

CLARK PRAYER UPDATE

PRAYER CALENDAR FOR MARCH/APRIL 2022



The Lord blessed us with a visit from Priscilla's mom, Beverly Kendal for almost a month during December and January. At 82, she is still serving the Lord in McAllen, TX and is one of our most faithful prayer supporters.

She got to stay long enough to take part in our work week on Michael and Sofi's house over in Cd. Hidalgo. She became good friends with Julie, Michael and Sofi's youngest, who was just on the verge of learning to walk and loved to be taken around by the hand, to practice her walking! Mom had the time and patience for this!



Great Grandma watching Julie and Owen



Food preparation in our make-shift outdoor kitchen for work week.

For some of our early breakfast preparations, it was in the 30's with the wind blowing! We felt like icicles!



The "baby station" right by make-shift kitchen.



Carrying dishes to wash to little backyard sink where there was water.

The Lord abundantly answered prayer for this work week in mid-January. The finding and renting of this house was in itself an enormous provision and answer to prayer. The spacious yards and extra buildings are perfect for church meetings, evangelistic outreaches, and Michael and Sofi's 4 kids, (and dogs and cats and chickens). (By the way, they have another baby coming in June!)

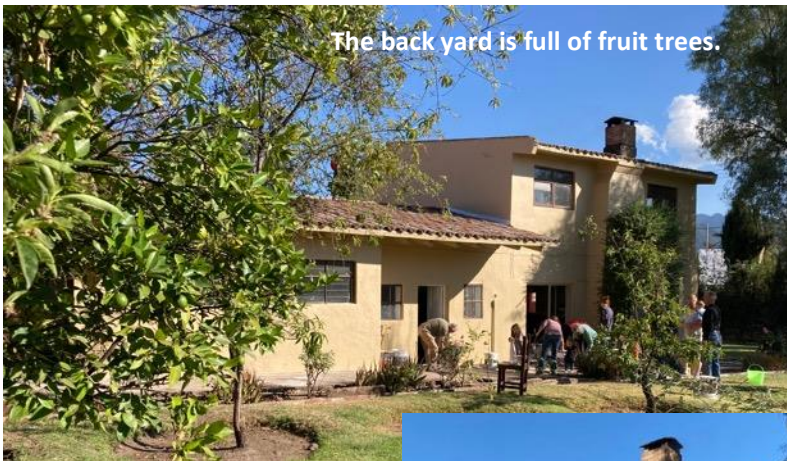
The 100-year-old house, however, was badly in need of repairs. The owner lowered the rent by 1/3 in exchange for Michael's agreement to fix the house himself. It seems this wealthy man is mostly interested in someone caring for the place, as it was his family childhood home. A team of our friends from Arkansas came for 5 days and accomplished a tremendous amount of work!



All the roof tiles had to be removed and replaced, to fix the water leaks!



Many windows were rotted out and had to be replaced.



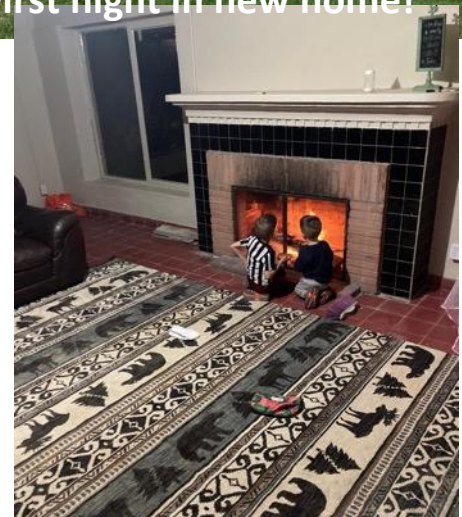
The back yard is full of fruit trees.



First night in new home!



MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!





Please pray with us for Michael and Sofi and the new work in Cd. Hidalgo. They have begun a Sunday meeting. Each Sunday a different family from our church plans to go over and support them. You can see Ana in the back, as well as Andrés and Lucy, whom we have written about. Ana is thrilled to be having a church service she can attend each week. She is spending quite a bit of time with Michael and Sofi during the week, which is such an encouragement for her, after her long, lonely time of being the only one. Her aunt and uncle, Ricardo and Rosa, seem to be backing off, probably from pressure by the uncle in Atlanta, who largely supports the family (financially) and is adamantly opposed to the message of Christ. Please pray for his salvation.

