

Viva Mexico

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Greetings from Guadalajara, Mexico:

I trust you are beginning to enjoy springtime in your area. Here, it is already very hot, and some days it is even hotter. I will be writing two prayer letters this month because of the great amount of activities we have done. We want to keep you abreast of what is happening here. This first letter pertains to the Huichol (pronounced, WE-chol) Indians and the church we are building for them.

On the 21st of April, Dad, a builder from my church, and myself drove to Piedra China, a Huichol village in the state of Nayarit, Mexico, to visit with the pastor and plan the new church building. In English, the town is called Curly Rock. We took 150 pounds of beans with us. They were delighted with the gift as they have very little to eat. On the 27th of April, 14 men and women left Guadalajara with 2 vehicles and 2 trailers loaded with tons of equipment and metal. We previously checked every motorized tool and laid out more tools than what we really needed because the closest town is almost 40 miles away; we didn't want to have go off the mountain as the inconvenience would destroy our work time of only 4 days we allotted to get the framework of the church under roof. By the time we drove the more than three hours and got up the mountain, we soon found that not one of our motorized machines were working. Both men and women began working in the trenches, cutting shrubs and trees and breaking up big boulders with sledge hammers. Some of our ladies can really sling a sledge! At least 10 to 12 Indian men and women were right there working with us. I was so proud of all our people as there were only 2 professional builders amongst us. In spite of Satan's wiles, which made us work twice as hard, everyone had a great attitude and everyone worked 18-20 hours each day in 95-degree heat. Can you imagine working in that heat, handling hot metal that laid in the boiling sun for hours? Just touching the metal raised immediate blisters on the skin, and we only had 2 pair of gloves between all of us. Can you imagine welding that metal with no shade in sight? Or even sitting on the metal frame of the building and welding 20 feet off the ground without scaffolding? Well, we did it. I had only done minor welding jobs, and now I was faced with the dilemma of welding an entire metal building! We only had one more person who could weld, and he didn't have any more experience than I did. We almost finished the frame of the church, but ran out of time and had to go back the following Saturday to put on the remaining pieces of metal roof.

The third day, I was into my 6th hour of welding and felt as if I would croak. I desperately needed a cold drink. Someone prepared a large glass of what everyone thought was squirt, but it was not a soft drink. Somehow paint thinner was purchased in a two-liter squirt bottle and mistakenly placed in the cooler. I took a long deep drink and immediately knew I was in trouble. I couldn't breathe, I couldn't swallow, I couldn't talk

and my entire stomach was on fire. I did not want to be touched or moved, but after a couple hours suffering, I was persuaded to go to the city of Tepic for treatment. We could not find a hospital but found a doctor. After consulting with other doctors and the pharmacy, I was given a prescription which not one pharmacy in the entire city carried. I went back to the mountain and took an old Indian remedy of eating burnt blackened tortillas. It must have worked as I am still here to write this letter, although I lost my voice for a week.

I will soon be going to visit some churches in the U.S.A. while dad and others go back to the village and finish the walls and put the solar lighting system in place.

In His service,

Jerry & Itzen Shaw

