

Our Dear Brothers & Sisters and Friends,

2014 January

As anticipated, January proved to be a very busy month. Of course it started out with a bang, or rather, a whole lot of bangs. Once again the air was filled with the smoke from thousands of firecrackers and rockets at midnight on the 31st of December. Since friends of ours, who were visiting their missionary children in Chile experienced a similar phenomenon, it may be that this behaviour is true of all of Latin America. Dwight does not recall it being so in India or Joanne in Japan. Joanne made batches and batches of muffins to share with our friends and neighbors and we enjoyed driving around to deliver them.

We made another trip to the border of El Salvador in an attempt to renew Andrew's visa before it expired Jan. 25th, but this time we were armed with our residency renewal verifications. Once again, immigration into El Salvador turned us back, saying that the "tramites" was only valid in Honduras, and showed us where



Dwight teaching a computer class in a mountaintop community in La Paz, Honduras. Note the six computers and keyboards of his mobile lab.

presented lessons on Christ and Christianity. They carried with them gift bags for 35 children, a large load of clothing to give away, reading glasses, and a gas generator with extra gas because there is no electricity.

He was working about 1800 meters in altitude (about 5900 ft) and from one location could see the volcano that erupted in December located near San Miguel, El Salvador and the Pacific Ocean, which was about 50 miles away. Almost the entire mountaintop community was made up of Lenca Indians, the tribe from which was born Lempira, the Indian who almost defeated the Spanish conquistadors and for whom Honduran money is named. Javier said that the people who lived on the mountain, could walk down the mountain 3 hours to the community of Florida and return the same route uphill in the same amount of time, carrying a heavy load of supplies. Dwight said he couldn't walk 'quite' that far without having to stop and gasp for breath.

It was cold (getting down into the high 30s one night), misty, and windy. He parked the truck near a grassy fútbol field and

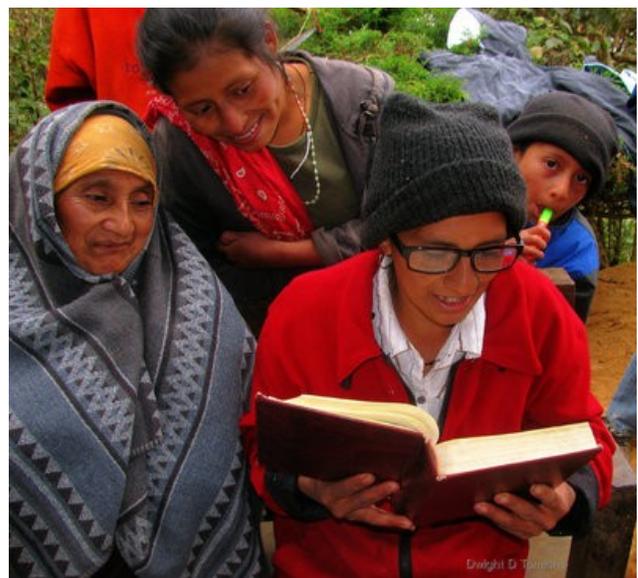


We stayed at the Orr's in Guiamaca. Seeing the house, it is easy to see they are missionaries from Wyoming. They even have sheep.

So there you have it; a pleasant week spent traveling the beautiful countryside, taking in the scenery and enjoying the company of other Christians overnight. We spent four nights away from home, and slept in three different towns, each time with fellow Christians. We were again struck by the scripture, "All who leave home for me will not fail to receive back 10-fold families and homes on this earth." Mark 10:29

La Paz

The plans for teaching in the national penitentiary were not able to be worked out, so Dwight changed gears once again. After a 3 day preparation in Catacamas, he took his mobile computer lab and drove Javier Perez, a preacher, and his family of six to visit their remote home in the western mountains of Honduras where he also taught several days of computer classes, showed entertaining movies, read books with the older children, and



Three ladies so excited that they can once again read their Bibles with the new reading glasses we brought.

one time felt the truck rocking from the wind, even though the field is surrounded by pines. Another time he came up to take photos of the fútbol players and could barely see them through the mist. But the people were delightful and the land was beautiful.

Steve Ingraham

Our greatest blessing this month was a whirlwind visit from Joanne's relative, Steve Ingraham. (He is the husband of her mother's first cousin, Cathy, which makes her a first cousin once removed, right?) Steve and Cathy have been supporting educational opportunities through our ministry for 5 years, so it was a great pleasure to introduce him to some of the many of the people they have helped over the years. His special blessing was the amazing amount of things he gave us during his visit. He brought down a long list of items that we requested at his encouragement, but then also shopped at (the one and only) Wal-Mart before heading to Catacamas, and also paid ALL possible expenses while he was here. Unfortunately, he had to squeeze his trip into a very demanding work schedule and could only be here for one full day. But we think we packed a lot into that day and made his trip as memorable for him as it will always be for us. Thank you so much, Steve and Cathy, for your special blessings and support of our ministries here.



Batches and batches of muffins

Joanne

Joanne continues to plug away at her research dissertation. Her data analysis is proving far more detailed and time consuming than anticipated, and this week she made the hard decision to take a second term leave-of-absence from Walden to finish the dissertation writing. She feels she is learning a great deal, and her Chair told her that this particular study is very valuable and worthwhile. So she continues to work on it for 2 hours every day, but not to allow it to be an all-consuming investment of time, focus, and ministry. In fact, she traveled to Tegucigalpa Jan. 29, for a second time this month, to help another missionary with adoption portfolios and other administrative tasks.



Andrew in his makeshift bubble-bath.

Andrew

Andrew continues to be a special joy in our daily lives. He has such a positive, loving, endearing spirit, full of joy and bouncy fun. We are preparing for his return back to his mother, Rebecca, who will be coming at the end of March to take him home. Joanne plans to travel back with them to help him transition into her home and life once more. The biggest issues that necessitated his long visit with us have been resolved and Becca is looking forward to having him back permanently. We, too, look forward to his return to her home and our return to "normalcy."

School Days

Dwight is preparing to teach again in the school at the children's home, Por Los Niños. The Minister of Education for Honduras has published a comprehensive list of those things the students should know by the time they are finished with their grade level. Dwight is using that list to more closely assist his co-teachers in their educational objectives through the use of his computer

classes. Since he teaches 1st through 6th grade, it is a great joy for him to see them grow each year. He sees almost all his students weekly at church during vacation, but is looking forward to encouraging them to gain the skills and push their minds further than they thought possible.

His Sunday School class (11-13 yr olds) is still studying the book of Acts. He needs many prizes for the contest when he finishes the book. If you have simple items (from pens to squirt guns or balls to simple electronics like flashlights or mp3 players) that you would like to donate, please let us know.

Prayers

We thank our Lord that our residency renewals are in process to get our residency status extended. Pray for our health and safety and that all goes well with the classes starting this month. Also please keep our dear friend, David Chacón, in your prayers. Most of you who have been here know and love David and Suyapa.

In Him, our Lord Jesus Christ, we pray that you are having a joyous 2014.
Love, Dwight and Joanne Tomkins



New jump ropes



50 people watching a movie in a house in La Paz



America, Marcos, Javier, Emelina, and a cousin walking above the clouds. Cue "The Hills are Alive ..."