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Subject: Prayer Update--July 23, 2009

“God treats me like He likes me best.”

A good friend who happens to be one of the pastors at our sending church in Indiana has been known to use that expression from time to time. Our first response to a statement like that might be to think, ‘well that sure is a prideful thing to say.’ But if the truth was known, every believer could say that with absolute sincerity, couldn’t they? Basically it’s another way of saying—God pours out His blessings on me in absolutely more ways than I should ever deserve. So, as we reflect back on the last couple of months since we last updated you on the ministry here in La Poza, we’d simply say, ‘*God treats us, like He likes us best!*’ What are some of the evidences of God’s goodness in the ministry here recently?

God’s blessing through a short-term ministry team

We have just returned from a week of ministry in La Poza with a team that was made up primarily of folks from Grace Covenant Baptist Church in Birmingham , AL . The team did a VBS for the children in La Poza in the mornings and then we moved to Media Luna in the afternoons where we did the same program. The Gospel was clearly presented to the kids in both communities. On Wednesday there were 90 kids that showed up for the VBS in La Poza. The team also brought a lot of material and other sewing related items. We have 6 battery operated sewing machines so that while the kids were in VBS the mothers and other ladies could sew. That too was very well attended and much appreciated.

On Wednesday night we showed the Christian film, “Fireproof” for the whole community. We had 100 people show up for the film and had an excellent response from this time together. Though it was late when the movie ended (about 10:45 p.m.) everyone stayed for a 5 minute summary of the Gospel and invitation to talk further if they so desired. Gospel literature was given to all those that attended. Thursday morning at about 8:00 a.m. Oscar, who had attended the movie, brought another friend (who hadn’t been able to attend the film) who has been having problems in his marriage to our house to ‘talk’. (If you haven’t seen the movie the general theme is about a man who is having serious problems in his marriage and how God intervenes and saves the man and eventually his marriage.) God gave us a good conversation together as the man related to me some of the things that have been going on his marriage. When I told him his story sounded like the man in the film, Oscar chimed in, ‘that’s what I told him too. That’s why I thought it might be good if you talked to him.’ I had the opportunity to talk and share the gospel with him. I invited him back to the house sometime to watch the movie in its entirety and so we could talk more. This man actually lives in Vera Cruz—about an 8 hour drive from La Poza but he comes to this area to buy fish for resale. We’re hopeful we’ll be able to have continued opportunities with him.

God’s blessing through answered prayer

What a blessing it’s been to Robin to see how God has been working in the life of one of her good friends in La Poza. This lady is young in the faith but has been sharing recently with Robin how she and her 10 year old daughter have prayed for specific matters and God has answered them in some very definite ways. Her comment to Robin was, “these things we’ve prayed about might be insignificant to other people but we prayed specifically for them because they were important to us and God answered our prayers!” We’ve prayed that God would make it obvious that He’s at work in the hearts of people here. This is a definite answer to that prayer. We’re reminded of John’s words in 3 John 4—“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.”

We've also prayed since we came to La Poza that the Lord would raise up a man or men who could be discipled and trained for leadership in any future church plant. While we can't say with certainty, it *appears* that God may in fact be answering this prayer as well. In the last few months we have met and developed a friendship with Tony. He has lived most of his life in Miami, FL but has relatives in La Poza and Valle Hermoso (a larger city about 45 minutes from La Poza). The story that brings him to live here is too involved to get into in this email, but suffice it to say, the fingerprints of God are all over it. Tony has been a believer for about 5 years (saved out of a gang in the Miami area) and has a real passion for prayer and sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He also seems extremely teachable and after sharing with him our vision for church planting, he was extremely excited and said, 'maybe this is why God brought me from Miami to La Poza. Because there is no work for Tony in La Poza he is currently living and working with family in Valle Herrmoso. But the last time we talked he told us his desire is to live in La Poza and commute to work in Valle Hermoso. We're praying that this will indeed be the case and we can begin the discipleship/leadership training process. Would you pray with us about that?'

God's blessing through new believers

On May 31 we had the privilege of baptizing 2 recent followers of Christ. Minerva and her daughter Ariana live in Media Luna. We have been friends of this family since before we even lived in Mexico. Over the last year we've seen evidence of genuine conversion and when we talked with them recently about following the Lord in baptism they both readily admitted their desire for this act of obedience. While our primary area of ministry is La Poza, we maintain friendships with people we've known a long time in Media Luna. They attend a small church with us on Sunday mornings in La Loma and we are encouraged by God's continued work in their lives.

Thanks and upcoming plans

Thanks so much for your faithful prayer on our behalf. God continues to *treat us like He likes us best!* We certainly don't deserve it but we give Him all the praise for it. We covet your prayers even more. Pray over the things mentioned in this update. Give thanks to God for what He is doing.

August finds us visiting our remaining supporting churches that we weren't able to visit in 2008. We'll be in churches in TX, MI, PA, and OK. We'd really appreciate your prayers for safety as we travel as well as good times of fellowship with friends who are vital to this ministry.

Partners Together in the Greatest Cause,

Steve & Robin