

Our Dear Brothers & Sisters and Friends,

2014 November

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;  
Let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.  
**Psalm 95:1**

November was, as most months are, comfortably busy without being overwhelming or exhausting, yet filled with the uniqueness that keeps us alert and engaged.

### **Annual Women of Purpose (WoP)**

The first weekend in November was the annual women's retreat to which Joanne looks forward as a highlight of her year in Honduras. Twenty team members came from the U.S. to host a four day spiritual revival for English speaking missionary women living throughout Honduras. From Thursday afternoon until 10am Sunday, 124 women were pampered with enthusiastic singing, prayer groups, motivational lessons, thoughtful gifts, gourmet meals, and lots of chocolate! The retreat was held in the Valley of the Angels, which is a popular tourist destination even without the added attraction of spiritual renewal. Old friendships were renewed, new friendships developed, and casual relationships deepened. We thank God and the Women of Purpose group for their care, attention, devotion and sacrifices that they make each year for our encouragement.

### **Community Public Health**

In the middle of November, Joanne started a new community public health project in Jicaro Gordo, about 20 minutes west of Catacamas. We have known the preacher there, Javier Perez, and his family since first moving to Catacamas. At the first meeting of the community's elected officials, known as the Patronato, the leaders seemed more attentive and committed to community involvement and improvements than did the previous community. This community has over three times as many houses as San Isidro, and the projects have begun with a mandatory door-to-door health census for the local health department and government records. The health census is being completed by four Hondurans and is expected to be completed and summarized before mid December. The first community wide meeting is scheduled for January 3rd at 2pm to discuss their collective wishes and goals.

### **30th Anniversary Vows**

The third weekend of the month, Dwight and Joanne traveled to Guaimaca (about 2 hours from here) to witness the renewing of vows between two friends (and fellow missionaries) who celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary. Joanne met Vickie at a WoP several years ago and one of their children is studying at National Agricultural University (UNA) here in Catacamas. Johnnie and Vickie (from Wyoming and Oregon) have been serving in Honduras for more than 20 years. Because the ceremony took place in the late afternoon, Dwight and Joanne stayed overnight in a local hotel and left early enough Sunday to make it back in time for church.



*Vickie and Johnnie Orr*

### **Visiting the Elderly**

Another project that Joanne has been helping with is monthly visits to a home for the elderly. For an entire morning, one Tuesday each month, one lady cuts hair and Joanne cuts

fingernails and treats them with an anti-fungal cream. Currently there are only nine individuals living at the Catholic sponsored home; eight men and one woman, Carmelita. Joanne also removed polish and re-polished Carmelita's nails. This month, Andrew went with her and was a special attraction for the elderly residents, who seldom see anyone so young and certainly never before got to see anyone perform "The Wheels on the Bus" in English.



*EBS students reading their new Bibles.*

### **EBS Graduation**

The Good Samaritan School (Escuela el Buen Samaritano or EBS) recognized 59 6th graders at a celebration held Saturday morning, Nov. 29th. Through the special generosity of several brothers (thank you so much, R.C., and C.B.), we were able to

help the school locate, purchase, and inscribe new gift Bibles for every graduate. As you know from our previous newsletters, we think this school is a very important and fruitful work here in Catacamas. Its purpose is to give an excellent education both secular and spiritual to those who otherwise would not be able to afford it. If you would like to assist with this work, let us know.



*Only one of these 'Mamas' students is a single mom. The others are daughters of single mothers.*

Honduras has caught the "Black Week" bug and that all stores and streets were choked with shoppers. Large billboards throughout the city advertised special prices, which were still steep by U.S. standards for similar merchandise. But they enjoyed a relaxing night at the hotel, and Andrew even braved blustery winds, low hanging rain clouds of steel grey and temperatures in the 60s to wade in the swimming pool - for 10 minutes. He came out covered in water splashes and goosebumps, but was still willing to suggest another swim an hour later - until he was at the poolside with his shirt off and was again blasted by the chilling winds and he remembered the shivering experience.

### **Residency!**

If you remember, last month we had to give up our residency cards in order to get new ones. They still don't have them ready and we just found out that we will have to pay a hefty fine because we have not received them in the required 30 days. It is a win/win situation for the Honduran government. They drag their feet in completing their processing and fine us for their malfeasance. As some may recall, it was a year ago next week that Joanne gave our passports and residency cards to a missionary organization that could "renew our residency cards within a month".

### **Prayers**

Looking over our calendars for the next few months, it appears that we will be busier between Dec. and Feb than is typical of most months. Please keep us in your prayers as we continue to serve. Pray also for our residency and for our travels into the mountains.

Love, Dwight and Joanne Tomkins

### **Computer Classes**

The Mamas Class (Las Mamas en Catacamas) has completed their first session of classes and all have said that they want to continue. As soon as we work out the scheduling, we will start another class for them. Another class has started out in a village east of us toward the mountains (Nuevo Progreso). Dwight will teach classes next Wednesday over in the mountains in the other direction (San Francisco de la Paz).

### **Thanksgiving in Honduras**

One of the best advantages to living in a country that does not celebrate Thanksgiving is that all of the stores, businesses, and banks are still open if you choose to visit them on Thanksgiving day. Joanne, Rebecca, and Andrew took advantage of Becca's time off from teaching to travel to Tegucigalpa for the Thanksgiving weekend to do some essential shopping that is best done in the capital city (for items such as stain removers, isopropol alcohol, window cleaner and bubble bath). Joanne only learned too late that