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Sent: Sunday, January 25, 2009 11:47:16 PM
Subject: Prayer Update--January 25, 2009

New Year/New Life/New Opportunities

Guns, grapes, and good times—that’s how we celebrate the **New Year** here in Mexico . **Guns:** it doesn’t have to be a gun but anything that makes a loud ‘boom’ (ie. firecrackers, anything with a fuse) is in order when the clock strikes midnight on New Year’s Eve. We prefer to be inside at midnight because when you fire a gun in the air it still falls to the ground somewhere. Every year there are stories in the news of people who have been randomly hit when someone discharges a gun in the air to celebrate the New Year. **Grapes:** we’ve celebrated New Year’s with our friends here in La Poza for several years now and there’s one tradition that is always observed. At midnight (usually after the guns are fired or the firecrackers are lit) everyone at the party receives a bowl of 12 grapes. The grapes symbolize the 12 desires/goals/wishes that you have for the 12 months of the New Year. As you eat the grapes the idea is to think about your goals and wishes for the New Year. **Good Times:** it’s true that in Mexico we never pass up the opportunity for a party and New Year’s Eve is a great time *para festejar*.

Celebrating new life always tops fiestas—“. . . there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents”—Luke [15:10](#). Our good friends Carlos and Sandra have 3 daughters. Their oldest daughter, Vicki, has shown a real interest over the last several months in going to worship services with us on [Sundays](#) in the church we attend. Vicki has been exposed to the Gospel often over the last several years through Bible Schools we’ve had here in La Poza and in spending time here at our house where she’s watched Gospel videos and read and heard [Bible stories](#). Several weeks ago during the children’s church time on a [Sunday morning](#) she repented of her sin and trusted in Christ alone for salvation. Rejoice with the angels of God and with us over this one sinner who has repented.

Looking forward to what is in line for '09—“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ”—Philippians 3:14. Even though we’re not through January yet, we are excited about a couple of **new opportunities** for ministry and hopefully and prayerfully more lost sinners who will repent. **English Class:** most public schools in Mexico have some sort of English curriculum. Unfortunately, most schools we’re familiar with don’t have teachers who know how to speak English. Consequently the students might learn how to recognize written words, but they rarely understand how to pronounce the words. Robin recently offered to ‘help out’ in the 4th and 5th grade class in La Poza’s elementary school. She didn’t want to offend the teacher by implying he didn’t know how to teach a language he couldn’t speak so the offer was simply to help the students in their pronunciation if that would be of help. He was delighted with her offer and rather than simply having her ‘help him’ he has essentially given her one hour [every Monday afternoon](#) to teach the whole class. We are both open to teaching other grades and classes if the opportunity arises. Not only does it open a door to spend time with the kids here in La Poza, but it also allows us opportunities to build friendships for sharing the Gospel with the teachers. **Teen Bible Study:** Carina is a teenager who used to come to our [Sunday afternoon Bible study](#). Carina is a professing believer and came faithfully with her mother, Lilia, to the study until she enrolled in a Sunday afternoon computer class that meets on Sundays in a larger city near La Poza. Recently Carina has asked if we’d be willing to study the Scripture with her at a different time during the week. We’ve challenged her to invite some of her teenage friends and we’d be glad to offer the same chronological Bible study for them at a time that was convenient for all of them. She’s talked to 6 of her friends about the possibility and there seems to be interest. As with most teens, the challenge is getting them to come as a group for the first meeting. We’ll keep you updated if this study actually materializes.

We would ask you to pray specifically for:

- Vicki—our new sister in Christ. Pray for Robin as she seeks to encourage and disciple Vicki in the faith. Pray that we will indeed see fruits of repentance in this young sister’s heart. Pray that God would use Vicki’s profession of faith to challenge her dad, Carlos, and see him brought to faith in Christ. Upon her return home that Sunday, the first thing Vicki did was to tell both her parents what had happened at the [church service](#) that morning.
- the new opportunities for ministry. Pray that God might use the English class in the school for His glory. Pray that God will give Robin wisdom in looking for those opportunities to proclaim biblical truth even as she teaches English. Pray also that we’ll be able to begin this teen Bible study and that God might use it to save a young generation here in La Poza. It may be that God would use these teenagers as part of the foundation of a new church in this community.

May God grant you *new opportunities* for ministry in the *New Year* so that you too will see the fruit of *new life* as God saves his people.

Resting in His Faithfulness,

Steve & Robin

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