

◆ The Garcia Gazette

Reaching Mexico and the Nations for Jesus

March 2020

Link International
Ministries



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church "La Gran Comisión" in
Ensenada Mexico

Reaching Mexico and
the Nations for Jesus

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Dear friends and family,

We feel like our heads are spinning with how quickly things are changing – as I am sure that all of you feel the same. The uncertainty, the fear...

A missionary couple, Ted and Cami Barker*, just shared these thoughts, encouraging us to reflect on God's sovereignty and His will in our lives.

James 4:13-15 "Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."

"...It is easy to say, "Lord willing", but in reality, we are so independent in our daily lives and routines that we often don't think about the fact that it is God who orchestrates our every moment and every breath. During this time of COVID, this principle is magnified, like many freedoms and daily routines (and even toilet paper :) have been uprooted overnight. Many have been bothered and inconvenienced by the disruption, as we come from a place that most of the time, life goes as planned. Sometimes saying, "Lord willing" can be a sort of nicety. However, some people are experiencing for the first time saying, "Lord willing, tonight I will make chicken and broccoli for dinner" because they don't actually know if the store will have the food they planned for.

Overall, I have been reminded more and more that every day and what it holds is a gift from God. Life looks a little different than what we thought..." but He is sovereign and good.

We would love to share a couple of things that we have been doing over the last couple of weeks.



On February 29th our music group went to a rehab center for young girls – ages 12 to young adult women in their early 20's. They are there for drug abuse, some of them were living on the street, some coming from other states, some without families.



Some are there for out of control behavior – rather than being in juvenile hall. Our pastor took a grill and everything for a hot dog and hamburger feast, we sang and worshipped with them and Pablo preached about the purpose and plan that God has for our lives – that no one is an accident... It was an amazing night. After eating together, there was more singing and individual praying for the different ones that wanted to talk and pray on a personal level.



As an extra gift from God, Noe (the young man we told you about in our last newsletter) was there and running the grill! He continues to do great and is keeping out of drugs. Thank you for your continued prayers for him and for these girls.

On March 5th a milestone was reached as my (Martha's) first group of ESL students completed their four levels of study. There were two



Rosy and Elsa giving their speeches in English with a translator for their guests!

students who stayed the course and graduated! They took the TOEFL ITP test which is a Global Standard that measures English proficiency of test takers and assess their

ability to use the language in an academic setting. They both tested at intermediate level! The second level students served as ushers at the ceremony and servers at the celebration meal. It was an amazing night to celebrate their accomplishment. One of the students wants to go on to open an ESL class at her church.

For me, being able to walk through life with these students – crying with them when a spouse dies, celebrating them on a birthday, planting seeds of Jesus' love in those who don't know Him – and finally helping to equip them for better jobs and watching them excel... That is what gives me the passion to teach!



Potter's Clay Students from Westmont College came the following week and blessed our city through service. There were medical/dental/vision clinics, vacation bible schools', sports tournaments and construction projects! Pablo

worked alongside a team that did an addition on



Casa de Pan, our church's kitchen, gathering hall and dormitory. What a gift! It will double the seating room for all of our events outside, under cover and above on a porch.



Top: Patio deck for event seating at Casa de Pan, Right: Dental ministry, Left: home for family with four children, Bottom: Youth service—Martha translating



And now this week our focus had shifted to our prep for Cuba. Today is the day we were to be leaving. We worked on our teachings, getting the details ready for our 5-week absence here in Ensenada – and COVID-19 has changed the plans of the world...

We have been praying and reading as much as we can to try and make the correct decision as whether to continue with our plans and go – or not. *Many of you have been praying with us and we thank you.* Our team has been collecting hygiene items and medicines to take in with us because of the terrible shortage of these products. We talked about going in on a “modified trip” to just deliver our goods and to possibly meet with just the trainers (a small group) to minister to them before returning home.

Three nights ago, we spoke in person to the leadership there in Cuba. At that point, there were no changes on the island – everything was “business as usual.” They said that Cuba continues to let people in from all over the world, regardless of the warnings. Because of the shortages on the island, they are not able to control hygiene as necessary in the midst of the pandemic... Their suggestion was to postpone the trip. So, we made the very painful decision to NOT go at this time. Our plans have been “uprooted overnight” yet we WILL trust and say “Lord willing...” and wait on Him.

James 4:13-15 "Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."

We ask for your prayers—for our ministry under “stay at home” orders, for our beloved Mexico, for Cuba and the world. “...We do not know what will happen tomorrow...” and we pray to always have the humble attitude to say “Lord willing...” Thank you for standing with us. May God protect you and bless you.



Pablo & Martha



Pablo leading a devotional and interacting with the youth group online while it is not possible to meet in person.