

Our Dear Brothers & Sisters and Friends,  
December 2013 can best be described as a month of suitcases and travel.

2013 December

### **Baxter 50th year Graduation**

The first weekend of the month we traveled to Tegucigalpa to attend the annual graduation at Baxter Institute of Biblical Studies. We first started making summer mission trips to Honduras through association with Baxter Institute and they continue to hold a special place in our hearts. We strive never to miss a graduation if we can help it. We traveled by public bus, which is our preferred method of transportation, and Andrew got to ride on a large, public bus for the first time since a baby. He loved it! Because of other commitments, we didn't go down until Saturday morning, in time for the graduation ceremony and great fellowship with old friends and new alike. We stayed overnight to attend the combined worship of the local churches and were among the 950+ in attendance.



*The three former presidents (right) of Baxter during its 50 year history, and the current president (left). From the right: Calvin Henry, Howard Norton, Steve White, and Steven Teel with his wife, Diana. The founder and 1st president, Harris Goodwin, died this year.*

### **Back to Tegucigalpa**

Only two days later, Joanne bussed again to Tegucigalpa to help her missionary friend with adoption portfolios for seven different cases. While they try to make this a monthly practice, Joanne has not been able to make it work with her schedule since August. They worked a solid eight hour day and on Wednesday and she returned on the last bus that evening. Andrew was very disappointed that he didn't get to go on the bus either Tuesday when dropping Joanne off or on Wednesday when picking her up. But he did get to make another trip the following week....



*Andrew's first bus ride since a baby (with his monkey, Buddy)*

The following Tuesday, Dec. 17th, we left for the beach in El Salvador. With the 90-day visa on Andrew's passport set to expire on Christmas day, we made an anticipated three-day trip to renew his visa for another 90 days. Our own four year residency cards had expired Dec. 9th and were not yet renewed due to some document complications. So we also understood that we would most likely have to pay an expiration fine when leaving Honduras and would be able to come back in with 90-day visas while our residencies were being worked out. Needless to say, things didn't turn out as planned. The Honduran border patrol let us out of the country with no issues over our expired cards nor our vehicle authorization, which was an issue the last time we went in to El Salvador. However, the El Salvadoran authorities were a bit more on the ball and turned us back because our Honduran residencies were expired. They told us to get a stamp inside our passports rather than on the transit document used for residents. And the border patrol told us the same thing; just get them to stamp the inside of the book rather than the temporary slip. But the Honduran authorities said they couldn't take care of the expired cards there, and sent us back to Tegucigalpa to get it corrected at Immigration. So we stayed overnight again in Santa Ana, and on Wednesday paid for a 30-day extension to Andrew's visa in the prayerful hope that our residency issues will be resolved in time for us to take him out of the country before the end of January.

### **El Salvador**

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### **La Paz**

Another anticipated trip that has not gone according to plans was Dwight's expected week-long trip to the mountains of La Paz. He was to carry a preacher's family of six to visit their families and to teach several computer class series

and evangelistic sessions while there. The trip was delayed again and again by different problems until it was decided to try during Spring break or later in the year.

## **Meanwhile**

Dwight has been working on repairing and updating equipment that has suffered problems during the main school year, both at Por Los Ninos and in his computer lab at home. He is still having computer classes at home, in the times between traveling and sickness. He also has been assisting at a local English school. Joanne is working diligently on her dissertation every morning, and enjoying the time with our grandson, Andrew.

## **The Rainy Season**

The rainy season has continued to bless us with significant rain almost every day. While this is very good for the cattle and dairy farmers (cheese from Olancho is famous throughout Central America), it is a great distress to most of the poorer people whose well-being depends on being able to harvest and dry their bean and corn crops during November and December. The coffee crop also has been hit by a double whammy this year; a plague that has cut the harvest severely, and a national drop in prices. On the other hand, more and more people in the mountains are growing cacao (chocolate).

## **Looking Forward**

January promises to be just as busy with travel, as Dwight plans to teach in the national penitentiary north of Tegucigalpa for two weeks and we plan another attempt at crossing the border at the end of the month to renew Andrew's visa. Please keep both events in your prayers, that they are safe, beneficial, and uneventful.

## **Prayers**

Please lift us up to our Lord concerning our visa issues (see section El Salvador), and that we may get our residency status extended. Pray for our health and safety and that all goes well with the classes in the prisons.

## **Gifting Request**

As we observe our sixth Christmas season living in Honduras, and people consider their end-of-year gifting, we are asking that you remember us and our work here. We acknowledge that we are not good at making our financial needs known nor at requesting support. And we only send this request once a year at the time when many consider extra gifting as part of their holiday or end-of-the-year practice. If you are able to bless us in this way, please send your blessings payable to:

**The Least of These - Honduras**  
**405 E. Dodge Street**  
**Bryan, TX, 77803**

It would be a great help to us if you could please drop an email to let us know to watch for your support as some things have gotten lost in the mail (or in the house). If you would desire to send us monthly support, please let us know. In all cases, we petition your continued and adamant prayers on behalf of our work and the advancement of God's kingdom in Catacamas, Olancho.

## **Thank You!!**

We are extremely grateful to those who have helped to get us started here but no longer support us, to those who have given one time gifts, and especially to those who have continued to support us regularly. We know that each of you is living a life of gratitude for the daily grace given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ, as are we.

In Him, our Lord Jesus Christ, we pray that you had a Merry Christmas and will have a wonderfully joyous 2014.

Love, Dwight and Joanne Tomkins



*Argentina, one of Dwight's favorite students from this year's graduating class at Baxter, is returning with her husband to work in Nicaragua.*