



The Ackerman Family - Missionaries to Bolivia

Dec. 29, 2014

Dear Prayer Partners, another year has flown by and another is about to start. It was a good year, though I believe this one will be even better. Thank you to all of you who sent a special card or blessing this Christmas, we appreciate you!

I was reminded this Christmas that many times we have our expectations and God has His plan. We watched again "It's a Wonderful Life" for Christmas. At times I feel kind of like George Bailey. Am I really making a difference? There are struggles in every direction and sometimes a guy just feels like well, just giving up. I know just about every pastor or anyone who is in ministry can identify with me. But then the Lord re-orient us. Maybe He uses His Word, His people, or even a movie made in 1946. Well anyway I put my self in George Bailey's shoes and got to thinking, what would it be like if I never had been born? Well I will not go into all of that, but lets just say some reflecting in that area gave me a new outlook and a new hope. I may not be building a mega church in Bolivia, but I am investing in God's Kingdom and in peoples lives and I have seen the difference it has made in some. I am so thankful God has let me be a part of His work here in Bolivia and in my immediate family.

The Family Conference in September had to be cancelled as the guest speaker's mother passed away at that time. Our 3rd Anniversary in Canasmoro this Nov. was a blessing; we had good participation and several first time visitors. Also Nov. 7-9 my friend and Director of our mission, Bud Rader accompanied by his wife Karen, came to San Lorenzo to preach the 7th Anniversary of "Iglesia Bautista Bíblica El Faro" (Lighthouse Bible Baptist church). There were several decisions made by the brethren to pursue a deeper walk with our Lord. All in all it was an anniversary that was indeed blessed of the Lord. This Christmas we had a wonderful Christmas Cantata, with lots of participation and the church was full. I gave in this year and agreed to a traditional Bolivian Picana, a huge meal at midnight, but with 2 conditions; no one in the kitchen during the service and we eat after the service, at 9:30 not midnight as customary. The Picana meal consists of big hunks of beef, chicken, sometimes pork, onions, potatoes, tomatoes, and spices with corn on the cob on the side. It was delicious!!

We have been discipling the Aldana family once a week when they are available, they attend our services in San Lorenzo. I say when available because this family is truly burning the candle at both ends. Ryder and Juana are both teachers, they have 3 children of which one Kevin age 18 has downs syndrome. Ryder works in the rural areas and has a 1-hour commute, after he helps in milking his families 100 cows at 5 am. Then after school at 5 pm he is back milking again, and he also plants and tends his fields. On the first night of discipleships Ryder asked Christ to be his Savior, after several other discipleships, I asked him and the other 5, his wife, daughter, sister in law, and her 2 boys after the lesson "Knowing you all are saved who wants to be baptized?" Ryder said, "We all do!" Way to take the lead brother☺. I then asked each one individually and they all said yes. So we are now trying to coordinate a time, when we could make this possible, we are praying for this Saturday the 3rd of Jan.

It has been a trying time these last 3 months, my father underwent major heart surgery, which several drs. refused to do, but a young dr. did and God gave him some more time. The surgery on my knee was unsuccessful; I need a knee replacement, which is now scheduled for May 5 in the States. As I write this, my mom who has advanced COPD is in the ICU with pneumonia. She is getting better and they hope to move her to a normal room soon. All this and being thousands of miles away places a burden on one's heart. We recently renewed our paperwork to be in the country for another 5 years, praise the Lord!

Prayer requests Please pray for Sandro's and Adelma's situations with their families; The health of my parents, Allan and Joan Ackerman; The VBS's we are planning the 2nd week of January 2015; the discipleships and baptisms for the Aldana family; someone to take over the ministry here while we are in the states for my surgery and our daughters graduation from Shepherds college.

Praises: God's goodness and faithfulness.

For His Glory, Matt. 5:16

Rick & Sheila Ackerman

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