

Hope Mennonite Missions

Newsletter

Issue #33

February 2006

Daily Life

Greetings and *Saludos* from Guaymas Valley. The time that my sister Rachel and I have spent here thus far has been a blessing to us. Since we've arrived, David and Betty and Margaret have made us a part of the mission family here.

We, or at least I, have been learning an abundance of new things. One of the primary things Rachel has been doing is teaching school, which lasts approximately six hours (seven including the driving) and takes Monday through Friday. In a normal week, all those days except Tuesday we drive to Lázaro Cárdenas. Tuesday, Davids come our direction to go visiting or go to town. During the school hours, I get to do all kinds of things, like what I'm doing now. But more often, I do maintenance and repair projects. A couple things that I worked on recently have been re-roofing the carport at David's and foundation reinforcement at Santa María. I also need to

gather much of the material for such projects. Some weeks I also study Spanish.

Other things that we participate in, often at times when Rachel isn't teaching or preparing for school, are visitation, passing out tracts and *Antorchas*, and other church-related projects. And there are the other regular chores such as watering, laundry, cleaning, etc. Most Saturdays, Margaret has baking class.

All these are normal occurrences. Something some people call "divine appointments" are also "normal". A visit to Lupito's one night led to a drive to the emergency room. An unexpected visit recently from a couple in Santa María canceled any plans we had for that evening. Interruptions are inevitable. Flexibility is mandatory. Such is life on the mission field.

Phil Strubhar
February 2006



Floor/foundation work (David)



Phil putting up drywall at David's

New Lives

Since Jan. 1, Perla, a 19-year-old niece from Sinaloa, has been living with us. Her cousin, Deyra, arrived with her for a 2 ½ week visit before heading up to Tijuana where she is studying. They are both quiet girls, and enjoyed discussing spiritual matters after meals, sitting around the table for hours. One evening, Betty prayed with the children before sending them to bed. After the children were gone, Deyra said, "I would like to pray, too." With that, both she and Perla prayed, asking the Lord to forgive them, accepting Jesus as their Lord and Savior. So that evening, there were two new births, praise the Lord!

Deyra has since gone on to Tijuana. She needs spiritual help in order to grow. She lives with her family, and none of them are Christians. The atmosphere at the university isn't conducive to being a Christian, either. So far, attempts at getting her in touch with a Mennonite group with an orphanage in Tijuana have failed, but we will keep trying. Please pray for her, that she will be able to keep on in the Way she has begun.

David Smucker
February 2006

Ended Life

Catty-corner across the street from our house, Martín's porch was full of beautiful flowers. It was a pleasing sight, except for one thing. The casket.

Last summer when visiting churches in Oregon and Washington, I talked about Martín. He had recently lost his wife, was suffering health problems, but was also drawing near to God. He enjoyed learning more about God, and believed what the Bible said because it was the Bible.

As his paralysis slowly advanced, he could no longer walk and his breathing was becoming shorter. It pained me to see him suffering. My wife and I visited him in the hospital two weeks before his passing, and shared from the Bible with him. "Estoy arrepentido," (I'm repentant), he told me, as he had before. Two days later, he was in a coma.

Praying the rosary is customary at funerals, and I wasn't surprised when they did it since the whole family is Catholic. Women gathered around the casket and went through the ritual while the men at the wake stayed their distance in the shadows of the night. Later, a granddaughter approached me and asked if I would also like to have a prayer. The next day, shortly before the body was taken to the graveyard, it was an honor to be able to share by the casket, as people gathered round. Reading Scripture, singing, and sharing some thoughts was well accepted, and this time, Martín's sons and other men gathered around as well. Pray for the family, that they would follow their father's example in seeking the Lord.

I am thankful that as Christians we have the surety of life with Christ in the New Jerusalem. There, we will have access to the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

*David Smucker
13 February 2006*



Betty and Otoniel passing out tracts



Baking class at Margaret's

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