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Border Reflections "You are Winning"!

Nov. 23, 2011



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International Ministries

Mercy and Rick and their family have been missionaries with International Ministries since they were commissioned in the year 2000.

They have been partnering with "la Convencion Bautista Dios con Nosotros" in Baja California, Mexico since January 2002.

They both teach at the seminary and their ministry includes enabling and walking along leaders as they seek to transform their communities with the power of the gospel.

As we look back on our ministry in Mexico, we ask ourselves who is ministering to whom? We have been truly blessed by this wonderful relationship with our sisters and brothers in Mexico.

Rick and Mercy have three children. Aida 21, a student at the University of Virginia. Richie, 18 a student at the University of Chicago and Joshua, 12 a 7th grader in El Centro, CA.

If you wish to support their ministry online you may go to www.internationalministries.org/give
Go to People who Serve
Go to Barnes

I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry. whether living in plenty or in want. I can do every



thing through him who gives me strength.

Philippians 4.12-13 (NIV)

We really wish we could say that we have learned the secret of a contented life. Like many who read this, we are still in process and it is so affirming to be reminded of God's blessings. Read on and enjoy! Happy Thanksgiving!

"You are Winning"

by Rick Barnes

When I think of thanksgiving, I think it is impossible to not reflect on things that have been reflected upon countless times already by so many. But in my teacher training, I learned that the discovery of something new is important, and the reinforcement of learning already present helps it to stick.

I had a recent discussion with a man named Will at a tire shop. I was just getting the regular tire maintenance when he struck up a conversation with me. It is honestly rare that I converse with a

and click on gift.

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Thank you so much for your support and your prayers!



complete stranger, but in this case, it just naturally seemed to occur. As we conversed, I discovered that he was a world-class hurdler in the 70's, and he shared about some of the experiences of his life and travels. And I shared about mine as a missionary. We got to talking about our children, and where they were and what they were doing. **He looked at me and said "man, you're winning."**

When I hear about your life, you are winning."

There are times when I feel like I am winning. There are times when I feel like I am drowning! With two kids in college and Mercy studying for her Doctorate in Ministry, there are times I simply scratch my head and wonder. I wonder will things stretch enough. I wonder where the promise of God's provision ends, and madness begins.

Which goes back to the nearly 400 year old lesson from Plymouth. I am sure that they wondered where God's provision ended and madness began. They landed ill equipped to handle the environment. Between exposure, hunger, and disease, they lost half their numbers. And they all would have starved had it not been for natives who took pity on them.

It seems to me like there could have been some terribly resentful people in the midst of their group, and maybe there were. But we see something else that has been a model for almost four centuries. They gave thanks. There was a time when they broke bread (and turkey and lobster and more) together with the community and the natives in a spirit of gratitude that God had seen them through.

I know right now, I am not the only one who feels at times like I am drowning. Many struggle, and there is much doubt and concern over the future, collectively and as individuals. It is easy for me to fall into the pattern of wondering about God's provision. And then God sends someone along who helps me to take stock of my life, and reminds me indeed that I am winning. Indeed, God has blessed me very much, and as I take stock of that, it prepares me much better to handle the challenges and joys of this present time, and to have confidence of God's presence in the future, too. I wish for

each of us a sure sense of God's presence and God's provision and the confidence that gives.



Looking Ahead

Wow! It has truly been an exciting beginning to our third term in Mexicali. It doesn't seem possible. During our year of visiting churches,

people would usually ask "Aren't you scared when you go to Mexico?" The truth is that we are excited. We returned to Mexico in September to start our classes at the seminary, to renew friendships and to travel down the familiar roads and highways of Mexicali. It feels good to be back here.

Rick and I are both teaching two classes each. Mercy teaches eschatology and Conflict Transformation. Rick teaches New Church Planting and Pastoral Care in the clinical setting. We have met new students and have been renewing relationships with students from previous years. It is heartwarming to be with our dear brothers and sisters in Mexicali.

