

March 5, 2007

Dear Praying Friends,

I've been in Acapulco for two months now, and it is past time I got back into contact with you all. I am EVENTUALLY going to answer individual emails that I have received (at least, that is my intention), but I am having to do it little by little, while taking care of the "urgent" business that seems to come up every day.

I arrived just in time to celebrate "King's Day" the 6th of January. For the children there are usually gifts from the "Three Kings," but for the rest of us, the main thing is to join your friends for coffee and a piece of the special cake/bread made for the occasion. In this case, everyone cuts his own piece, and if yours happens to have a small plastic doll in it, you are elected to provide tamales for a feast in February with the same group of friends. I think I got a doll every time I cut a piece (at my house, the Bible Institute, and a few other places), but somehow we never got around to planning any tamale parties!

The first week of January was very busy getting ready for classes at the Bible Institute as well as picking up on some of the details that were "left 'til Ellen comes back" at New Horizon (I'm still picking up). I'm translating materials as I go for a class on studying the Bible. By the time Isis and I have finished checking and rechecking, we have a pretty good grasp of what the book is saying, although there is still work to be done in putting it to practical use and figuring out how to teach it. The class has several new students who are very participative and very excited about what they are learning. Since some are teachers in the church, they have a lot of opportunities to put it into practice. I'm also attending a class on Romans, to observe and help the teacher, plus a class on Hebrews on Sunday morning, so I too have the chance to practice the good interpretation that I am teaching (and learning – teaching always makes me realize how little I really know).

Many of you are on the New Horizon Christian School prayer letter email list, and should have gotten an email from me a couple of weeks ago. However, if you didn't get it and don't mind a "two-in-one," here's a second section, with news of the school. If you have seen it all before, just skip to the end for a few prayer requests.

Getting ready for school to start in the fall in the new building was a major undertaking, and we are still working on details. A floor for the art and music classroom was the latest project. Waterproofing the roof is coming up next.



We have 96 students, and are just starting to think about the next school year, with a few people coming in to register children to reserve their spot. We don't have a lot of space for expanding at the

moment, since we will need to strengthen the structure of the building before we can knock down walls or build a third floor. In the meantime, we are praying about a possibility that has come up of renting a building across the street, with the option to buy (after we finish buying the building we are paying for now, of course!). It is being used as a school, but the present renters are leaving.

Although it is rundown, with some work it would allow us to expand the pre-school/ kindergarten section (where we have a waiting list) from 30 to 50 children, and would give them a larger area for play. We would have a little more space in the original building for the primary classes to spread out, so we could add a few more students there, too. Of course, we would have to have 2 new assistants and more furnishings and materials, not to mention being sure that we could increase enrollment sufficiently to cover all the added costs. It may not happen, but I wanted to mention it to you now, so that you could be praying with us about the opportunity. There is actually a large piece of land with several buildings connected to the section we want to rent, owned by an extended family and probably up for sale sooner or later (dreams for the distant future!).

Speaking of the future, Amanda Massingill will be coming with Mission to the World as an English teacher, Lord willing, this fall. She still needs to raise a goodly portion of her support and will need to go to language school for at least a month before starting in September, so I would appreciate your prayers for her, and of course any help you would be interested in giving. Amanda is a certified teacher and this year is getting classroom experience in first grade at a Christian school in Georgia. She has also worked as a program specialist for several years with the Girl Scout Council, and is teaching English as a second language at her church. We know her from several short-term mission trips to the Casa Hogar Children's Home and are very excited about her coming.

As far as our present building goes, we paid about \$150,000 (\$1,500,000 pesos) last February and around \$30,000 during this year. We would love to have been able to give \$120,000 more last month, to finish off the payments without having to add any of the \$65,000 interest that will accrue if we pay for six more years. However, we still needed about \$100,000! My mother, among others, has been praying for a miracle and "gently upbraided" me for not keeping people informed of the need, so here I am, doing that, although somewhat belatedly. We are very thankful for the gifts we have received toward the purchase price and the renovations that have made it "habitable." However, we continue to pray, and would appreciate your prayers for what is still needed.

Meanwhile, the day-to-day work of the school continues. There are frustrations and struggles, but also those encouraging moments when we can see that the children really are learning and growing, both academically and in their understanding and love for the Lord. It was fun to visit with some of the kindergarten teachers recently and hear stories about their students' theological discussions!



A quick list of prayer requests:

1. That Amanda Massingill will be able to raise her support and be here by August.
2. For good Christian teachers to fill other positions next year. We are definitely going to need another English teacher, one or two assistants for pre-school and possibly two classroom teachers.
3. Funds for the school.
4. Maranatha Presbytery's growth has been somewhat leveled out for the past few years, and they are trying to address that now. Please pray for the Spirit's leading in some upcoming meetings and wisdom as to the next steps that they should take.
5. Bill Yarbrough (MTW Area Director for Latin America) will be here in April to do a weekend seminar on "Living in Grace." Please pray that many would come and that there would be a good understanding of something that we should know and do, as Christians, but often don't.

Praying God's blessings for you and your involvement in His kingdom work,

Ellen Barnett