



Ortiz Family Serving in Arandas and San Miguel el Alto, Jalisco, Mx.

BUILDING UP THE CHURCH

As church planters, we seek to see people saved then build them up. To do so, we have to “speak the truth in love.” The lost will not be saved if we do not speak the truth of the Gospel to them, but they will often be turned away if we do not do so in love. A new believer will not overcome falsehood and sin if we do not speak the truth to them, but we may hinder them if we do not do so in love. In our present building project, we have seen several important factors that are parallel to spiritual growth. In order to build up, we had to first dig down. We cannot be superficial in our understanding of Biblical truth and expect the church to reach a high level of spiritual growth. This is a lot of work when you are dealing with first generation Christians. Additionally, we have to keep clearing debris from the construction site. It is amazing how much stuff adds up if you don’t stay on top of it. Hannah has been constantly clearing the property, and yet it is quickly cluttered again. That is true of the church as well. We have to keep short accounts between each other or our unity as God’s people will be soon cluttered with offenses: offenses which are impossible to avoid but not impossible to deal with (Luke 17:1-4). Construction is a messy process, and we all know people today who do not want anything to do with church because of the mess that they have seen. The church is under construction, and there will be a mess until it’s finished. When the church reaches its fullness, even the holy angels will be astounded to behold it. Instead of running from church because of the present mess, we need to all be actively involved in “speaking the truth in love” to build it up. I hope this letter finds you busy in God’s building project.

Building comes with its hiccups, but we have always been able to get through them. The first hiccup was that a neighbor came and told us that some of our land belonged to them. This turned out to be false but was unsettling nonetheless. Secondly, the city lost the blue prints for the water services. They told me I had to look for it myself, and only if I could not find it would they come in. I ended up digging 65 feet along the road to find nothing. They came several weeks later and fixed the problem, but that slowed the work down because almost everything in Mexican construction requires water. The third included the ATM. In 6 years, I have never had an ATM dispute. I didn’t even know what that was. Since we began building, I have had three ATM disputes. The bank tells me they are certain I will

Prayer Tab

PRAISES:

- Chela’s salvation
- Gonzalo’s salvation and baptism
- Efrain’s health
- Christmas outreach
- Arandas’ anniversary
- First stage of building project

PETITIONS:

- More souls
- Building each other up
- Kids being disciplined
- Second stage of construction

not lose any money, but it still is inconvenient. Fourth, the provider for the steel beams decided to overcharge us. We caught him in his scam, but he did not want to repay, and we had to change provider. Also, we had two fender benders in two months whereas we had only one or two in the previous six years.

I hope it does not sound like I am complaining. We know that when you are doing something for the Kingdom there will be obstacles, so these are an encouragement! God is still doing great things through earthen vessels.

In December, we met a lady by the name of Chela with one of the saddest faces I have ever seen. Her wrinkles set in a frown told a story all by themselves. She told us of her life of emptiness, and we did the only thing that could help her. We pointed her to the Christ. Praise the Lord, she cried out to Him for salvation! I wish you could see her face shine with joy after finding living water! Wrinkles of sorrow turned to joy. Pray she will be built up in Christ's body.

Gonzalo is a young man who only lives in Arandas during harvest season, but we were privileged to see him as part of God's spiritual harvest. He professed Christ and was baptized a few weeks later. Several brothers in church watered and planted, and we go to see God give growth. He has since returned to his home but told us he looks forward to being in church with us next work season.

For Christmas in San Miguel, we had 25 bags of food to give away to needy families and 40 gift boxes to give away to kids. We shared the Gospel with more than 70 people that way. Praise the Lord, we had a good response from some of the adults and a few of the kids! Several committed to ongoing discipleship.

We have had several of the church folk helping us build, and there has been some friction over different things, but God has helped all parties involved to "speak the truth in love" and humbly make things right.

We are close to finishing the first stage of the church building. God has provided, and we are still debt free. We hope to move in some time in March and, as the Lord allows, work on the second and final stages of the building. All donations not otherwise designated go to this. On top of all these blessings, several people sent Christmas money for our kids, and one family sent money to cover what was stolen from us, mentioned in the last letter. We are so very grateful to you all!

We also had our 4th church anniversary in Arandas and had more than 100 people in attendance. God has been faithful in building His church every step of the way.

Built up in Christ,

Rolando, Hannah, and family

P.S. - Efrain, whom I mentioned was dying and had very low chances of survival, is recovering very rapidly. Thank you for your prayers



Anniversary



Christmas Outreach



Gonzalo's Baptism