Michael and Sofi recently had a long visit with Lucy's grandparents, who basically raised her. Her grandmother has serious heart disease. They received them with many good questions about the gospel message and an invitation to return. Please pray for their salvation, as well as Andrés and Lucy, who have been open all these years, but seem to be holding off on a decision for Christ.



We have been so encouraged by the great spirit and enthusiasm for the Parents in Action camps. Here, the families are doing the tests on their homework together, during the camp held the end of January.

The next camp will be March 18th. They will read the biography of Cameron Townsend, quite an interesting story for Mexicans, as he was close friends with a well-loved Mexican president!



CLARK PRAYER CALENDAR—MARCH/APRIL, 2022

MARCH 1-5 Please pray for Ana in Cd. Hidalgo. Pray for her steadfastness, encouragement, and continued growth in Christ. She was impacted by our last PIA book about a missionary to Muslims in Algeria and all the terrible persecution suffered from family, by those who trusted Christ. She has felt strong rejection from her family lately, because of her faith, but the firm resolve of these Algerian youth was an encouragement to her. In fact, she is beginning to read the book again!

MARCH 6-12 During our work week, we had an evangelistic supper to invite those who had studied with us in the city over the years. A good little group came and Michael shared the gospel clearly and welcomed them to his home from this time forward. Ana's grandma came with her, for the first time ever. She claims to be a Catholic but is quite involved in seeking out witchcraft solutions to her problems. However, she has been open to letting Ana come with us, in spite of the uncle's opposition. And she is the last word for Ana, as she has raised her. She said she didn't understand much of the message, but she liked it, and would like to return! Please pray for her salvation, and that of the uncle in Atlanta. This would have an enormous impact on the whole family!

MARCH 13-19 This weekend, we have another Parents in Action camp. Please pray with us for these parents who desire to raise their children to follow Christ. Pray that they would have wisdom and boldness and love to do all that is needed, as much as is possible on their part. Pray for the salvation of the children.

MARCH 20-26 Pray for Michael and Sofi, to "be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding...to please Him in all respects and to bear fruit in every good work..." (Col 1:9ff.) Pray for the Lord to lead them step by step in the development of this new work in Cd. Hidalgo. Pray for the strength of the Lord for them, and for His wisdom, His love and His diligence for them, according to all their needs.



Preparing hundreds of crepes for the banquet.

MARCH 27-31 Our church hosted a special evangelistic Valentine's banquet. We had a good number of non-believing guests and a clear gospel presentation. Please pray for the salvation of those who heard.



APRIL 1-9 Pray for our son, Nathan, who has decided to spend the first half of this year working in Arkansas, to help raise money for more inventory and other needs of the Hávilah bookstore. Please pray for the Lord to meet all his needs, both physical and spiritual, and guide Him in the knowledge of His will. Pray for Alma Roa, and for the Hávilah bookstore to be raised up as a light in the city of Morelia. We are encouraged to see what the Lord has done already, in this respect.

APRIL 10-16 This weekend is our large Easter family camp. Please pray for the Lord's blessing in every way.

APRIL 17-23 This year we feel the Lord is leading us to focus more on helping Christian parents in our churches, to do all in their power to love, discipline and lead their children to the Lord. Pray that many of these parents would have the will and zeal to do this, and that the Lord would strengthen them and open the way in each situation. Pray for wisdom for us. Ted has begun a series of teachings in our church on discipling children (for parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, S.S. teachers and Christian youth).

APRIL 24-30 Pray for wisdom and direction for Regis and Katie, as they have begun a weekly ministry with children in the nearby village of Triguillos, where Regis is from. →



FAMILY PICTURES





ELLA AND OWEN—11 MONTHS



Levi helping Grandma make supper—the taste tester!



JULIE AND JEMIMAH





WITH AUNT ANNIE



First swim in the river. Owen loved it! Ella wasn't so sure.



Two tuckered out girls!



Adriana's Story

By Annie Clark

Adriana sat nervously, scanning the ornately decorated room in which she found herself. The hands of the big, wooden clock ticked slowly past each number. It seemed as though this would never end. Alejandro, looked over compassionately at his girlfriend who was noticeably agitated. Although he tried to look calm, Adriana could see he too was worried.

Her thoughts went back to the events which had caused her to arrive where she was now—in the waiting room of the Bishop of the Catholic Church in the city of Leon, Guanajuato, Mexico.

