

Christ, Only Christ!

Proclaiming HIM Following HIM



April & May 2023

“That We May ...Comfort Them”

I spoke to others of the love of Christ,
Comforted them in sorrow and distress;
Told them assuredly His will is best,
He brings not idle suffering to man
And in His wisdom there must be a plan;
Their part was just to trust - completely trust;
The rest was His. Deliver them He must -
Not necessarily in their own way,
A thousand years with Him are as a day.
He knows the end, He has an eternal plan,
His ways are high above the ways of man.
Who would not gladly trust his all to One
Who loved enough to send His only Son?

And then there came into my life such stress,
Such overwhelming grief and bitterness,
It seemed as if my Lord had ceased to care,
And heaven's doors were shut against my prayer.
How easy it had been for me to say,
'Fret not thyself, God has a better way."
Upon my knees I fell with earnest plea,
"What I have told to others, prove to me!"
He did not lift my darkness, but instead
He took my hand firmly in His and led
Through cleansing flood and purifying fire,
Purging away my dross, lifting me higher
Than all the trials His mercy had allowed,
Until I saw His face above the cloud.

Barbara C. Ryberg

Parents in Action

These camps are short and only last from Friday evening until Saturday afternoon. On Friday evening, we make supper for the guests (usually 100 to 150 people). Then the families share a verse they've memorized, and any of the children who are learning a musical instrument present a song they've learned.

After this, most of the parents spend time visiting while the kids play volleyball or dodgeball in the camp gymnasium.



Bible verse and musical instrument presentation time in the camp dining room



Family presenting the verse they memorized



Kids presenting a song they learned together

After breakfast on Saturday morning, each family is given a paper with a list of questions regarding the book they read and the Bible study they did as a family. Every Parents in Action camp, the participating families take home a book (usually a missionary biography) and a fill-in-the-blank Bible study that they are suppose to read and study before the next camp.

After everyone is finished putting in their answers, a group of judges start going through all the paperwork. While the judges are busy grading everyone's homework, the families enjoy viewing the crafts each family worked on together.



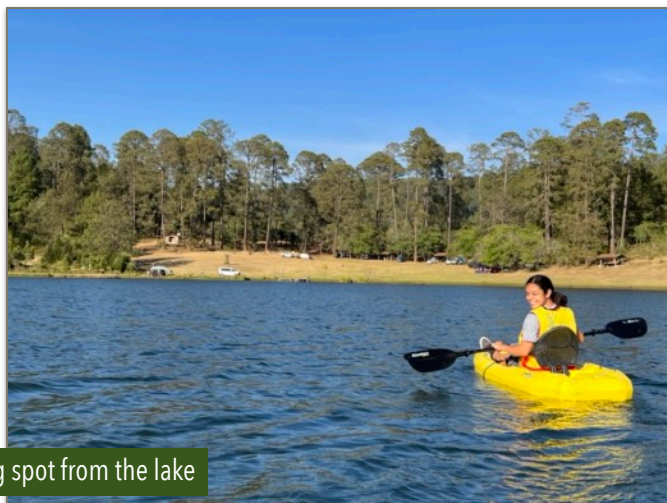
Following is a prayer time—parents praying together for their children, while the children play some outdoor games. This is followed by lunch and the announcement of the winning families for the quizzes—each of the first 6 places picks out a prize, such as chocolates or dried fruit. Finally, a short challenge is given to the parents from Scripture.

This past time, several families went with us on a camping trip to a beautiful lake by Ciudad Hidalgo, where my brother Michael lives.

It was our first time to go camping in this place, and everyone seem to really enjoy it. What surprised all of us was the fact that it would freeze during the night! And we went during the hottest time of the year. We are now all wondering how cold it must get at this lake during the winter months!



View of the camping spot from the lake



Group of kids playing on the dock

Both the camp and the camping trip turned out great and provided a wonderful opportunity for families to be encouraged, slow down, and spend some time together.

Hospital Ministry

Unlike anything you would probably ever see in the US, at our local government hospital there are lots of poor people outside the hospital just sitting around waiting for news or instructions from the doctors regarding their loved one or family member.



This of course gives us an outstanding opportunity to go share the Gospel with them. We've found people at the hospital to be very open and receptive.

(Picture—Annie, Gloria and my sister-in-law Zaira handing out gospel tracts at the hospital.)

Several months ago, I decided to take a couple loud-speakers to the hospital and start street preaching, or in this case, "hospital preaching".

This is something I had always wanted to do but just never had



Unbelievably, some people spend months outside the hospital until their loved one is either released from the hospital or dies.

had the courage to do. The first time I took the speakers I felt quite confident when we left home, but when I arrived at the hospital, all my courage faded away!

