

# The Mountains Will Move . . . Matthew 17:20

## The Ventura-Lewis Family (Buky, Theresa, & Elena)

### Serving with Mexican Medical at La Esperanza



### Family Update

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, our family drove down to Mexico to prepare for teams that were coming to serve at La Esperanza this spring. However, all of the teams had to cancel due to COVID-19. At first, we were planning to continue to hold the outreach events with our team of local volunteers, but then we decided it would not be wise to gather people in groups. Shortly after that, Mexico began to announce school closures and began prohibiting groups of people from gathering together. So, we headed back to our home in California.

Buky will be able to apply for U.S. citizenship in June and this extra time in the U.S. will be good for his application. This last year has had its share of trials, loss, and busyness, so this forced stay-at-



Above: Our family led a service for our congregation in Mexico through Facebook Live.

home order is something that we have needed for a long time. We are so grateful for this slower paced life to seek the Lord and

spend time as a family.

Although we are not in Mexico right now, we are happy that we can still stay in touch with our congregation via the internet. Last month marked the first time Buky and I led service for our church in Mexico via Facebook Live. We look forward to the next opportunity!

### Pastor Jr.'s Food Delivery

On Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, Pastor Jr. and members of the Ventura family, distributed 60 despensas (food donations) around the community to needy families. They were well received because the price of food has gone up and many people have been out of work. There has been some help from the government, but people do not receive it if they do not have their voter identification card or birth certificate.

One woman who received a food donation was Sofia. She prayed to give her life to Jesus that day. She also asked for prayer for her granddaughter, who is a new mommy to a baby boy, Alim. The granddaughter is a single mother now because Alim's father took off. Pastor Jr. was able to encourage her



Right: Pastor Jr. with a van full of food to distribute to needy families in the area.

and bless her with baby blankets, diapers, and baby clothes. So by helping the people with their physical needs, the door has opened for the Gospel to go out to a hungry people!



**Top: Sofia receives her food donation. Bottom: Baby Alim and his mom receive a care package.**

Pastor Jr. and his team would like to continue being a light by continuing to distribute these food donations. They plan to distribute food to expectant mothers and senior citizens from migrant camp Vergel who cannot work. Pastor Jr. has also received word that CREAD (the drug rehab we share about in a later article) and Buen Samaritano

(the assisted living home where we minister) are also in need of assistance. If you would like to help make sure that these food donations are able to continue, you can send a check made out to Mexican Medical for Pastor Jr. food donations. Thank you so much for your financial support and prayers in these difficult times!

## The New Church Roof is Up!

It was so great to hear that the new church roof was finally completed the Sunday before Easter! The roof project was made possible due to collaboration between La Hermosa church and American teams. The church members of La Hermosa raised money for the project through offerings and by selling food. Part of the funds that teams raised for their mission trips also helped towards the refurbishing of the church building. The teams also helped by working alongside Maestro Pedro and other church members to take down the old roof and to build the walls up higher. We are also grateful to Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church (Fair Oaks, CA) for making a donation to cover the roofing materials, which helped the project be completed. Although, the congregation cannot meet in the church yet due to COVID-19, we anxiously await the day we will be able to have church in our building again and begin using the youth center (where the church had been meeting temporarily during the roof project) to reach out even more to the youth in our community.

**Top: The men from church work together to finish putting on the new roof. Right: The new roof on the church building is complete.**



## Lessons from the Hospital

As I think of our lives being completely turned upside down with the stay-at-home order, I am reminded of last summer. I had served with teams at La Esperanza every summer since 2005, so I just assumed the summer of 2019 would be the same. How wrong I was!

After our first week of groups, Buky ended up in a private hospital in Ensenada with pancreatitis. I remember that a pastor prayed that Buky would be a light in the hospital, and I wondered who he would be a light to, when he was only visited by the doctor, nurses, and a nun! After three days of care and with the bill going higher and not a lot of action being taken, Buky's brother, Maurilio, and I decided to take Buky out of that hospital and move him to the government hospital.

We could not get Buky into the new hospital right away and it became hard to manage his pain. The scariest moment was driving him to the emergency room in the middle of the night. He was in so much pain that Maurilio stopped outside of another hospital on the way and we pleaded with a nurse to inject him. When Buky was finally accepted into the hospital, I could not go in with him, which made me feel so helpless. While in the waiting room that night, I heard a song called "The Goodness of God," and it brought me to a place of complete surrender. The song became my anthem: that we would see the goodness of God through this difficult situation.

The next day when I visited Buky in the hospital, he was in a room with five other patients. Three of those patients had struggled with drug addiction. During the two visiting hours each day, I would go to encourage Buky, but many times he encouraged me as he shared how God was opening up opportunities for him to share with his roommates about the Lord. Even the nurses listened in! It quickly became apparent that God was using Buky as a light in the hospital.

Buky also shared with me how some of his roommates needed towels, soap, or shampoo. So, my mission began to help get the other patients what they needed. The guys became like our family. This was our normal for almost three weeks until Buky was released from the hospital after his gall bladder surgery. I share these things because as our new normal has changed and it is not ideal, we can still trust



Above: Buky leaving the hospital in August 2019.

that God has a purpose for our lives, new ways He wants us to serve Him, and new things He wants to teach us during this season.

## CREAD

While Buky was in the hospital and surrounded by many men that had medical issues related to drug abuse, he felt the need to minister to drug addicts and to teach children and youth about the danger of drugs. While we were joined by a team from Hope Church (Lenox, MA) in

November, the opportunity arose to minister at CREAD, the government drug rehab center a few miles down the road from us. It had been years since we had been there and we were not sure how we would be received. When we walked in through the heavily guarded gates, the men were seated in plastic chairs in a cemented courtyard. The roofs were covered by guards and guard dogs on every side. It was intimidating!

The Bible students and team prepared to serve the men pozole soup and chocolate chip cookies. This was a special treat! The group also had prepared bags with important hygiene items. The 130 men were so grateful to receive these. The interesting thing was to see people passing food and bags to the men on the roof too! We didn't want anyone to feel left out!

Buky and the local church's band led us in worship time, the Bible students shared a powerful drama about how Jesus can free us from sin and addiction, and Pastor Jr. preached about our hope in Jesus Christ. At the end of the sermon, there was an altar call and men flooded the altar. Many were on their knees crying out to God. What a blessing to see the men from the group, Pastor Jr. and Craig Libby with their arms around these men and praying for them.



Above: The men from CREAD worship the Lord.

While the men were there, we kept singing to God below the moon and starry sky.

After the men cried out to God, we began to praise and celebrate and many of the men began to dance. They did not want to stop worshipping God and we finally had to go! We went there to minister to them and their passion for the Lord ministered to us. They were living in lockdown, but that did not keep them from worshipping Jesus with all of their hearts! May our hearts never stop worshipping Jesus no matter what season we may be in!

**Please Pray For . . .**

- Pastor Jr. and the church as they continue to minister to people in our community during these difficult times.
- Provision for Clínica La Esperanza during these unprecedented times, as there are reduced team funds to support national missionaries and ongoing ministries.
- Current conditions to improve, so that teams can come back to serve.

<b>Contact Information for Theresa &amp; Buky</b>	
Address for donations: Mexican Medical 7850 Lester Ave. Lemon Grove, CA 91945  (Checks made payable to: Mexican Medical, with indication that they are for The Ventura Lewis Family.)  For correspondence: include c/o Theresa Lewis with address above.	Phone Numbers:
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