Adriana had grown up in a strictly Roman Catholic home in the city of Irapuato. Her father, as a boy, was sent to Catholic schools and it was supposed he would study to become a priest. However, he decided that though he loved his religion, he would make a better lawyer than he would a priest. He became a very successful lawyer, but Manuel raised his large family in the ways of the Church. Many of his friends had gone on to become priests and whenever Adriana had questions about the Bible she would ask one of her father's friends.

Her young mind was full of questions and doubts about the Bible and about the traditions of Catholicism. She sincerely wanted to know who had the truth. The priests would often encourage her just to follow the traditions and obey the commandments. They told her to not worry about the rest.

When Adriana was in high school, she met Alejandro. She was amazed when she found out that he was studying the Bible in a Bible church. She had never even heard of such a church in her city. She was even more surprised when Alejandro explained that at his church, they only studied the Bible. This was exactly what Adriana had been wanting—to study the Bible for herself and to find out the truth from God's Word, not having to depend only on the words of men.

As part of her Catholic upbringing, Adriana attended a Young Ladies Silence Retreat (the "silence" part being something nearly impossible for most young ladies!) At this Retreat, the nuns would teach them good things. But never were they Biblically based. Adriana would ask sincere, thought-provoking questions. The answer seemed to always lie within the Catholic Church. This bothered Adriana. She wanted to be sure of the truth. Why couldn't they give her satisfactory answers from the Word of God. Why did she always have to take man's word for what she supposedly believed.

One day as she sat alone, feeling confused and frustrated, she came to the realization: "I can't believe in the priest's word, I can't believe in the nun's words. I can't even believe in what Alejandro tells me because, although he's helped me understand a lot, he's still learning himself." At that moment, Adriana concluded that God's Word was the only word she could trust fully.

Once she started reading the Bible for herself, her excitement grew. She was finally finding answers to her questions. But with the answers more doubts arose in her mind. If the Bible says "this...then why does the Catholic church say the very opposite?"

One day she prayed and said, "Lord, I ask You for Your help. I've come to the conclusion that I can only trust in You and in Your Word."

From that time forward, Adriana slowly began to understand the good news of the Bible. She realized from God's Word that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23) She realized that the Bible never teaches good works can save, but quite to the contrary it says in Ephesians 2:9, "you are saved, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." She finally came to the point of recognizing that she was a sinner and needed the perfect substitute, the Lamb of God to take away her sin. Adriana received what Jesus had done and what He had suffered as a free gift for her.

Unlike many, when Adriana finally received Jesus as her Savior, she did not go to church, she had not been given Bible studies, she did not have lots of Christian friends to encourage her. God had brought her to faith in Him through His Word

and it was through His Word that He continued to help her grow in her Christian walk.

Occasionally, she would secretly go to one of the youth Bible studies at Alejandro's church. Telling her parents she was simply going to drink coffee with Alejandro, she would then ask him to take her to church.

Although a deep love had developed between Alejandro and Adriana, several times their relationship nearly ended, as he was not welcome at her home. Her father and brothers knew he was a Christian and did not approve of him seeing their daughter/sister. Adriana's mom would see her reading the Bible occasionally and would complain that she was getting "brain washed" by Alejandro.

Adriana objected, but she finally started doing her studying at night, away from the watchful eye of her parents. She tried to get ahold of whatever study material Alejandro would loan her, to work on it herself at home. Her hunger for the Word was so great she couldn't seem to get enough of it.

When it came time for college, Adriana went to live with an uncle and aunt in the city of Guadalajara, to attend school there. Alejandro also went to the same city for his career studies, and he began attending a Bible church on Sundays. Away from the strict supervision of her parents, Adriana would slyly make the following proposition to her aunt each Sunday, "Auntie, would it be ok if I go to Mass and then go with Alejandro to his church?" "Don't start, Adriana." was the answer. "You know your parents wouldn't like it if they find out I'm letting you attend a Christian church after Mass." "Please! I promise, I'll still go to Mass if you ask me to." was the sweet reply. After another "pretty please," a raising of the eyebrows and a heavy sigh, the aunt would finally give in and let her go.

Soon enough, however, Adriana began to just skip Mass and go to church. As she started attending church, she realized the great difference between what she had always known and what she now believed. At this church she could actually compare what the preacher said with the Bible. In the Catholic church she could never do that. Most of it was simply not there to be compared in the first place.

