

MEXICO

Westminster Biblical Missions

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Fall 2007 Report

We continue to be encouraged with the growth among the Manifestors of the Doxa (Glory) of God in the Tarascan region of Michoacán. We are seeing growth in several different ways: a modest growth in numbers; an encouraging growth in confidence and faith among church leaders; a deeper growth in understanding of the Reformed Faith; a growth in trust among the church leaders and members - trust in us, and in Misael Custodio and the teaching coming from the *Seminario Teológico Juan Calvino*.



Rev. Greg Poorman will be with us again on this Fall trip, as well as being able to give a brief visit of encouragement last Spring. He was very helpful in encouraging the brothers there, both in Mexico City, and in Michoacán. Greg's outgoing and winsome personality, and his strong commitment to the confessional Reformed Faith, and his youthful energy, have won him a place in the hearts of our key leaders down there (despite the language barrier).

The work of the *Seminario Teológico Juan Calvino* still seems to be going well. For this year's Reformation Day Conference my topic will be Zwingli's contribution to the Swiss Reformation. Then following the conference in Mexico City, we will head out to Michoacán to visit the Manifestors in Tarascan-land. We will be doing some teaching, some counselling, and generally encouraging the church leaders there in the work of the Lord.

Here are some specific details about various parts of the work among the Manifestors:

Amado Mendez is one of the leaders in Cheranastico.



Cheranastico: This is a new church plant, a mission church that sprang out of the evening discussion in the Paracho church led by Rev. Dennis Roe last Fall. The church in Cheranastico that was founded, and physically built, by Max, had been taken over by a group of Pentecostals. And despite numerous attempts by the Manifestors to try to bring them back, the leadership there had remained uncooperative. Dennis' encouragement helped give them the confidence to begin a mission church in that town, which we pray the Lord will richly bless, as He gives the people of Cheranastico a thirst for His authentic Gospel. The mission church in

Cheranastico is also very open to the leadership of Misael and the teaching coming from the *Seminario Juan Calvino*. Every time Misael visits the region, they insist that he come

and visit them in Cheranastico. This is very encouraging, given how long we prayed over the compromised state of the original church there.

Tzopoco: Pablo Tomas' son, Naftali, is helping with the work there, as Pablo Tomas is still in the states, but he is still somewhat insecure in his preaching gifts, so he is being helped by José Magaña. He recently went to the states himself for a time, but I believe he is now back in Tzopoco. Pray that José Magaña can continue to hold forth a strong presence there, and that the Lord will raise up a suitable pastor for that church, since Pablo Tomas is so rarely there, and would be woefully out of touch even should he return.



Ichan: José Magaña carries on faithfully there, and is carrying a huge share of the load of ministry in Acachuen and Tzopoco as well. Among Max' original disciples, José has most readily accepted the Reformed teaching of Misael, embracing the more full-orbed Calvinism coming from *Juan Calvino*. He has been feeling discouraged this year, longing to see a greater response to the Reformed gospel being preached, and carrying such a lion's share of the load, trying to oversee the works in Ichan, Acachuen, and Tzopoco.

José has also been sick this year, with a hospital stay and some serious health issues. So please pray for José's health, and for his spiritual encouragement. There have been some visitors in Ichan earlier this year, which is very encouraging. Please pray that the Lord will soften the hearts of the villagers in Ichan, and give them a thirst for God's Word.

Acachuen: Anciano Jorge Serrano continues to lead this group, which meets in his metal-working shop attached to his home. (This is the man who was ordained in the church in Paracho in 2005.) David Custodio and José Magaña have taken him under their wing, and he appears to be growing steadily in the faith and the ministry. There is some concern about his brother, who has been actively opposing the Manifestors' church there in Acachuen, trying to stir up trouble where he can. Please pray that the Lord will frustrate the efforts of opposition of Jorge's brother, and even to soften his heart to the gospel, as He did that of another opposition leader, Saul of Tarsus.

David and Eric



Paracho: Pastors David Custodio and Eric Villa (Eric is Assistant Pastor, and they trade off the preaching duties - David in the P'ore language, Eric in Spanish), with the support of elder Tata Ramón Joaquin (another one of Max' original disciples), are truly leading the way for Reformed training among the Tarascans. They unashamedly list the church there on the bulletins as a "Presbyterian Church." They have embraced wholeheartedly all the Reformed teaching that

Misael has brought from the *Seminario Teológico Juan Calvino* in Mexico City. When we are there, we meet to discuss the state of the church in pastor Eric's Pizza parlor. This is the church that has begun the mission church in Cheranastico, and is considering planting another church there in Paracho. Eric Villa's wife, Yolanda, had been very sick

last year, and we praise the Lord that He has raised her back to health. Please pray for these pastors and their families, as they carry a lion's share of the load there among the Manifestors.

San Lorenzo: Lencho Naranjo has largely taken over the reigns of this work from his father, Santiago (another one of Max' original disciples), with Santiago's blessing. The Naranjo's still attend all the joint Manifestor functions, but the center of gravity (as it were) has shifted from San Lorenzo as the center, more to Paracho and Ichan. Please continue to pray for this work.

Salvador and David



Anga'uan: Salvador Perucho still labors faithfully in this very hard, difficult village. The village is fiercely (and sometimes violently) Roman Catholic, and is one of the most hard and stoney fields in the area. Please pray for the Lord to open up this field, and to break up the stoney ground. Particularly pray that the Lord would soften the hard hearts of the villagers, and give them a thirst for His gospel, and that the Lord would give Salvador the wisdom and faith he needs to bear a shining light in

that dark field.

Please continue to uphold this work in your prayers. Pray for Misael and David Custodio, who are carrying a huge load in terms of teaching and leadership of the ministers and churches there. So pray that these brothers will continue to exhibit patience, maturity, and wisdom, as they have done so far. And pray that the unity of these brothers will continue and grow, as many pressures threaten to pull them apart.

Pray for Prof. Misael Custodio, for whom this work is in addition to his responsibilities at his church in Mexico City, as well as the seminary there. Pray for his wisdom as he contemplates how and when he might be able to move back to Michoacán to work there full-time. Misael's wife was pretty seriously sick earlier this year, and though it appears she is somewhat better now, I hope to learn more of her condition while I am there. Please pray for her overall improved health.

Pray for the work of Juan Calvino Seminary. This is, in my estimation, the most significant testimony for the Reformation in all of Mexico. Pray that their work would continue, and not be hindered by those forces that oppose her. Also please pray for our mission's General Secretary - Rev. Dennis Roe. He has been in ill health recently with his liver, and is in need of your prayers.

Thank you for your faithful work, prayer, and support of this important work in this little corner of God's vast Kingdom.

- Bill Higgins
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