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WWNTBM

**May 2019 –Missionaries in a pagan land.**

This prayer letter is more of something we are learning than an actual update. Still, I hope that it will give you fuel for prayer. We need it, and other missionaries need it.

In the book of Daniel, we find there are four friends that had been taken in captivity to a distant land, Babylon. They are not like missionaries today who are willingly sent out and may return whenever needed. Yet, they are not unlike missionaries in many ways. One of the main ways was by being a light in the pagan land, a light that showed the True living God to people in darkness. In this, we may learn a lot from them.

First of all, Jeremiah had prophesied that they were not to expect this to be a short term mission trip. In Jeremiah 29:28 he says, "For therefore he sent unto us in Babylon, saying, this captivity is long: build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them." They were to settle in for the remainder of their lives. God told them to get married, have kids, and even seek the peace of Babylon (Jer.29:5-7). I thank God for missionaries who God calls only temporarily; Paul was certainly one of them. But if you are called for a lifetime, you especially need to settle in, rather than forever dreaming of home somewhere else.

The four men of God in Babylon were not to seek positions in order to overthrow political powers. Instead, they obeyed God in being submissive to Babylon law and culture as long as their God-given beliefs were not compromised.

If they ended up in a crossroad between obeying God or obeying Babylon, they had to stand up for what was right even when it was unpopular or dangerous. As one song says, "Dare to be a Daniel; Dare to stand alone; Dare to have your purpose firm; And dare to make it known."

However, on the flip side, they had to discern what was worth fighting over. In the first chapter of Daniel they did not say, "Cast me in a fiery furnace if you must, but don't change our names." They had to choose in what furnace they were willing to burn. They had to choose in what lion's den they were willing to be devoured. If there was a problem because of food sacrificed to idols, they still could politely decline.

Missionaries today go to pagan lands (sadly, the US is more and more pagan every day as well), but they must keep this same balance in mind. We are not sent to the ends of the earth make more Americans. We are here to make disciples of Christ. This means there will be some cultural differences that we can and should adapt ourselves to. Anything that is not taught implicitly or explicitly in Scripture is an area that should be considered. Hannah and I have been running into some cultural things of which we were not aware. Even though I grew up two hours from where we serve, I am not aware of every cultural detail. Pray for us because though we have always sought to make things right, we have at times offended people. For example, the way you put down a plate when serving people is a very touchy issue. If you do not set it down in a certain manner, you may be offensive. I also find that sarcasm is not well understood in this area, and that is a challenge for me since I like to joke. Some people read into your gestures and are offended without anyone knowing. Babies here are bundled in heavy blankets even on hot days. People propose home remedies for your every sickness – some of which you

Ortiz Family

**PRAISES:**

- Hilario's baptism
- Camps blessing
- Teens growth
- Advancement

**PRAYER**

**REQUESTS:**

- Javier, Isaac and Iris' salvation
- Fernando and Alma are going through some hard times.
- Next step for our church

Serving in San Miguel El Alto and Arandas, Jalisco, México

have to be careful how you respond lest they be offended that you don't believe them. Do we have to break all these customs? As long as they are not anti-Biblical, there may be more advantage for the Gospel by us adjusting ourselves to a healthy middle rather than expecting everyone else to adjust themselves to us. On the same token, there are customs that are opposite of what God teaches us. To these we simply cannot comply. On these we have been trying to teach the why more than the what. Why is it wrong for us as Christians? Why do we do things the way we do them? We have also been teaching people to seek out the offender biblically (Luk.17:1-4) as it seems to be worldwide culture to talk to everyone else rather than go to the actual person involved. This is a point in which our ministry is hurting, and so we ask prayer. I'm not referring to ourselves. Some have gossiped misunderstood conversations to unsaved people, and the doors of home studies have closed because of it. We have, from the beginning, taught that we cannot be the messiah of anyone and that if they do not look unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith, they will be disappointed. Some have understood this mentally but are still not applying it (expecting our family to be perfect) whereas others have matured and live by it. Still, I find it frustrating as a missionary to try my best to build a church and my own imperfections are hindering it.

That being said and moving on, we have much to rejoice for these past weeks. I summarize: Hilario who accepted Christ a few weeks back got baptized. We celebrated this step in his life and have two teen girls who sound like they will get baptized soon as well. I recently got permission to preach in a secular rehab center for addicts: one that people here were surprised that they let me. For three Wednesdays I have been there preaching and mingling with the men. Pray God will bless this work. So far, they keep asking me back. Whereas the last month or so has had less attendance in Arandas, it has been higher in San Miguel. Not far from Arandas, there is a brother in Christ living in a small town with no church. He has begun asking that we come and work there. At this time though, I cannot fit it in my schedule to go. Pray that if God wants it to work out He will make time. A young man named Javier came to church for the first time in his life, he was deeply moved and came back again the next Sunday and broke down in tears at the end. Cesar (his saved father-in-law) and I shared and re-shared the Gospel with him for an hour after church. He is so close to rendering his life to God. In only four weeks, he has read all of John, Acts, and Romans on his own time. Pray the seed finds good soil in his heart. Hannah and I got to enjoy a two-day marriage conference to which we will probably take some church members next year. Church camp had a positive effect on five of our teens and they all made decisions to sever God more. Finally, we received good news last night that there has been some improvement in one of the touchy situations in Arandas. God is faithful and keeps giving victory!

In contrite prayer,

Rolando and Hannah Ortiz

Especially pray for Javier, Olvera, Nena and family, María Elena, Fernando and Alma.



Hilario's Bautismo



Preaching in Tapalpa Church Camp