

The Call Family Prayer Letter - Serving Along the U.S./Mexico Border

*"Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel" - Eph 6:19*

January 18, 2012

## Life on the Border: An Encounter at Walmart



When I find someone who speaks Spanish (not all Hispanics here in Chula Vista speak it), I try and greet them or make some comment in Spanish. Last

week I was in line behind someone obviously speaking Spanish so I said something like "buenas tardes" (good afternoon) and moved on to some comment that I can't remember now. The checkout person was obviously happy to speak in Spanish with me, so when the other customer left she was rattling off a whole host of comments and we had a nice discussion. I told her that I have 6 children and she made a joke about how I probably come home at night and ask my wife why the house isn't clean, etc. (It's not true - Michele does a great job at home). I found out that this woman has 11 brothers and sisters, but only 3 children of her own. It is common to hear people who have grown up with many brothers and sisters but who have chosen to have fewer children themselves, both here and in Mexicali. Several times while she was scanning my items she needed to tell others that her checkout light was out and that she was closed for the day (all in Spanish - and each person understood!). During our conversation I told her I am a pastor and before I left I gave her an invitation card to church. Encounters like this don't provide an opportunity to share the gospel in depth, but they can be a point of connection with those in the community. You never know: God might be working in the hearts of those we encounter and they may come to church or call wanting to know more about the Jesus we follow! After all, we are praying for "divine encounters" so that we can be a witness for Christ. God may just answer those prayers in ways we hadn't anticipated.

## Partners in Ministry



In so many ways God has blessed us with partners in the ministry. We are not only thankful for you who pray for us and support us financially, but also for the churches in the area which desire to see

God bring the life-transforming message of the Good News to Hispanics and others on the border! Our family is currently worshipping with two of these churches: Harbor Presbyterian Mid-City on Sunday mornings and New Life Presbyterian (La Mesa) on Sunday evenings. Harbor Mid-City (Pastor Stephen Phelan pictured to the left) has a bilingual worship service and they have offered me opportunities to teach and preach in Spanish as well as to help out with some outreach to Hispanics. God is doing so much through both these churches as well as others. Harbor has recently seen a number of people come to faith in Christ and baptized and New Life is growing and has seen record attendance recently. Praise God that the gospel is being proclaimed through Word and Sacrament in both these churches!

There is a great need for churches which can bring the gospel to Latinos here in the San Diego/Tijuana area. I am only beginning to get a feel for how many and what kind of churches are already reaching out to Hispanics, but there are few reformed churches. The only PCA churches that have some Spanish component that I know of are Harbor Mid-City (bilingual), Misión Vida Nueva (Spanish only) and North City Presbyterian (Spanish Sunday School class). Harbor Mid-City is the closest to the border and there are none in South Bay (a number of cities closest to Tijuana). Would you please be praying with us that God would establish more biblical, gospel-centered, confessionally reformed churches?

## Church Plant



Right now we are the only team members "on the ground" and are awaiting our teammates Dave and Dawn Diaso. They still need to sell their house in Colorado, which has just gone back

on the market after a holiday hiatus. Please join us in praying for their house to sell and for the remainder of their financial support.

Dave was out last week and we had a series of meetings to work on plans for the ministry here. Besides our church partnerships, our focus for the immediate future is on gathering prayer teams, demographics, networking and recruiting. We hope to implement several prayer teams which will go out into various neighborhoods to pray for church plants and for the community. That will also serve as a great way to get to know the community and will provide opportunities for evangelism. If you or your church is interested in coming to pray with us, let us know.

An MTW associate of ours, Jim DeWitt, is helping us organize these prayerwalking teams and is also helping us with pursuing research and demographics on the area. We will need more information before we make decisions like which neighborhood or city to plant our first church. In order to better know the area, we are meeting with church and community leaders on a regular basis. Dave and I will also focus on recruiting church planters, a mercy ministries coordinator and others to join our team. Please pray that God would raise up and equip laborers for the harvest field!

## Home Life



The Lord is teaching us through mild trials. Ever since we returned from our trip to the Midwest in early November we have experienced many car problems. Both vehicles have been in and out of the shop a dozen times. The van's injector problem that first occurred on the way back from New Mexico has never gone away. They have cleaned and replaced

components to no avail. The mechanic now believes it needs a new computer part so we are ordering a used one in

hopes that it will fix the problem. It has been pretty much non-operable for the past few weeks. The other car needed a new radiator and water pump and has a leak. But perhaps the worst thing was that it was declared a total loss after a recent collision in Ocean Beach, though it is still drivable. Sometime after Christmas I wanted to take the family down to look at Sunset Cliffs in Ocean Beach. Because the van wasn't operable, I took as many as would fit in the other car (yes, we do not all fit in one car, unless it holds 8 or more passengers!). As we were driving down a narrow street an SUV slammed into the rear passenger side door where AnnaGrace was sitting. The four youngest children (except the baby) were with me. We give thanks to the Lord that nobody was hurt.

Please pray that the insurance will offer us an adequate settlement. In the midst of these trials and others, we cling to the Lord and pray that He would be glorified and strengthen us. I have been thinking much about 2 Cor. 4:7-10 where Paul writes: "But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies (ESV)." Thanks be to God for His power!

Homeschool is going well. Rebecca participated in a homeschool speech and debate tournament last week at California State University San Marcos with Abigail Roe (daughter of our former teammates who lived in Tijuana). Congratulations to both of them for making semi-finals and winning 16th place in their category! Both Jeremiah and AnnaGrace have a renewed interest in reading books for their own pleasure. John has learned to read and Daniel is now going through the beginning reading curriculum. Jeremiah enjoys outdoor activities and is learning about nature and survival. Michele has visited a couple of homeschool events in the area and is enjoying being an active leader in La Leche League.

Thank you for your fellowship in the gospel!

In Christ,

*Ray & Michele, Rebecca, Jeremiah,  
AnnaGrace, John, Daniel & Christina*

### Prayer – Will you join us?

We are asking God for a group of at least 200 individuals or families who would be willing to pray for our team and ministry on a *daily/weekly* basis. Please let us know if you would like to volunteer! ☺