

Family Business Meeting

2018 Mexico Mission Trip Overview

In July of 2018 DRC sent a team of 9 people to Mexico for a 1-week short term mission trip. The 9 team members were Rick Allen, Joanna Tang, Anthony Sims, Toyosi Busari, Pastor Tony Shen, Noah Shen, Kristina Santos, Marcelo Pinell, and me. The central focus of the trip was to come alongside local churches and local pastors to support them in their efforts to engage their local communities. After much consideration, we made arrangements with 2 local pastors to work with for the week. Our base of operations was Yugo Ministries in Ensenada. Prior to arriving they were vital to helping us make connections with local pastors. While we were in Mexico, the facilities of Yugo Ministries were our base of operations and where we slept and ate our meals.

The first pastor we worked with was engaged in an outreach to the elderly population. Unlike in America, if the elderly are not cared for by their families, they are left to fend for themselves financially, physically, and emotionally. The local pastor that we worked with has a ministry that feeds, clothes, provides exercise, games, love, support, and much more to this community.

The second pastor we worked with asked that we spend a week teaching a biblical view of marriage to married couples from his congregation and the larger community. During the training we also cared for the children of the couples in attendance. We were honored that this pastor would trust us with the responsibility of proclaiming God's Words to his flock, especially something as important as marriages, which as Ephesians 5:32 tells us is a direct reflection of the relationship Christ has to His church.

On the next few pages you can read through Pastor Tony's Facebook updates that he gave as the week progressed.

On a more personal note, this trip was an encouragement and blessing for me as the one who has been given the task of leading our local church in engaging the nations. Seeing members of our church step outside their comfort zone and perform tasks they had never performed, all in the name of obeying Christ and glorifying our Father in Heaven, was rejuvenating for my soul.

Some highlights for me were watching a married couple, Rick and Joanna, stand together and proclaim a Biblical view of marriage; seeing Anthony, who has a heart for the Latin community, engage with his Mexican brothers and sisters in their own language even though he's still learning it himself; and witnessing Pastor Tony and his teenage son Noah serving side by side. In addition I was encouraged by Marcelo as he labored for hours to make sure he translated our material in the most precise and meaningful way to those listening; by Kristina who spent many hours over the week showing genuine compassion and love for the elderly men and women we served even though they were strangers to her; and by Toyosi who was willing to serve joyfully in whatever capacity she was called to, which included confidently and effectively teaching the Bible even though she had never done it in this setting before.

I thank God for these men and women, and for all of you in our church as you prayed and supported us in our efforts. May God continue to be glorified as we seek to obey the commission given to our church.

Brian Criscuolo
Missional Director

DRC Mexico Missions Trip 2018

Daily Updates from Pastor Tony Shen

Team Mexico, travel day and Day 1 (July 30, 2018)

By God's Grace we had an uneventful trip from DRC after 1st service across the border and straight to Ensenada at Yugo Ministries. This is our overnight base of operations, where we are staying with about 120 other people from 7 other U.S. churches. While they are focused on building houses for low-income local church members, we are teaching married couples about biblical marriage and caring for the elderly, working with two local churches.

Day 1, we visited Casa del Abuelo to engage the elderly with arts and crafts. Rick Allen gave his testimony of God's grace and Jesus' work on his life. Marcelo Pinell translated, as he will do for all of us all week. We brought coloring sheets, oven pads to make on looms, jigsaw puzzles, Scrabble pieces to glue onto picture frames, and origami.

In the evening, we headed to Arca de Noe (Noah's Ark) church. A fantastic home-cooked meal was followed by the first two lessons on marriage by Kristina Mae Santos and Anthony Sims. The lessons were very well received. The rest of us entertained the kids of the 20 couples in attendance with bubbles, soccer balls, and bouncy balls. Rick and Toyosi and Kristina learned the Spanish version of the kids' song "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" ("Cabeza, Hombros, Rodillas y Pies")

Brian Criscuolo has done a masterful job making arrangements, preparing the materials and the team, and leading the expedition. We are looking forward to our 9th team member Joanna joining us tomorrow. Keep us in your prayers as we continue teaching God's Word and preaching the gospel.

Team Mexico, Day 2 (July 31, 2018)

Back to Casa del Abuelo, where there were twice as many guests as yesterday. It was a full house of about 70 elderly friends. They made bean mosaics and made some more coloring pages and hot pads. I had the honor of glorifying our Lord by sharing my testimony.

