
Gulick Gazette

EL MOGOTE (continued from our May letter)



Tim with Marina, Daniella, and Monica.

... two days before our trip to El Mogote, we learned why Marina was nervous. She said, "Annette, my mother wants me to tell you that our family doesn't have water." I thought she meant pure bottled drinking water, "That's no problem. You just boil it, don't you?" "Well, we . . .", she was looking down at the ground uncomfortably, "I mean, we don't have running water or a bathroom in our house." "Oh, so you have an outhouse?" "No." I was puzzled, "So where do you go to the bathroom?" "In the CAMPO." (Spanish for countryside or field.) This was our first experience in a house with no facilities at all. Even after our visit we remained puzzled about the protocol of this situation because around Marina's house there are only nopal cactus and thorn trees, nothing that provides any sort of "cover." Fortunately, our stay was only about 24 hours. We used the campo on hikes that took us beyond the view of any family members or neighbors.

Although El Mogote is only about 50 miles from Cuernavaca, the bus ride was two and one half hours. When we arrived at her house, Marina pointed towards a guy sitting watching T.V. and said,

"That's my brother." We greeted him, never hearing his name. Then she took us through a doorway into the room where we were to sleep. The first thing we noticed was a three-foot-high pile of dried corn kernels filling a third of the room. Every morning one of the girls takes some corn to the mill so they can make the day's tortillas. And these tortillas are GOOD. The difference between store bought tortillas and homemade ones is like the difference between Wonder Bread and homemade bread! Everyone in the family was perfectly nice, but no one really paid much attention to us. It seems the hospitality etiquette is different in El Mogote. Soon after we arrived, we went on a walk up a hill behind the house. When we got back and asked for Marina, her mother told us she had gone to visit her married sister. We had no idea what to do in El Mogote. We spent the evening watching Mexican live wrestling on T.V. with whichever family member happened through the room. It was rather surrealistic. We did talk with them some. But a lot of the vocabulary was new for us — for example types of birds they hunt — so we didn't always understand what they were saying, which was embarrassing. And the family didn't ask us any questions. So we sat watching wrestling. We had planned on attending church (the only one in town is Catholic) with them on Sunday. But the priest lives in another city and has to perform mass in several churches each Sunday, so the service wasn't until two o'clock in the afternoon. In order to get back home before evening we left before the service.



As well as learning Spanish, we've been learning Mexican history and culture; trying to understand who they are as a people and why.

As I think back on our trip we didn't get to know the family or even life in the town as we had hoped. But now we have experienced another Mexican way of life. According to the 1990 census, 20 percent of the population of Mexico lives like Marina's family with dirt floors and no running water. The trip made us consider deeply what makes life worth living. Are running water, meat, education, and employment what enrich our lives? Is being comfortable synonymous with being happy? Never before had I appreciated that the man who said, "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12:15b) didn't have running water, or a high school diploma, or even a house. Even so, He did leave us advice about material needs, "The pagan world runs after such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom and these things will be given to you, as well" (Luke 12:30).

Thanks for your support and prayers as we seek His kingdom.

Anette