

February/March 2023

Dear supporters, friends, family members, greetings from Mexico City!

Finishing well

The last time we sent out our prayer letter was late November. So much has happened since then! Let's start with the end of Reconnect:

I (Dave) went to the Dominican Republic for a few days for strategy meetings for the mission, and then took some vacation time to do some reading and writing in Grand Rapids. Blanca went to North Carolina to visit her niece (and her mother, who was there to visit).



Lively Haitian church service in the DR

Snowstorms delayed our Christmas, but we had good times with my family and at church. Then we did our last Reconnect visit on January 1, at LaGrave Ave CRC.

End-of-Reconnect packing and cleaning house is always grueling, but the fruit came on January 7, when we flew back to Mexico City and were welcomed by our kids, Daniel and Alexandra, and our dog Muffin. January was a time of special family moments: Christmas as a family, Daniel's birthday, and a trip to one of the largest floral gardens in the world.

Dave and Blanca Gifford In Mexico City with

Resonate
GLOBAL MISSION

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Ladies' corner

By ladies I mean first of all Blanquita, who is beginning to look at starting up the evangelistic kids club soon. In the meantime she has been busy ministering to the ladies at our church and other friends of hers from other churches, as well as getting back into the rhythm of our household here in Mexico. Please pray for her as she gets the kids club started up again.

Another lady worth mentioning is Kayla Johnson. She is a young lady from Michigan who will be joining us in May and June as a volunteer. We are excited to have her with us soon. Please pray for her as she raises support and prepares to come. Let us know if you are interested in sponsoring her.

And finally, the other ladies to mention are the single female missionaries, mostly Mexican, who will be coming over this Friday night for supper and games. We enjoy this fun way to show our support for these servants of God.

Gaining traction

I had hoped to jump right into my new ministry of networking in Mexico City, but roadblocks had to be cleared first:

- January and February are the heaviest months for me as Mexico team leader: budgets, plans, taxes, grant distributions, reporting – all that fun stuff you like to read about in missionary prayer letters.
- In February my energy was sapped by seasonal allergies and CPAP problems.

But God is good. And I am starting to see that what I am doing this year is exactly what is needed. I have already gotten enthusiastic responses from leaders of various ministries to what I am doing this year. The focus of my networking is an online directory of projects run by Christian churches and organizations that are looking for volunteers from churches in Mexico City. The projects can be evangelistic or humanitarian in nature. The goal is that Christians here will use the directory and volunteer to serve in the projects listed there. Churches helping each other and helping the

ministry organizations looking for volunteers. Please pray for this endeavor.

A personal comment

All pastors serve as bridges between the world of the Bible and the world of today. My ministry of teaching New Testament, preaching and producing web materials has been weighted more heavily toward the biblical world. Which is great, and I love it.

But this new ministry I am involved in has gotten me out and more in touch with what the Lord is doing around us in the here and now. And that has already been refreshing!

- I met with a couple who are ministering to migrants and to prostitutes.
- I visited a church full of young people with music so loud that I left the service early with my ears ringing.
- At another church I heard testimonies of changed lives from men who had just returned from a men's retreat.
- I took part in an evangelistic English club on a university campus of 340,000 students.
- I zoomed with leaders of a ministry that does community education, financial services, violence prevention programs and emergency services in several parts of Mexico.
- And I visited a ministry center that runs a coffee shop, a publishing house, training programs, and several other ministries.

I have to confess it led to a crisis of confidence on my part. Look at what all these Mexican Christians are doing! And me? Am I really looking at merely creating an online directory and visiting churches and leaders?

But they didn't see it that way. I could see their enthusiasm as I shared my plans to encourage Christians to get involved in evangelism and benevolent projects. The leaders of ministry organizations I met with are hungry for volunteers. They thanked me for what I am doing. Not many people here have the time or the technical ability to create an ambitious online directory like this. And not many have the freedom or comfort level to visit churches of very different persuasions and perspectives to promote involvement in word and deed ministries.



Not to be outdone, these Mexican Christians also have a lively church service

My experience so far has even sent me back to the "biblical world" I mentioned earlier. It has increased my desire to provide free Spanish materials on the New Testament, Christian living, and ministry topics.

Thank you to everyone who contributes by prayers and financial support so that we get to be a part of this. We are at 67% of our annual goal. It is much harder to measure prayer support levels! But we got a letter recently from someone who said "I pray for you every day." You can't imagine what that means to us to read words like that. Thank you!

Speaking of prayer...

Please pray for a few other things:

- My trip to Ciudad Juárez, March 1-2
- The trip Blanca and I will take to Belize March 9-13 for the annual regional spiritual retreat
- For Blanca's family, many of whom would like to visit us in May, but some are facing hurdles getting time off and getting passports and visas in order.

Thank you all for your prayers, financial support, and words of encouragement. God bless you all in Christ Jesus!

Dave, Blanca, Daniel and Alexandra Gifford