

Our Dear Brothers & Sisters and Friends,

2014 June



*Angela and Joanne putting up lots of mangoes.*

Let me hear in the morning of Your steadfast love,  
for in You I trust.  
Make me know the way I should go,  
for to You I lift up my soul.

**Psalms 143:8**

As we mentioned in the last newsletter the rainy season (or our Winter) has begun. It is just amazing how quickly things green up. Dwight says he thinks June is his favorite month here; the temperature is moderate (rarely above 90° F), the days are the longest of the year (13 hours) and the sun rises early, the corn is sprouting, everything is green with lots of new leaves, the ginger is profuse, and mangoes are everywhere, all because it rains almost every day.

And speaking of rain, we are very glad that drought conditions for many of our friends in the US have been ameliorated.

### **Stateside Travel Plans**

Before our next report goes out at the end of July, we will be traveling to the east coast of the U.S. for two family reunions. Joanne's sisters and families will be gathering in Myrtle Beach, SC over the weekend of July 25-26. The majority of our children are planning to make the long drive from Texas to join us there and we are excited to be reconnecting with people we have not seen in seven years. Over the following week we will travel with some of our children to visit our sponsoring congregation in Raleigh, NC (Sunday morning), visit a special hiding place in the VA mountains (Tuesday and Wednesday), drive all the way up to NY (Thu) to visit Niagara Falls (Friday), before the Tomkins' family reunion on Saturday, Aug. 2. We return to Honduras via a full day layover in Miami, during which time we hope to meet with old friends and new. We arrive back home, if God allows, on Wednesday, Aug 6th. If all goes as planned, Joanne will also be defending her dissertation to her committee during that week of travel. Please let us know if you will be anywhere near our travel destinations and would like a personal hug.

### **Celebrations**



*Maritza laying flowers on the grave of her husband, Lidio.*

June has been a month of celebrations. The first thing we celebrated was an unexpected sadness, in the death of a favorite preacher, Lidio Saenz, who died Sunday night, June 1. But we rejoice in knowing that we will see this faithful brother again. If you did not get the special Memorial report we would be glad to send you one. The second thing we celebrated was Dwight's birthday, on Friday, June 6th. It was a quiet day, with dinner at home and a movie on our DVD player. The following day was our oldest grandson's birthday, and we got to Skype with him for awhile at his home in TX. On Monday, June 9th we celebrated the approval of Joanne's dissertation by her committee Chair. A week later we celebrated Father's Day, again with a quiet day and emails or Skype calls from the majority of Dwight's children. Then our 30th wedding anniversary got a bit of attention on Monday, June 16th. However, the following day was one of the best celebrations, when we received six boxes filled with seven donated computers (thank you, Ted and Provider Advantage) and loads of clothing for the poor. That same day we were blessed to celebrate the unusually fast approval of Joanne's dissertation by her second committee member. Can Life get any more exciting than this?!

## Whooping Cough!

Most people living in the U.S. know that we vaccinate our children against "Pertussis", which is often known as "whooping cough". While the vaccine can prevent serious illness and has significantly reduced the rates of death from Pertussis, especially in children, the vaccine is NOT a complete preventative. It turns out that just before Joanne's April visit to the states she picked up whooping cough while here in Honduras. The incubation period is 1-2 weeks, so she didn't show symptoms until she was in TX. She saw our general practitioner for a routine annual visit on April 2nd and nothing was amiss. Whooping cough starts off looking like a typical cold, until the cough becomes incapacitating during the second week and lasts at least two weeks. It is so uncommon in the U.S. that when Joanne called our doctor about her debilitating cough, his response was to call in a strong prescription for cough (which did nothing to relieve the symptoms). It was not until after her return to Catacamas that our local doctor diagnosed Pertussis over the phone, based on Joanne's symptoms and the cough she could hear. The illness that can linger for over two months was nipped at 5 weeks because of Sheree's alertness. Thank you, Sheree!

## Andrew is Home

You may recall that we mentioned Andrew is living with his mother in Texas once again. What was left unsaid was how thrilled he was to return home after six months in Catacamas with his abuelos. He settled in as though he never left and loves his Mommy dearly. Our oldest daughter said that when they arrived from the airport and he walked in the door for the first time, he said something akin to, "That's my bed, and those are my toys, and that's my door." He was so happy to be back with his mother that every day when she got home from work he would run to meet her with his arms out yelling, "Mommy!" The day before Joanne returned to Catacamas she told Andrew, "Tomorrow I'm going back to live with Abuelo" and he immediately responded, "Uh-huh, and I'm going to stay here with Mommy." He was perfectly content to kiss Abuela goodbye. We are thankful to God for that blessing.

## Joanne's Dissertation

Well, it seems impossible, but Joanne's dissertation is finally in the hands of the last academic reviewer, the University Research Reviewer! Both her dissertation Chair and her second committee member have approved her final draft within the last month and have forwarded it for final review. Worst case scenario, the revised final will be approved



*Marlon preaching.*

by the end of July and Joanne's oral defense will be scheduled. The final hurdle is the Form and Style review that scrutinizes the document for every punctuation, spacing and layout error, as well as in text citations, coordinating references, page number sequence and accuracy of the tables of content (there are three). Still, there is light at the end of the tunnel and Joanne is feeling a great load of pressure relieved. It is great to be back in a spirit of local service and to be getting many delinquent projects into motion.

## Combined Worship

The congregation at Nuevo Esperanza hosted the 'Culto Unido' for the churches in Catacamas and the surrounding area at the Good Samaritan School on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Though it was only lightly attended, we had a good time and heard a wonderful sermon from Marlon Molina. He continues to get better and better in his ability to bring the scriptures to life.

## Prayers

Please continue to pray for our residency status. Our papers are somewhere in the entrails of the Honduran government. Also we ask your prayers for our travels this next month. And finally please pray for the family of Lidio Saenz.

We pray that you are spending good time with your families and rejoicing in life, not just the physical blessings He gives us, but the spiritual blessings we have in being in Jesus. May you be blessed.

Love, Dwight and Joanne Tomkins