In the evening at Arca de Noe, we were treated once again to a home cooked meal: fresh fish caught by Pastor Angel and deep fried by him in the church backyard. Then it was Toyosi Busari's turn to teach, and she got much love including a kiss from one of the wives. Marcelo Pinell concluded the evening with his first-ever sermon in Spanish. Truly a disciple of Pastor Matt, he went an hour and fifteen minutes - without translation. (The rest of us have been less than an hour with translation.) He was on fire! The rest of us tried to control the chaos with about 20 kids. Rick Allen learned a new game he is calling Dodgeball-Tag.

Prayers for Day 3: for Brian Criscuolo as he prepares to preach at Arca de Noe, and for Rick and Joanna and me as we prepare our lessons for Thursday and Friday. For our continued health and unity. For the gospel to penetrate hearts and change lives as we minister. Thank you, church!

Team Mexico, Day 3 (August 1, 2018)

Today we welcomed our 9th team member, Joanna Tang, who boarded a 2AM bus in downtown Los Angeles in order to arrive at 6AM in Tijuana, where loving husband Rick Allen drove to pick her up and drive her to Ensenada, from which he had left at 4AM. What dedication!

In the morning at Casa del Abuelo, we introduced beads and twine for making bracelets. We struggled with tying the knots in the rubbery twine, but we managed. We also struggled to make use of our hot glue gun because there is no electricity in Casa del Abuelo; burglars have broken in repeatedly and stolen many materials including the copper wiring that enabled the electricity. Anthony Sims gave his testimony, a testament to God's grace.

After a delicious taco feast for lunch, we took the afternoon at the beach to cool off. Anthony Sims took some convincing, but in the end he was glad he joined us.

The evening service at Arca de Noe was their usual Wednesday evening bible study. This week, Brian Criscuolo preached his sermon on Philippians 2. The congregation was edified. Praise God for a job well done!

Prayers for Day 4: Rick Allen and Joanna Tang teach on biblical headship and submission in marriage in the evening. Continued diligence by the rest of us. Strength for Marcelo Pinell, who is carrying the brunt of the labor in translating for all of us.

Team Mexico, Day 4 (August 2, 2018)

On Thursday, we again served the elderly at Casa del Abuelo. The project today was chalk drawings on black construction paper. Several of the other elderly chose to continue with bean mosaics, making pot holders on looms, and coloring sheets. In addition, the pastor who runs the program also plays a form of bingo with them (to keep their minds sharp). Marcelo and Anthony, the Spanish speakers, pitched in to call out the words, which are matched to the corresponding pictures. The program also includes some gentle calisthenics (to keep their bodies active). Lastly, the program also includes lunch, so the rest of us served bowls of stew, tortillas, and tea. Toyosi graced us with her testimony of God's power in her life.

In the evening, we were back at Arca de Noe church. It was Rick and Joanna's turn to teach. Rick started with a lesson on biblical headship for husbands, and Joanna concluded the evening with her lesson on the call of wives to biblical submission. Attendance has been staying strong at 17 couples or 35-40 individuals. Marcelo was able to add much appreciated cultural insight from a Latino perspective. Afterwards we stayed longer than usual to field some questions. These biblical lessons are making husbands and wives consider how to be conformed to God's Word.

In between, we had time to visit La Bufadora (blowhole). It was quite impressive - when the swell surges in, the spray was reaching 30-40 feet. Also making quite an impression was the long line of tourist trap vendor stalls selling lots of different knick-knacks and food. Not all of the items were kid-friendly or even adult-friendly, so we had to avert our eyes when walking by.

We also enjoyed a delicious lunch of tacos at a local restaurant. Alas, our enjoyment was short-lived. It seems that some of the food was problematic, because several of us had digestive problems overnight. As a whole, however, we are not suffering too badly.

Please keep us in your prayers. For our health, of course, but also for Kristina and Joanna as they give their testimonies, and Brian Criscuolo and me as we teach about divorce and remarriage, and sex in marriage.

Team Mexico, Day 5 (August 3, 2018)

On Friday, we visited the elderly one last time, then we went to Arca de Noe so Brian could teach on divorce and remarriage, and Tony could teach on sex in marriage.

After we returned to Yugo, we decided hastily to drive through the night so we could get home to our friends and family. We started driving at 9:30pm. There was a long backup at the U.S.-Mexico border, but we eventually arrived home at 1:30am. Praise God for an edifying and fruitful trip.