We met with the pastors for breakfast and are listening intently to the needs expressed during our conversation. The trust between us and them is deepening. That is a good thing! Rick will be developing a class to fill some of those needs together with one of the pastors present at that table. You know, there is something about coming together to break bread that makes sharing a lot easier.

We also went to celebrate the anniversary of "Iglesia Bautista La Nueva Jerusalem" in San Luis, Rio Colorado, Sonora, Mexico. It was truly a celebration with each age group participating in singing, liturgical dance, wonderfully gifted guitar playing, skits, and good preaching followed by a very tasty and simple meal.

Am I transmitting the joy that we are feeling when we meet with the people with whom we serve? We are receiving invitations to visit the planting of new church starts and to see how these ministries are interacting with their communities.

We are in conversations with the leadership of our convention here in Mexico to see if we can partner with a region in the states in sending out a couple of local missionaries to minister with hispanics in the states. It is still in the envisioning stage but it is exciting.

We are speaking to our churches about hospitality and preparing a room for visiting teachers and guest at the seminary. There is not enough room to begin to share the excitement that we feel as God has prepared the ground for ministry to continue to happen.



Family Update and Prayer Concerns

Life continues to happen and we are constantly reminded of God's provision. We have two adult children who are now out of the nest and confronting their own challenges in their academic settings. As we approach the end of the first semester, It is amazing to see that Aida is already in her third year at the University of Virginia. She leaves on January 3rd for a semester abroad in Lille, France. Why do they have to go so far away?

Richie is approaching the end of his first quarter at the University of Chicago. He is doing very well and celebrating Thanksgiving with his grandparents in Illinois. I had the blessing of seeing him in Chicago a few weeks ago.

Joshua is also enjoying Junior High School and seems to be growing right before my eyes. My baby is no longer a baby. He is wanting to participate in a class trip to Florida and we are praying for the resources to help him accomplish his goal.

Rick finished a year of chaplaincy training during our year of home assignment. It has given him more tools to share with others and has helped him to grow personally. He is using these new skills in Mexicali.

I (Mercy) am starting my DMIN at McCormick Theological Seminary, I spent my first week over there in early November. It is exciting and intimidating and at times overwhelming. My prayer is to be stretched so that God can use me in a better way in our ministry in Mexicali.

Prayer Concerns:

1. Thanks to God for our children, our family, our health, our ministry and each other.
2. A Childhood friend of mine, Emma, recently lost her adult son to cancer at the age of 26. Please uplift her in your prayers.
3. Prayers for financial resources to support all of our academic goals as a family.
4. Thanks to God for our Missionary Partnership Team (MPT) as we reached our 80% goal for last year.
5. Prayer for our MPT as we strive to reach our 90% goal for this year and for new members to help in the work.
6. Pray for us as we continue to adjust to our nest (getting emptier by the day).
7. Prayer for safety for Aida in France, Richie in Chicago and Josh here in El Centro.
8. Ministry related prayers: One of our students, Israel, recently had a child with many health challenges; please pray for him and his family.
9. We are direly in need of a second vehicle for work (a pickup) so please help us to pray about this.
10. Prayer for guidance with all of our projects.
11. Prayer for continued support that allows us to continue to be in ministry.

Upcoming Events

1. Aida and Richie return in December for Christmas! Yea!!!
2. Missionary retreat at Palomar Christian Conference Center.

Closing Thoughts

Our desire for you as we enter the Thanksgiving Season is that we continue to discover that our lives are in God's hands. We are thankful for each and every one of you that have participated and partnered with us in our ministry through your prayers, contributions, short term mission trips, love gifts and letters.

We wish to invite all of you who read this to partner with us by supporting this ministry. You can support us online by going to www.internationalministries.org/give and go to people who serve, Barnes. Any contribution would be truly appreciated.

You can also give by regular mail by sending your checks to:
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On memo section of church write: Ongoing Support Barnes

or you can call up and give your card info the the Finance Department at International Ministries at 1-800-222-3872.

You can also give through your local congregation and/or region. Whichever way you choose may you continue to sense God's provision in your life.

"I can do everything through him who gives me Strength."

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