

March 2, 2009

Dear Praying Friends,

February-the month of hearts and flowers has passed by again. We are including several stories about hearts that we hope will touch your heart as you read them.

Our family news includes this story of two hearts. In early February, we were invited to the home of our son's girlfriend to share dinner with her family and our son Tim, who was visiting. While we were there, he asked her parents for permission for them to marry, and he presented her with a beautiful ring to seal their engagement. We are very happy for them, and plans are in the making for an August wedding in Mexico.

A VISA (Volunteers in Service Abroad) team from Pennsylvania was here in January, and another VISA team from Canada arrived in February. Both of these teams opened their hearts and offered their hands to aid the work here. They did a great job of providing activities for our church people and neighborhood as well as finishing several construction projects. Gary has been tutoring a gentleman in English. While the team from Pennsylvania was here, he also attended the English class that they taught. He later inquired of Gary, "Why are you people (referring to the VISA team as well as Gary) so kind to me?" Many questions such as that have permitted Gary to tell him about the Bible and our life as Christians.

About a month ago, a couple women stayed after prayer meeting to ask Gary and Jann about baptism. They knew of four people that were ready to take that step. Our pastor and wife started making plans, big plans, to have the baptism at a resort spot about two hours away from Mexico City. The weather is still too cold here in the city to have the event here. By the time the pastor finished interviewing the people of the main church as well as the new home churches, there were fifteen people interested in baptism. Between the pastor and Gary, the new believers were instructed about the significance and importance of baptism. We rented two large buses and filled them with friends, family, and the Canada VISA team. What a day it was! We all gathered for a short time of worship, went to the pool for the baptism, then enjoyed a picnic lunch, soccer, and swimming. Joy has to be the word to describe the day. When we returned to the city, one of the newly baptized persons asked the pastor, "What comes next?" The pastor is therefore beginning a series of teaching on living a holy life.

We see that the year 2009 is off to a great start. Our hearts are grateful to each of you who prays for the work here and the gifts you give to make it all happen.

With hearts and hands for the mission in Mexico,

Gary and Jann Allen