Although she was now going to church and was in better soil in which to grow, her deception to her aunt was not leaving her conscience alone. She knew she could not hide it from her parents forever, but the mere thought of telling them that their daughter was now a Christian produced such terror, she couldn't bring herself to do it. For the time being, she decided she would be a "secret Christian."

When she finished college, Adriana headed for home and trouble. As always, her dad made her go to Mass each Sunday and reminded her faithfully of her duties as a good Catholic. "Why don't you go ahead and confess to the priest? Why aren't you participating in communion?"

The more Adriana lived her double life, the worse she felt. Who was she deceiving anyway? God? She knew no one could deceive God. Her dad? Perhaps for a time, but sooner or later, the truth would come out. She felt sickened by the way she was deceiving her parents. How could she say she was a Christian and be living in deceit at the same time? After waiting in line to confess to the priest and to receive communion, Adriana knew she didn't belong here any longer. "I can't do this one Sunday more!" she groaned. "Well, I think we'd better tell your parents then, Adriana." prompted Alejandro.

That night, Adriana started writing a letter which she never managed to finish. She tore and crumpled page after page from her notebook, attempting to start different ways but realizing that the outcome would be the same. In His mercy, God helped Adriana with an unexpected circumstance, to do the thing she found impossible to do herself. Around that time, Adriana decided to share with a good friend of hers that she had become a Christian. The only thing she hadn't calculated was that this good friend would share Adriana's secret with her older sister who happened to be Adriana's sister-in-law! Her sister-in-law then went and told Adriana's mom before she even had time to do it herself. It was in this way that all of Adriana's family found out about their traitor daughter/sister without a word on her part.

She will never forget the day her mother called her into her room. "I already knew!" she sobbed, "I already knew!" Adriana was speechless. How could she respond. Her mom had found out and her game of charades was over. In a sense, she was

relieved that it was out in the open. At the same time, she felt trapped, as her parents were not the kind who would inquire what had happened or who would ask for an explanation. They simply condemned her and would not accept the explanation she longed to give of the hope she had found in Jesus. Her dad's response to his daughter's newfound faith had the whole family worried. He seemed depressed and that was making him sick. He could not believe what his daughter had done and his daddy-heart broke as he thought of his apostate daughter. He tried his hardest to make her return to the faith of her forefathers. He kept on taking her to see one priest after another. When that didn't work, he settled on one last plan to get her to return—he set up an appointment with the Bishop of the Catholic Church!

And so it was that Alejandro and Adriana were ushered into an ornately decorated office complete with virgin and saints. Never had Adriana felt her heart beat so loudly as the day she went to see the Bishop. They timidly entered the office when called, firmly gripping the only weapon they had—a Bible. "What is that?" asked the Bishop, pointing to the Bible. "A Bible," answered Alejandro nervously. The Bishop grabbed the Bible from his hands and lightly tossed it onto the desk. Feeling disarmed, the young people looked nervously at the Bishop. He started with Alejandro. He got a volley of questions thrown at him and with each new question, the Bishop was visibly growing in frustration. Alejandro's answers were so solidly Biblical and firm, the Bishop finally gave an exasperated grunt and in no joking terms, excommunicated him from the Roman Catholic Church. That done, he turned his back on him and began firing his discourse at Adriana. Although she was a new believer and only knew at the most 15 Bible verses, she answered each of his questions with those 15 verses. She later recalls reading Luke 12:11-12 and thinking how true that verse had proved in her own experience with the Bishop: "When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

After trying in vain to find a question that would in some way penetrate Adriana's strong convictions, the Bishop started trying to reach her emotions by saying, "Adriana, what are you doing? I've known you since you were a little girl. Think about what you are doing to your parents. Think about the pain you are causing them." Although this deeply hurt Adriana, her faith stood strong. She knew what the Bishop said was true. She had been raised to believe in the Catholic church and she knew she was affecting her parents, "But Lord," she prayed silently, "I know that what You have taught me is the truth." After trying this last technique in vain, the Bishop excommunicated Adriana as well and called in her father who had been waiting outside. "Manuel," he said soberly, "all you can do with a daughter like that is to have her leave your house."

This was not what Adriana's father wanted to hear and she could see fear in his eyes. On the 40-minute ride home, no one said anything. Manuel's lawyer-mind was working hard, trying to figure out what would be the fair thing to do. When they finally arrived, Adriana's father called her away and began, "Adri, I can't let you go! I just can't turn you out of the house. But I'm going to ask you to finish your relationship with Alejandro."

