

¡Hola from Cuernavaca, the city of eternal spring!

We didn't choose to study Spanish here simply because it's 84° during the middle of February, but it sure is a great perk. A profusion of bouganvilla and a lack of clouds don't hurt either..

We've been Mexican residents for almost two months now. Our life has changed so much in that time that we thought we'd send you a more descriptive update than we have space for in our monthly letters. We hope the enclosed photos also help give you an idea of what our life is like here.



Our team leader and his family (Steve, Jan, Nathan and Joel Griswell) greeted us with smiles and flowers at the Mexico City airport Jan. 1st. We spent our first week and a half with them in Toluca in the same room we'd stayed in last summer. What a great way to ease into living in a new country! During that time they also oriented us to the team and the basics of life in Mexico, like how to use buses, taxis, and public telephones.

Steve also walked us through our first day of LAMP-- Language Aquisition Made Practical-- a "pre-school approach to learning a language." "Pre-school" in the sense that we used it for a month before enrolling in full-time Spanish classes, and "pre-school" in the sense that we felt like pre-schoolers: "Hi, my name is Tim. I just arrived in Cuernavaca. I know almost no Spanish. Goodbye." LAMP consists of daily learning a few phrases -- for example, "How much does this cost? That is expensive. What is the cheapest price?" -- then using these phrases a lot until they feel natural. We also learn about the culture in the process.

After we moved to Cuernavaca we used this system for a month. Every day we met with a teacher from our language school, Cemanahuac, for an hour a day to learn our phrases. We spent most of the rest of the day practicing them, with our family and with people we met on the street. Some phrases were easy to use a lot. We're really experts at saying "*Buenos Dias*" to people we pass in the street. Others like "Careful, don't run because you might fall down" have a more limited use. Living with a Mexican family has been one of the most significant aids to learning both language and culture. You can read about the Martinez family in our March newsletter. In short, God has given us a comfortable living arrangement coupled with a window into one family's life and viewpoints.



The LAMP system gave us the opportunity to spend a lot of time getting to know the city and making observations about life here. It immersed us completely in Mexico, instead of the hybrid Mexican/American subculture of the language school. We could go for a week and not speak to anyone in English (but each other). But after a month we were ready for a more systematic approach. Now we're in Spanish classes at Cemanahuac from 9 to 1 every weekday. We each have only one or two other students in our class, which allows for lots of personal attention. Tim started in book one and I started in

book two. It's amazing how much of the basics I've forgotten since getting my major in Spanish almost 10 years ago!

Tim has made great progress since we've been here. When we arrived he thought he understood (got the sense of) about 60% of what was being said. Then after about three weeks he realized he only understood (knew the meaning of) about two words out of each sentence. Now he feels like he about 60% of the words in most slower because it is not as confident in using what I know also learned lots of new vocabulary, and reviewed lots of points. Although we are coming always be learning Spanish, we focus on learning it well now as highest.



understands, really understands, sentences. My progress feels marked. But I am much more than when we first came. I have vocabulary, including Mexican verb forms and grammatical to understand that we will are so grateful for this time to our learning curve is at its

During our Exit Orientation before we left the States we read an article by Don Larson that talked about the different arenas of culture for a missionaries: the culture at large, the national body of believers, and the mission. In each of these areas there are sub-arenas: the porch, where insiders meet outsiders; the living room, where hosts bring their guests; and the kitchen, where important stuff is "cooked up." Our long term goal is to become change agents/ cooks. However during this month we've been *in the street*, we're not even onto the porches yet.

In Cuernavaca all the streets Rarely can you see what lies mansion with exquisite gardens get behind the walls of the



are lined with 10 foot walls. behind them. It could be a or a series of shacks. We long to houses and the people.

Probably the hardest thing not having the meaningful having in our lives. I've traveled a lot in my life, but somehow moving has made family and friends seem further away.

about our time here has been relationships we're used to

Our teammates are a support system for us. We see or speak with them every other week at least. After our six or so months here studying Spanish we will move to Toluca, becoming more and more a part of the team "kitchen."

