

September News from the USA--2005

Independent Baptist church-planting missionaries in the Basque region of Spain



What does a missionary do on furlough?

I guess the answer to this question can vary a lot since missionary personalities, philosophies, and economies can be very different. But I thought it might be useful to give you, our praying friends, some insight into "normal" life for this missionary family on our four-month furloughs.

Traveling reports and opportunities

This is perhaps the most obvious aspect of furloughs. Our typical week includes a weekend trip, with a full Sunday of preaching and reporting, and a long drive back to Greenville, SC through Sunday night or Monday. At most services we sing as a family, show the 18-minute DVD presentation, and I preach. During our first six weeks of travels we've covered approximately 7,000 miles and visited 12 churches. Each one has been very kind and generous to us and we feel like the most blessed missionary family in all the world!

Children's education

Putting the children into a Christian school each furlough has several important benefits. First, the children enjoy getting to know and relate to others of their age and nationality, as well as participate in extracurricular activities impossible for them while on the field. Second, it gives us an opportunity to evaluate their progress in education. And third, it gives Mimi a break from home-schooling. For these reasons, we are grateful to our supporting churches, without whose generous love offerings we could not do it. David is busy working at Bi-lo and saving up for next year's college bills. Meanwhile, it's like a honeymoon around here . . .



Social delights

Furlough is also a time to meet with friends and family whom we do not see for years at a time. Every week we are blessed with gracious invitations to breakfast, lunch, or supper by friends who want to show us their affection. These are wonderful times of fellowship and encouragement, and sometimes even come with fun surprises. Linda Phillips and her mom recently took Mimi and Rachel out for lunch. At the restaurant they met an unusual group of Christian ladies, all wearing red hats and purple dresses, and having a bunch of fun together. They were delighted to find out that a missionary and her daughter were present and asked to let them take a picture.

Long distance ministry

Although we are back in the USA, the church planting ministry, as well as the Aierdi conference center work and printing ministries, continue on to one degree or another. These require a regular amount of administrative work, much of which can be done from the office and computer here in the USA. I still produce a weekly church bulletin for our people, though for furlough it is reduced and only includes a pastoral challenge, some news, a few personal notes to believers, and pictures. My co-worker Juan prints these out for Sunday. We also make weekly calls to Spain as we rotate our communication and counseling with the believers in our church.

Projects

Laptops are wonderful things, usually. While here we can still be working on tracts, brochures (for upcoming evangelistic efforts), and magazines (like the English VOICE2) for the ministry back in Spain. We've also been able to help put together a missionary friend's DVD presentation. We are working on a digital version of the 5-year Aierdi Photo Album. I'm also hoping to find time to continue writing the COUNT THE STARS story. And of course, there are intensive institutes, retreats, youth meetings, etc... to organize for the coming year.

I trust these lines will help you pray for us as we face our last 10 weeks of furlough. The desire of our family is to be a blessing wherever we go. Personally, I thank God for His gift to me in the persons of my wife (and best friend), and our four treasures. Andy

Joyfully serving Christ in:

IBEV church planting, province evangelism, missionary training
Aierdi camp & conference center, Intensive Bible institutes
Printing ministry, CLE magazine & Gospel literature

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