After unloading the tracts and Bibles along with the two speakers, we walked to a central location where everyone could see and hear us. I felt petrified! Everyone that came with us took a handful of tracts and started handing them out, looking for someone to start a good spiritual conversation with. Meanwhile, I was left alone with my two speakers and the microphone in my hand. Everyone at the hospital was staring at me with a look that seemed to say; "what are you going to do?" The pressure was on! I remember thinking, "you were crazy for having had this idea in the first place!"



This is the only picture we have of me "street preaching" at the hospital.

After about five minutes of silence, just standing there and praying that the Lord would give me the right words and the courage to speak, I was finally able to start talking—and since then I haven't looked back!



My wife Keyla sharing the Gospel with people at the hospital

I now enjoy taking the speakers each time we go to the hospital and preaching to everyone within hearing distance. Most of the people seem to respond well to what is said, and we've been able to distribute several Bibles, New Testaments and gospels of John as a result.

Keyla's VISA

I honestly don't enjoy writing. In fact, writing my prayer letter is one of my least favorite things! That said, my constant motivation for writing these letters is the fact that we can see God move in answer to your prayers! Thank you all for praying for us!

I mention this now because in our last update we asked for your prayers regarding all the paperwork necessary for getting Keyla's visa to enter of the US. We needed 3 different documents that she didn't have. The first was something called an INE which, in Mexico is your official voting ID and is used for practically everything. We needed that in order to get her Mexican passport.



Getting the INE only took us about 2 weeks but unfortunately the line for getting a passport was somewhat backed up. In fact, it ended up taking us over 2 months to get her Mexican passport!

The final and most difficult step was getting Keyla's VISA to enter the US. We had heard rumors about how backed up everything was for getting a US VISA. Even so, we started filling out all the necessary paperwork. In order to get the US tourist VISA there are roughly 4 steps.

1. Fill out all the paperwork.
2. Pay for your visa and/or interview.
3. Choose a date for your interview with the US consulate.
4. Go to your interview where they tell you if your VISA application is approved or denied.

(If they deny your VISA application, which is very common—we estimate about 75% of the time, they don't return your money.)

After we finished filling out all the paperwork and had payed for the VISA, we still needed to get an interview date with the US consulate. There are around 12 different US consulates in Mexico. Of those 12, we chose the consulate in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico's side of US Laredo. (Nuevo Laredo is a 12 hour drive away from us but according to Google, this was the consulate that was least backed up.)

Even so when we checked the closest available date for the interview on the consulate website, it wasn't until August 24 of 2024! More than a year in the future! (By the way, at the interview, the US consulate reviews your paperwork and asks you questions, after which they either approve your VISA

application or deny it.) There's no guarantee that they will give you the VISA even after waiting over a year for the interview!

This was rather daunting to say the least! But...

...someone told us that if you just sit there and reload the page where you choose your VISA appointment date, sometimes closer dates become available. After doing this for several minutes I realized that it was true. The nearest available date was August 24th of 2024 but all of a sudden August 16th became available. After about five minutes it was gone. A few hours later, I noticed that May 14th was available. It only lasted about 30 seconds before someone else registered their VISA appointment for that date.

In both these instances, the problem was that these dates were still over a year in the future. I decided to keep trying, and pray that something would become available this year. If it did, I knew I would have to be fast because I wasn't the only person looking for a closer date!

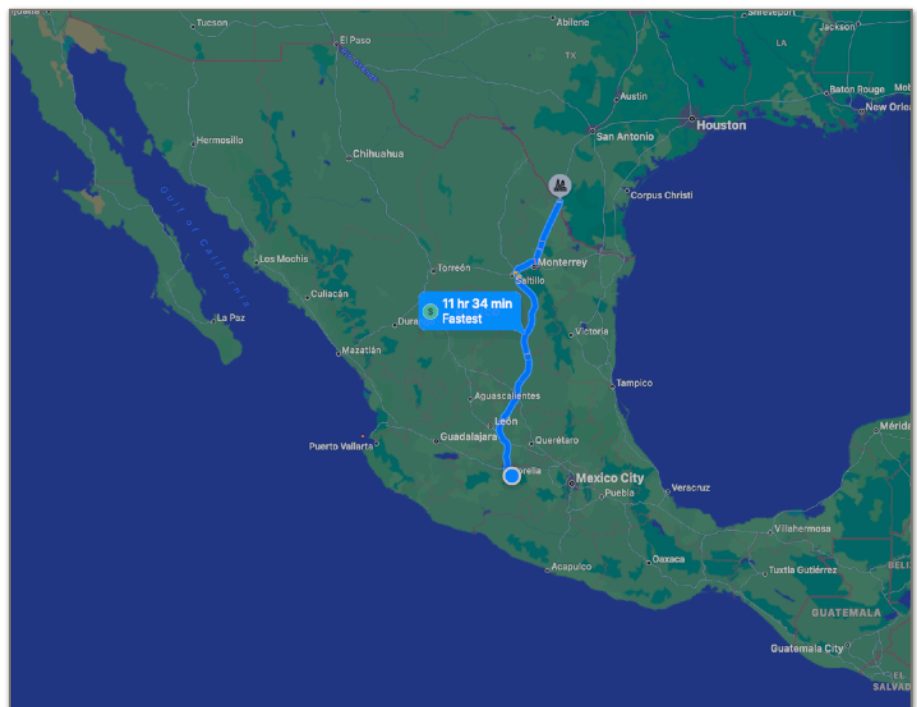
After trying for almost 2 days November 11 of 2023 became available! As I tried to reserve this date, someone else beat me to it! This was the closest date we had seen. But even though we missed it, it was encouraging to see that every once in a while, dates even into this year would become available.