I think that within the Christian community it is fairly easy to move from the porch to the living room. There is a wonderful Christian teacher at our school who has invited us to her church, her small group, and has even introduced us to several leaders from her church, El Centro Cristiano, the largest church in town. We want to get a taste of what the evangelical community in general is like so we have not yet chosen a church to plug into. We've visited traditional, "historic" churches, Baptist and Presbyterian, as well as more innovative ones like the Centro Cristiano, and a "civic group" known as Amistad Cristiano (which isn't registered as a church to avoid government regulations.) We need lots of divine love and wisdom as we

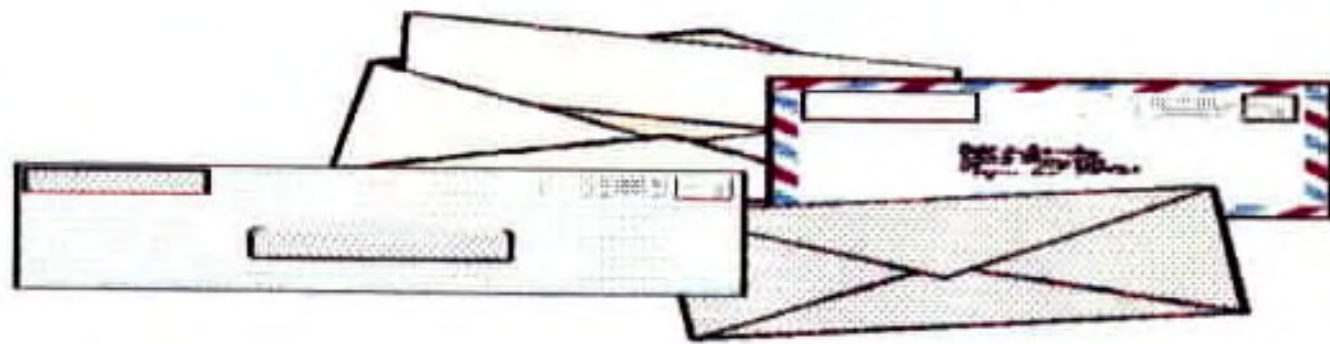
develop relationships with these brothers and sisters who are from such different cultures than us.



By living with a family we are in at least one living room of the non-Christian culture. The Martinezes represent well the religious world view that missiologist Roger Greenway calls "Urban New Age Pluralism." We are excited and honored because the maid in our house, Marina, has invited us to visit her house in a pueblo two and a half hours from here. Another living room!

There are so many stories and things we've learned that we'd love to tell. It's hard to sort through them all. I hadn't realized how much we had been absorbing and storing up until we were talking with some new students last week after school. For an hour or so we talked about the Virgin of Guadalupe, evangelical churches, and the state of Chiapas. We had just touched one area of all the many things we've found fascinating. I thought, wow I guess we've picked up quite a bit since we've been here.

We thank you for your prayers. Because we are out of our comfort zone so much, we feel our need for God's help even more than usual. We also feel a greater need to pray for you because we care so much about you but can't do anything else to express our gratitude and love.



Prayer Requests

Safety and Health-- -- Because of the economic crisis, crime has increased significantly in the last year. God has kept us perfectly safe every day and night. We feel much more dependent on Him because we don't know as well how to secure our lives as effectively as we do in the States. Health hazards are everywhere. Almost every week at least one of us has had some kind of minor health problem, but none of it has been incapacitating, "Gracias a Dios."

Language study-- It is fun, but it is also HARD WORK. There are so many things to think about at one time sometimes we think we'll never get it. Please pray that we will have dilligence, strength, and aptitude.

That we would Salt and Light -- At school with teachers and students, in the community, and at home with The Martinez family and Marina (their maid)

That we would know and share God's presence and love--As Henry Drummond says in "The Greatest Thing in the World," Missionaries can take nothing greater to the heathen world than the impress and reflection of the love of God upon their own character."

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FINANCES AND PRAYERS WHICH HELPED US GET HERE AND WHICH ARE HELPING US STAY HERE.

LOVE,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Annette". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial letter.