Although Adriana's heart throbbed, she realized this was a test from God to see if she was really willing to live like she claimed to. She knew that her family believed she had changed because of Alejandro. They thought that perhaps by ending her relationship with him, she would be cured of this Christian stuff. This was a perfect opportunity to prove to her parents once and for all that Jesus was her own. She had not accepted Him out of obligation to Alejandro or anyone else for that matter. It was a decision she had made, of her own free will and God was giving her a chance to prove it. Also, before becoming a Christian, she had always been very rebellious towards authority. But she recalled some believers who had encouraged her to submit to her parents, in spite of the fact that they were not Christians. So, when her dad asked her to end her relationship with Alejandro, she surprised him by humbly saying, "Ok, Daddy. If that's what you want, that's what I'll do. Only would it be ok with you if I go and explain everything to him?" she asked. "Sure, honey." he said compassionately.

Overwhelmed with pain, Adriana went outside where Alejandro was waiting and sadly explained her dad's decision. Troubled by this, Alejandro asked if it would be ok if he went in to talk to her father. "If you want to loose your head." Adriana replied. But after asking her dad to make sure it was ok, Alejandro went in and after a long while came out crying. Adriana's father was also crying. Alejandro had made it clear to Manuel that he had not forced his religion on Adriana and that she had found the truth from God's Word.

This was not easy for Manuel to hear, as he still held to the hope that his daughter might some day return to Catholicism. He slowly addressed her after his meeting with Alejandro and softly said, "We've decided Alejandro can continue coming to

see you. You are not allowed to go out with him, however.” Adriana’s heart skipped a beat. She was so grateful. Just an hour before she wasn’t even sure where she would lay her head that night or if she was going to lose her best friend. But the Lord had been merciful to her.

Life at home became hard. Her brothers would make fun of her, her parents continually wept over her apostasy. Alejandro could see the toll it was taking on her and finally one night he asked her to be his wife. She gladly accepted, not knowing necessarily how her family would react. Her father although not happy, finally agreed to the marriage on one condition, “You must get married through the Catholic church, as well as your wedding in the Christian church.” With a heavy heart, the young couple explained simply that they could not respect his wishes in this regard. With tears in his eyes and pain visible on his face, Adriana’s father responded, “Then you don’t have my blessing!”

Never had Adriana felt so alone. Everyone seemed to be against her. Her parents, her siblings, her friends. To whom could she turn? To whom could she go? She knew Jesus would take her in, for as the Psalm says, “For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me up.” (Ps. 27:10)

Adriana will never forget trying to get ready on her wedding day. As her parents had refused to take part in the celebration, Adriana did everything a bride enjoys doing with her friends, alone. She even drove herself to the church! She was grateful for the support of her in-laws. Since she had never been to a Christian wedding, she had a lot of questions about how the procedure would work out. She didn’t even know very many of the people who would be attending her wedding. She was heartbroken to know that her family wouldn’t be there for her, but she was filled with joy over her decision to obey Christ through a Christian wedding. The only one who accompanied her was a brother. Adriana tried to understand how this could be the happiest and yet the saddest day of her life.

Through the years, Adriana’s parents came to love Alejandro. Her dad would say, “He’s a great guy. Too bad he’s a Christian.” When times got hard, the family would come to Alejandro and Adriana for help. Years later when Adriana’s youngest brother died, Manuel’s heart was more tender than Adriana had ever seen it. He began asking questions like, “What happens when someone dies?” “How do you do Christian burials?” Although this story is far from over, God is working in Adriana’s family and I hope to some day be able to write the final chapter of this story.

Epilogue: Alejandro and Adriana now serve the Lord as missionaries to Hispanics in Oregon along with their two daughters, Karen and Pamela. Karen married David Norris, Denny and Arlene’s son. They now have three beautiful children. Pamela was part of the discipleship program at the camp this past year. She has a huge heart to see her family saved and God has



given her amazing opportunities to share with her grandparents.



ALEJANDRO AND ADRIANA WITH THEIR TWO DAUGHTERS, SON-IN-LAW AND GRANDCHILDREN



A RECENT FAMILY GATHERING IN IRAPUATO. HER MOTHER IS IN THE CENTER AND FATHER ON THE FAR RIGHT. PLEASE PRAY FOR THEIR SALVATION.