

## Mexico Mission March 2017

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Back when Pam and I first moved to Arlington 28-years ago, and began working with the California Lane Church of Christ, many folks here had recently visited Mexico and the various congregations which were then supported by the Mexico Mission Fund. I kept hearing interesting stories about their travels via train, cities visited, food, churches, preachers and congregations; it all made me a little jealous and hopeful that I would soon be traveling there too! At that time brother Roberto Lara stopped by California Lane every once in a while to give us a report, which further whetted my appetite to travel south.

March 2017 will be a month that I will not long forget, as I traveled with Ray White and met up with Marcus Brannon in Mexico for a ten-day visit with the brethren. I tell you what; Marcus is one fine young man, super smart, a good mixer and an excellent preacher.

There was one problem though, a couple of days before we left Texas I felt a tickle in my throat which turned into a cough which by the time we landed in Mexico had turned into a hacking, coughing experience that went on and on. "Doctor Brannon" diagnosed me as suffering with Bronchitis, something which plagued me almost yearly as a boy. If the Mexican brethren remember me at all it will be as The Coughing Preacher; it just wouldn't go away.

This was not my first trip to Mexico, Pam and I went to Matamoros on our honeymoon 38-years before, just a three hour stay! And a couple of years ago Pam and I traveled with my brother Mike to Puerto Vallarta for a few days, something that didn't seem to impress the brethren in Moroleon or Morelia very much, as they would roll their eyes upon hearing this. You haven't really visited Mexico until you get away from the tourist destinations!

Also, all those YouTube "Learn Spanish" videos which I had watched in February just seemed to escape my memory, as Spanish is a very fluid language which just rolls off the tongue from people who were raised with it. Maybe it was the coughing which caused my Amnesia, sure that's it!

The first person we met with in Mexico was Brother Roberto and his sidekick Nathanel Martinez, who traveled with us for several days. Brother Nathanel is a rather quiet descendent of the Mayan culture and sadly we didn't have time to visit with the church where he preaches in Tancanhuitz, but Brother Ray promised that his church would be one of the first on the list next time.

Our first destination was Moroleon and the church there where a Monday night Bible study was held and taught by a fireball preacher named Martin'! He is a gentleman whom I will not soon forget, a fellow with an excellent knowledge of God's word, a memory that just wouldn't quit, and a sense of humor and smile which were very captivating. We are thankful for him and all the preachers in Mexico who selflessly serve their congregations.

I didn't keep good notes on people, places and things as I should have, but we often had lunch or dinner in the homes of brethren who showed us great and generous hospitality. Guadalupe and Maria Zavala, along with their 9-year old boy Kareem, had us over for lunch one day and what a blessing it was to visit with them and enjoy the food and comfort of their home. Kareem's uncle is a professional baseball player in Mexico and Kareem aspires to one day to be a big league pitcher himself. I tried to play catch with him one day and, to say the least, he wasn't impressed.

One thing I try to do when visiting churches in other counties is to take something for the children, whether a stick of gum, piece of candy, a Frisbee, a ball or a double eyed wiggly green monster. When I quickly pulled a couple of these wiggly things out of my bag of tricks one evening, a couple of the little girls from the church screamed with joy, grabbed them and ran off making all the other children envious. And it was nice to sit around the campfire at night and, on more than one occasion, roasts weenies and marsh mellows with the kids from the church.

Brother Roberto told us about David Garcia from Morelia who now suffers with Parkinson's disease. We met with him and found a man who was very sincere in his service to the Lord and the local church. Ray being a board member promised to present his need before other members and help where possible. Visiting with David was in my opinion the reason the Lord brought us to Mexico this year!

The enthusiasm for the Lord's local churches and dedication to His service in Mexico is commendable. Lord willing, if I have the opportunity to travel south again, it will be without a cough and more pleasurable for all!