On Saturday, May 6 at 11:15 PM after three days of trying to find a closer date for the VISA interview, I decided to reload the page once more...

I couldn't believe my eyes! May 17 of 2023 was available! I was so excited that my hands were shaking as I quickly chose that date for our interview, and proceeded to save it...

...the date was ours! We were the first people to see it available and reserve it! Praise the Lord!

Now we had to go to the interview and pray that the Lord would grant my wife favor at the interview and that they would approve her VISA. And guess what—that's exactly what happened! We now have Keyla's VISA to enter the US and we can't stop praising the Lord for this huge blessing! Thank you all for your interest and for your prayers!





This is the Rio Grande. We went to see it during our time at the border.



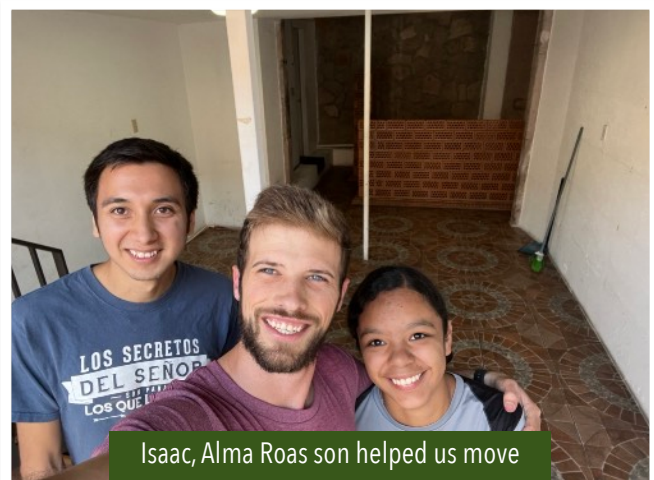
The day we picked up Keyla's US VISA

Havilah

In the last two months, there have been huge changes to Havilah! After three years in the downtown location where we have been working, we finally decided it was best to close and bring all the books and Bibles back to the camp library. This was a hard decision to make. This spot was very central, and we had many many new customers find us there. It was also a great place to evangelize to all kinds of people who would visit that part of town.

Even so, we could just never make ends meet. Our monthly expenses almost always exceeded our profit, and we were just barely surviving.

Now, our plan is to do almost everything online. One of the huge advantages this gives us is the fact that we will now be able to sell practically everything at cost since we've eliminated the cost of rent and of Alma Roa's salary.



Isaac, Alma Roas son helped us move everything out of the downtown location.

The Roa family have been fantastic to work with, but thankfully, as time has gone by, the children have finished college and have started working, making them much more financially stable and independent. Alma, the widowed mother, plans to continue working on her own. Though her children can now support her, she is a very hard worker and wants to continue supporting herself. In any case, we feel confident that the Lord will continue providing for her in the future, as He has in the past.

Meanwhile, Keyla and I have been working hard to get the website working as smoothly as possible and we have already had lots of orders come in since we lowered the prices. As everything is now here at the camp, we will also be able to sell the books and Bibles at the different camps and events that take place here year round.

So in conclusion, Havilah continues but, it's now here at the camp and is completely run by my mom Keyla and I (until we can find someone to take our place). My mom contributes hugely to everything. We couldn't do it without her help!

What's Next?

I'm afraid we may have to go back to writing an update every month! I can't believe how many things happened in the last two months. We probably didn't even write about half of them—and this letter has already gotten way too long.

One of the things that discourages us when we write our updates is the thought that many of the recipients probably don't have time to even read them. (I understand, life is busy!) If you have gotten this far, thank you! We're so grateful for your interest and time. Hopefully our writing more was informative and encouraging, not boring and long. If you have any suggestions for our future prayer letters please let us know. We would love to hear from you!

The main thing coming up is our annual youth camps. Keyla and I will be in charge of the boys camp so there's lots of planning and organization to do.

May the Lord richly bless all of you!

Nathan & Keyla

Yours in CHRIST!

OUR LORD—COME!