

Dear friends,

Thank you so very much for your interest and continued support of our mission efforts in Mexico to assist Pastor Tomas in his outreach to the Indian Tribes of the Sierra Madres. March 12-21, a group of 13 of us traveled to Mexico for a week of mutual encouragement and blessing.

Four Words. These words seemed to describe the Mexican Church serving in the remote mountain areas. **Alive, Passionate, Growing, Sacrificial.** With no fanfare, these Christians continue to build the kingdom of God, serving precious people in obscure places, and faithfully living out the gospel of Jesus.

It's not always efficient. We thought the work project-purpose of our trip was to enlarge the kitchen, only to realize that this wasn't what they really needed. (Was this one of those examples of deferring to the perceived needs of the Americans?) What they really wanted was to enlarge their chapel. Fortunately, all the materials we had purchased were usable for the project change.

God's big "come through". We figured it would take 62 trailer loads of hand-shoveled gravel from the river bed to level the chapel area...an impossible task for our time frame. We located a backhoe 30 minutes away and hired it for \$277 for 8 hours. (This is about the cost of 1 hour in the US.) Of course, after 4 hours the machine broke down, but he will complete the task this week. It took us nearly 2 days to remove a tree (6 ft. wide stump). As we left, the project was started and block laid on the foundation. We hope to receive funds to hire Mexicans to complete the project before July so that they can use it in their camps.

The stories are amazing! The lives of the Christians are so filled with remarkable service, joy, sacrifice, and love...they inspire us!

- Abby and Lucio now work on our compound. She and her family of 10 were kicked out of their village in Central Mexico for being Christians, losing their house and farm.
- Isaiah wants to reset his life and has come to assist Tomas. He is a 20 year-old with lots of energy and speaks fluent English and Spanish. He did a marvelous job translating my sermon on Sunday... only his 2nd time. (Speaking of translators, we had 5 people who were bi-lingual, allowing us to have many personal conversations.)
- Pastor Francisco and Maria have pastored the church in Rio Chico for 45 years. They are humble, kind, called servants of Jesus and are greatly respected by the people.
- Maria (from Juarez) cooked for us. She is so full of joy, despite losing her husband to cancer just 8 months ago.

I wish you could have been there. Each March we provide a Pastors' Retreat. There were about 40 attending this year. They come from their remote ministries to drink in the fellowship and the teaching.

- Alliance Missionary Todd Burdick presented his GRIT material. Using the hand as an illustration, GRIT teaches how Godly Resistance can control our flesh and empower us to live holy lives.

- I taught on the need for a balance of responsibility, relationships, and rest in our ministries.
- The Youth Band led us in wonderful times of refreshing worship.
- You should hear them pray! In loud voices they cry out to God for their families, communities and churches. Often I can't put words to my prayers; I'm overwhelmed by these moments in God's presence and just join them in yearning for God. Each family and ministry was focused upon in prayer.

God is searching. King Asa was told in II Chronicles 16:9 that was God was searching throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong in behalf of those who whose hearts were fully committed to Him. In keeping with that imagery of God searching for a place to show his power, I cried out often, "God, find this place; see these hearts...in this unknown, obscure corner of your creation, find us and show your power in bringing people to Jesus".

Fruit abounds. Everywhere in the mission with Tomas there are people turning to Jesus and their lives being changed. Congregations are being formed and church buildings being built. This is true particularly among the Tarahumara tribe where hundreds have become followers of Jesus. It is always a blessing to see Domingo at the retreat and know of his impact. He is like an apostle Paul with his personal transformation, powerful message, and huge impact.

WE NEED YOUR HELP. We must replace our old tractor immediately. The old one has a blown engine and so last year we rented the neighbors. But since we couldn't use it until he was finished with his spring work, our planting was too late and a frost destroyed our crop. It costs about \$20,000 for seed, fertilizer, diesel, etc. This was a great loss, as you can imagine. (The year before we harvested about 80 tons of corn. The corn is distributed to the mountain Indian tribes where the childhood mortality rate is as high as 50%.)

This year we face the same predicament. We were unable to get a replacement engine. Unless we can purchase a different tractor in this next week, we run the risk of losing another crop...a risk we can't afford to take. I have told Tomas to buy a \$15,000 tractor immediately and that we will trust God and friends of the mission to provide the money.

Will you help? If you want to help, send your designated contribution as follows:

To: RMD CMA
 Memo: AMIGO – Tractor
 Address: Rocky Mountain District
 2545 St. John's Ave.
 Billings, MT 59102

With great appreciation for your interest and support,

Jim Stumbo
 Mexico Mission Coordinator