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WWNTBM

Jan 2020 – Birth pains and new births

Ortiz Family

Hello, brothers and sisters in Christ! It is a blessing to be able to report all that is going on and all that we are up against and know we have people praying through it with us.

The last two months, our calendar was full. There were not but two days that had only normal events happening. We had baby showers and births, summer VBS, a missions emphasis month with four missionaries scheduled, a special baptism service in which we had five baptized in a nearby river, fixing up the church building, women's cell groups once or twice a week (Arandas and San Miguel), a Mexican patriotic service (something churches in Mexico rarely do), preaching in rehab centers, preaching on the streets, the visit of my parents-in-law, and the beginning of fall semester Bible studies – all this on top of the regular activities. *Phew* I got tired again just writing that! Now let me break this down a little to mention some specifics.

The Summer VBS was our first VBS since we got here, so we were testing out how well things would go. We had around 20 kids during the event, and we made some contacts with their parents for follow up. I was thankful for Paulette's help taking care of all the lessons, making it a lot easier on me (picture included).

I trust all have had a blessed Christmas a New Year. We have had many things happen since our last prayer letter that we would like you to be updated on and for which we would appreciate your prayers.

First I would like to get you caught up with what I mentioned last report.

Maria Elena, the 77-year-old who was threatened to be kicked out of her son's house, has been super excited about what God has been doing for her. Within two days from when I sent the last prayer letter, her son had a drastic change of mind; he was suddenly no longer against her coming to church. I'm sure that your prayers had much to do with that. Thank you for your intercessions! Not only that, Maria Elena decided to be baptized. Weather around here has been getting all the way down to freezing and a little below. I suggested that she wait for warmer days, but she insisted that she had little time left and did not want to delay. I called a few pastors to see what they would suggest as to how to baptize someone of her age and frailty, and thankfully, we came up with a way to do so without putting her at risk and without skipping biblical submersion.

The couple who were getting married are now undecided and may not go through with it after all. Pray for both as there were circumstances that greatly discouraged them. If the Lord wants it to be, He will open the door again, and if not then He knows best.

The men's retreat was a success. I preached over an hour long on the story of Samson, both a strong and weak man. It was a partially cloudy day and we were up some 8,000ft above sea level, so many of the clouds were underneath where we were having the lesson. Also there was a cross built up there, so it seemed we had the stage set up. It was an awesome experience. We had 25 men and teens and, as a result, two new young men have been coming faithfully to church. Both had made a profession of faith before the retreat, but now they have starting to come faithfully to church services. We finished off the adventure with tamales, and now everybody is asking when we will have the next outing.

Having reported that, I am glad to report another missionary who is due to show his/her face next September. Hannah and I are expecting another baby! Pray that God takes

PRAISES:

- New Baby
- One Baptized
- Man day
- Two saved
- New year

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Two members
under discipline
- Young man in
trouble

over his/her heart at a young age. Also, pray for the older three's salvations. Azelia especially seems close!

Another thing that brings me joy to report is that the preaching in the rehab center has been bringing forth fruit. One of the guys that was there assists with us from time to time (he lives a ways away). Another two of the men have made professions of faith and plan to begin going to churches in the towns they live in. We were able one week before Christmas to give them all small bags of American candies. I'm talking about just under five hundred bags. Thanks to the hearts of people in our church who wanted to encourage the men who are locked up in there! This is not a Christian rehab center, but God has kept us in good standing with the director, and we intend to keep going for as long as possible.

We had a wild ending for last year. I could probably write a full prayer letter on just Christmas day, and I advise that you don't read the rest of this prayer letter to children unless you have already read it and feel it is appropriate. I tried to keep things appropriate. We planned absolutely nothing on Christmas, so that we could spend the time together as a family. At 4:00am in the morning, the first text of trouble was sent by one of the young men in San Miguel. He had been in a party, drank too much, and ended up in problems. At 10:00am a believer from Arandas who had not been drinking now for three months called me and asked me to come over. He probably was not even aware that it was Christmas day. I visited him and tried to encourage him. That night I got a call from another member of the church who was making huge accusations against two young men of the church. I honestly didn't believe it was true because this particular lady had cried wolf many times before. She was saying that it was a case of rape. I had to leave that conversation until the next day, because it was not possible at the time. Needless to say, I didn't sleep very well that night. Turned out that all four kids involved had been willing and cooperative. While the mother had been drunk on several occasions, one daughter or the other would let the guys in the house.

The mother had already not been going to church for a while, but she allowed her daughter to assist. After that, none of the family has been coming. I called a number of pastors and got their council on what to do. I had to discipline the two guys, and so far they have been repentant and receptive of the discipline. Restoration is in progress for them, and they seem relieved that they are no longer hiding the whole situation.

New Year's Day wasn't as bad, but these dates are always hard for the people that are barely breaking their addictions. Friends and family always are inviting them to places of greater temptation. The same young man from San Miguel who had struggled on Christmas ended up drinking and getting in a fight on New Year's Day with a mob of teens and a 30-year-old who was also drunk. The fight wouldn't have been so serious, but one of the teens pulled a knife and the 30-year-old ended up in the hospital with

eight knife wounds. The police did not do anything about it because the 30-year-old is connected with the cartel that controls this area. All the teens were threatened to be severely beaten by the cartel and most ran from town to secure themselves. I helped the guy from our church get some distance away from San Miguel, and he probably needs to stay away for at least six months.

We were looking at going on furlough this late spring and early summer, but I'm not sure that with all the extra turmoil it would be a good idea. We wanted to visit our eastern churches whom we have not seen for three or so years and update them personally. Rushing the trip, we would take a minimum of three months to see all the eastern churches. Please pray that God will indicate whether it would be good to go this year or the next, or whether it would be a good idea to see half the churches this time and the remaining ones afterward.

Standing in the need of prayer,

Rolando, Hannah, Azelia, Viana, Amadeo, and Baby

