

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Costa Rica and Happy New Year 2008! It has been a little over two months since I have written, so I will get started with a review of the last two months or so and then move on to share some of the plans for this year.

During the last two months, Juan Reyes and I have continued our evangelistic home Bible studies in Barrio Mexico, a very poor section of the inter-city of our capital. We have been somewhat encouraged to see this family of Abel, Mercedes, Junielca, Anielca, y Andres begin and continue to attend the church in Los Lagos. Abel is showing some fruit of conversion, but his wife Mercedes, while asking questions rather frequently, still is enslaved to tradition. Please pray for her.

The church in Los Lagos really needs your prayers. I can't be pessimistic. There are too many signs of God's workings, but there is a critical spirit that some have seemed to imbibe and that spirit is so discouraging to Eric and me. Nevertheless, attendance has been decent, and we continue to see some of our visitors grow and become faithful. One young man of about twenty-five is Ramon. I believe that the Lord is dealing with him. He is from a charismatic background, but I have watched him really learn to appreciate the doctrine of the church and hardly a week passes that he isn't purchasing a book from the bookstore of the church. The Lord has also added four babies to our families during the last month, and the Lord, in what C.S. Lewis, would call a "severe mercy" took home to swim in the ocean of His love our dear sister Alba. Alba was only sixty years old, but she succumbed to cancer after a few short months. We miss her, but we rejoice that during her funeral the Gospel was preached and her Savior was exalted.

The church has been studying the theme of the life of the church in the book of Revelation. Please pray for these messages to be sealed to our hearts. How easy it is for all of us to be moved without being changed! May God seal His Word to our hearts and grant us the grace to grow! During the month of December, I took a break from Revelation to preach the annual Christmas series, this year from Luke 1:72. Truly, we were blessed to see that Christ is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. He is the Good News, the blessing to all the nations. He is our justification and joy, and He is our Substitute.

Finally, let me share with you some of our goals for 2008. This year holds for us the completion of the renovation of our building. At the moment, we plan on two work teams coming to help complete this. Also, we have our VBS in the first full week of February and covet your prayers that many children will come to know our Savior. During the month of March, I will be traveling to the Dominican Republic to teach a course on pneumatology. I also would appreciate your prayers for the possibility of a radio show that has opened up. We desire to increase the number of evangelistic Bible studies. Beginning tomorrow, January 8, I will be having two Bible studies each Tuesday in the capital, and a few men have indicated that they would like to help in preaching the Gospel. There is much more information to impart, but for that, there are more prayer letters to write during this year.

Now for those of you who have difficulty in writing, perhaps you will understand that I have great difficulty of thinking of information to share with you. Our ministry here is quite ordinary. I serve as a pastor of a congregation of a hundred people or so. I write and translate, train men, and do quite a bit of personal evangelism, but often I find

that my letters do not have much variation between the two months that I write. I say all this because some of you might question the propriety of the next paragraphs, explaining what's new in the Henning's lives in Costa Rica, but it might give you a better glimpse into missionary life, at least ours.

Near the end of September, we purchased a guard dog. She is a fila brasileiro, and we have named her Calvin. (By the way, I also have fish named Spurgeon and Luther.) If you are curious as to what kind of dog she is, just do a Google search, and you are in for an interesting read, but since I like my dog so much, let me tell you about her. This breed is the national dog of Brazil and has a 400 year history. It is a mixture of English mastiff, bloodhound, and bulldog and was used to return run-away slaves to their owners. It was also used to hunt jaguars in the Amazon, but now its primary purpose is as a guard dog. Two words describe its temperament: loyalty and ferociousness. This breed is uncommonly loyal to its family and has never been known to turn on them, even in old age and great pain. The Brazilians have a saying "...as loyal as a fila." On the other hand, this breed hates strangers and must be placed in a home before three months. During her most recent visit to the vet's when she was four months old, we were informed that Calvin is not welcome back, unless she is wearing a muzzle. The fila is one of just a handful of breeds, if there are any, that do not need any training whatsoever to keep all strangers away. She does that instinctively, even with those whom we welcome into our home, such as Sarah our daughter who visited here during December. Needless to say, I like our dog, except for the feeding part, as she eats twelve cups of food each day. She is currently six months old and weighs eighty-five pounds.

On another vein, pray for my mechanics to have wisdom and for me to keep my sanity and self-control. Folks, I have literally spent hundreds, really nearly \$2000, on our van which has been destroyed by the various mechanics here. I hope that I have found a good one finally, but the verdict is still out. I will let you know during the next letter what was wrong, but it appears that too many amps or volts are going into the fuel pump and injector system which burns them up. My last fuel pump lasted all of two hundred miles, and then the mechanic who fixed it robbed me something fierce.

By the way, Christine and the children are fine. They are now in their second semester and learning continues. Pray for strength for all of them and a complete recovery in their health, as they continue to battle health issues. As for me, I have been the healthy one, which is a switch.

We appreciate your prayers, support, love, and care. May you remain faithful to our loving Savior who someday will reward His own with rewards that will never wear out nor break.

Sincerely,
Steve Henning

