere near what you see in north central Mexico. That doesn't mean the cartel members who live here aren't dangerous, but they are not the same as far as the level of violence towards ordinary citizens. Please keep all of us here in prayer, especially the police and soldiers who have to combat this.

Other prayer requests for me are to continue to learn the language, to continue to have divine appointments to share the gospel, to build relationships with people, and above all, to keep my mind on the Lord and not on myself or my circumstances or surroundings.

God bless, and I miss you all.

Michael Barton

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