



Llevando la Luz de la Esperanza (Taking the Light of Hope)

By Pastor Rafael Ventura, Jr., serving with Mexican Medical Ministries

A new year has begun and with it many opportunities and doors that will open. One of the things that I personally have learned is to better discern between windows and doors; many times we can end up slamming against thick glass windows that we thought were doors, but no, they were windows and not doors, and those “hits” hurt a lot.



A beautiful sunset on our beach.

It has been a few months since I last sent a newsletter; today I'm finally doing it, with the desire and hope that God would bless your lives and ministries more and more each day. Thank you for your prayers, because I have felt them and been strengthened through them. I want to thank you for this year that has just ended, for your financial support and material donations, but also for taking the time to read these simple words.

October, November, and December were months for preparation--in the Bible school, Bible studies at church, home study groups, and for me at the university. In our area, fall is a season where jobs are hard to find, the fishing season is over, farming slows down a bit, and, well, there is just a general lack of jobs. The weather cools

down and we no longer do outdoor services, go to the night film ministry, or have other activities in the open air.

On October 31st we put on a children's festival called “Jewels of Christ.” In Mexico, Halloween is very different; it's a celebration laced with witchcraft and Satanism, the kids go out at night to ask for candy, but there have been sad instances where children have been hit with eggs and rocks, they've been abused and others have even disappeared. The last case didn't happen in our town but did in others. One of the reasons we planned this festival is so that the kids would not be out on the streets, since it can be so dangerous on this day. Those that came to the festival were presented with Christ as the only real alternative for their present and future; many made decisions for Christ, placing their present and future in the precious hands of our Lord Jesus Christ.



At a quinceañera I officiated.

In October and November, I officiated three weddings and three quinceañeras. We also celebrated an annual event we

call “Noche Mexicana” (Mexican Night). It's an evening where the church members dress in colorful and folkloric Mexican dress, with traditional Mexican foods, but the primary reason for this night is to intercede on behalf of Mexico, its towns, leadership, the church, ministers and ministries, and for the needs and problems that affect our country.



Celebrating Noche Mexicana

We have been focusing on the home study groups and we have five groups that meet. I have been going to preach at different churches over the past three months, with the students accompanying me and helping to minister.



A drama with some of the Bible school students performing.

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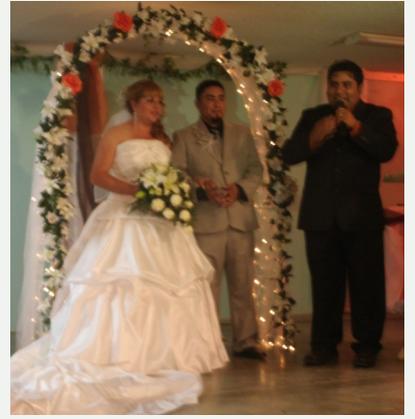


My mom, Coco and Ángel helping with the tamale-making process.

December, like in most years, was a time of rest, fellowship, and family. It was also a time of

festivities at the church, at the Bible school, and at home with the family.

God has been good to us, and this year has not been an exception. God has blessed me with a car that I have been using to go to the university, on visitations, and various speaking engagements. My youngest brother has begun to come to church and participate with the rest of us brothers within the church, glory to God! Three of



Danny and Karla's wedding.

my siblings have married and we now have new members in the family.

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News from
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La Esperanza Bible School

Praises, Prayer Requests & Upcoming Events



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Support may also be sent to the above address, with checks made out to Mexican Medical and a note enclosed designating it to my account. Donations are tax-deductible.

- On January 10th we began Bible school classes again. We ask that the Lord would strengthen each student that is being trained here in the Bible school, that they could see and understand the special vision that the Lord has for each one of them and that they would meet the goals they have set for themselves.
- Some of our teachers have needed to get outside jobs and will not be able to teach this semester. Please help me pray that God would supply them with stable jobs that would still allow them to be able to give classes. Also pray for support for them so that way they could dedicate themselves full-time to the ministry of teaching.
- Pray for the students that are studying, that they would be able to get scholarships to cover their basic needs during their time here.
- Celso will be returning to his homeland. Please pray for divine guidance and divine protection, and that God would touch hearts to support the ministry in Guerrero. Celso just needs to finish one last semester of computer classes, then he will be heading back to his village.
- Personal Requests: Pray for discernment and for confirmation in certain areas of my personal life. I am studying at the university; please pray that He would supply for my needs and strengthen my finances so that I can finish my psychology degree. There will be changes in some of the leadership at the church this year; please pray that God would place the right people in the right positions.