

10-Second Update

- * Our trip was safe and productive; thanks for your prayers.
- * It's a tough choice between Mexico and Brazil. We'll let you know as soon as we know.
- * Interesting stories from each country inside . . . if you have more than 10 seconds.

Our trip ended with a BANG -- a 37-hour journey home which included three custom checks and left us a teeny bit tired. Thanks for your prayers for safety, energy, and health during our trip. They made a difference.

As Annette and I look back at our time with both the Mexico and Brazil teams, we've come to at least one conclusion: the visit gave us enough information to make our decision; it just didn't make it easier. We arrived back in the US less than a week ago. Odd as it seems, in order for you to be reading this in October, I have to send it to the printers by the first of September. So as I write we are trying to make this BIG decision. This includes praying for clear guidance, making lists of pros and cons for both

countries, getting counsel from friends and family, and basically trying to choose where we will likely spend a good portion of our life. Not to mention where we'll raise our children (no . . . nothing to announce; we're just trying to look ahead. ☺)

To give you a flavor of our trip, I thought I'd share a few "snapshots." In Mexico we were given the opportunity to speak to a youth group (I had a translator. Annette spoke in Spanish). It was both fun and enlightening. The group seemed sincerely attentive to what we *gringos* had to say. They reminded me of youth groups we've worked with here and in Africa. Which gives credence to what one youth specialist said, the average 14-year-old seems to have more in common with a 14-year-old in any major city of the world, than he does with his parents. One major difference between this Mexican youth group and one in the US showed up in the mix of ages present. The 25 *jovenes* we spoke with in this group spanned from 12 to 30 years of age. The term *jovenes* is the closest Spanish equivalent to our word "youth." But in Mexico it includes any non-married person who is no longer a little child. In the same group we had giggling junior-highers and a mature dentist. Another difference was that the youth group meeting was exactly the same as a Sunday morning service, even down to the pastoral prayer and an offering. Afterwards a special get-together had been organized so that Annette and I could hear from the *jovenes* about their opinions and felt needs. This gave us some insight into what the church is and isn't doing to reach them and their non-Christian peers.



Mexico City -- the largest city in the world.



Experiencing the crowded markets during our time in Brazil. With us is our translator, Danny Kornfield, son of OC missionaries.

Our second “snapshot” comes from Brazil. The OC team gathers together each month for a social event. We got to be part of this fun team time and ended up being the recipients of quite a show. After a potluck dinner, the 30 of us (teammembers and their families) gathered around in a big circle. Each family, couple, or single person had been given the assignment of entertaining and recruiting the two of us. A couple of families did rap songs telling us something about themselves. One veteran missionary couple wrote a take-off on “*Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*” in which they enumerated reasons why we should join the Brazil team. Not only did they make us feel welcome, but they proved that they know how to enjoy themselves.

Both OC teams -- Brazil and Mexico -- are great. We truly enjoyed all the missionaries we met. Each one impressed us as a quality person who strives to serve God and His people diligently. On the down side, Mexico City and São Paulo -- the first and third largest cities in the world respectively -- are polluted, crime-ridden, and a bit scary.

However, Christian leaders in both countries personally stated to us a need for development of youth ministry in their land. In Mexico 72 percent of the evangelical church is under 30 years of age. In Brazil a recent survey showed youth ministry as the third most requested area of need according to pastors. Maybe from this you can sense why this isn't an easy decision for us.

By the time you receive this letter we will have chosen either Mexico or Brazil. We will try to let you know our decision as soon as possible . . . maybe you've received it already.

With so much change in our life, we want you to know that one constant is our appreciation of your interest and prayers for us.

For Christ and His kingdom,

Tim & Annette

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