

## Homes that change the world

September 2020

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

Seeing how much has changed since our June prayer letter, and how much changed between the June letter and the previous February letter, I dread to wonder what things will be like by the time we write our December letter...

- Mexico is firmly entrenched as one of the countries with the highest COVID statistics, and the neighborhood of the seminary and church is one of the hot spots.
- We have moved from “let’s just stay put and ride this out for a few months” to “this is our new reality, let’s see how to respond to it”.
- I had to turn off notifications for Twitter and Facebook and do some ‘unfollowing’ to get some relief from all the smug, angry posts.
- We alternate between “All Zoomed out” and “Feeling disconnected and left out”.
- At times we wonder why we don’t just do ministry from Michigan. It feels as if we traveled to be here in Mexico City but now we can’t take the last step of the journey to be physically present with people here.
- We now wonder what photos to include, if any, in our prayer letters: photos of our house? The “Brady Bunch squares” of Zoom meetings?
- If the world situation weren’t enough, I also had a major setback: A couple weeks ago I discovered that the file I used for the seminary library database was corrupted. I figured out what happened, and now I am transferring the 5800 entries, one by one, into a new, safer file.

But there is also much positive, and we are grateful to be able to see the Lord at work.

**Dave and Blanca Gifford  
In Mexico City with**



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- After my initial shock and dismay about the library database, the Lord lifted my head up again, and now I am upbeat about it. The new version will be better than the old one in 6 or 7 different ways, including the possibility of adding photos for each entry at a later date.
- Blanca has had numerous opportunities to minister to church members, family members, and others with phone calls and WhatsApp messages.
- The COMPA university ministry adjusted quickly to the new reality, and invited me to participate in three Zoom trainings of various lengths since April. Invigorating experiences.
- The Lord provided three new students for the seminary, and I am teaching them in one course and teaching three others in another, all by Zoom.
- We have enjoyed helping church members and others with “despensas” (pantry donations).
- Working from home is good for my introverted personality – I have enjoyed preaching and teaching by Zoom, and preparing a heap of free Spanish materials. Regarding the latter, I have been focusing on the Gospels, but am also preparing materials on the literary features of the Bible and transformational worldview. I have received positive feedback on the sessions and the materials. The Lord is multiplying our

offerings of fish and bread, despite the lack of face-to-face connection.

- I also continue to get positive feedback from Stroll, the notetaking app I created earlier in the year.
- I was invited to teach Sunday school this month on How to change habits, and I am enjoying being able to integrate biblical insights with psychological insights.
- In July we visited our colleagues James and Barbarita in Queretaro, and were encouraged by our time with them.
- Monse, our good friend from the CUR university ministry, just left for California to study at Westminster Seminary, and our friends Uri and Carmen are in Michigan, where Uri is studying at Calvin Seminary.
- Despite financial setbacks, you, our supporters, have been very generous. We finished the fiscal year with nearly 100% of support, and currently have 12% since July. Thank you! *(but: we are already behind, so we value your continued support gifts! See the link at <https://giffmex.org> to Resonate's online giving page for us)*
- On the family front, our son Daniel's foot has healed, and while stir craziness hits us once in a while, we continue to be COVID-free. *(but: we value your prayers for our health, as we each have our ongoing health concerns. See our prayer requests at the link just mentioned)*
- And God continues to use our Pomeranian, Muffin, to lift our spirits with her fluffy, silly antics.

I entitled this prayer letter "Homes that change the world." I find it interesting that in one way, we are closer to the early church, in that we have been taken from our big church buildings and put back in our homes. I think that is a healthy shake-up sent from God. But in another way, we are further from the early church, since for most of us

we aren't able to *meet together* in homes. So this is a new challenge.

When I read the news or sneak a peek at social media, I get cynical and sad. So many Christians on both sides are buying into the polarization by believing and posting everything that people on their side of the political divide are feeding them. But when I read the book of Acts, I see our time in a new light, and I get a sense that this could be a time of great positive change:

- Imagine Christians wearing physical masks yet unmasking themselves to reveal Christ in them.
- Imagine Christians overcoming the distance between us while still practicing social distancing.
- Imagine us overcoming political, racial, sexual and economic divides around us by our oneness in Christ Jesus.
- Imagine Christians actually expanding their impact, all the while reducing and limiting their mobility. Imagine having a worldwide impact, from the confines of your home.

It won't happen until we set Netflix and Cable aside long enough to dig deeper into God's Word. Until we stop sharing smug, hurtful memes and humbly pray with open and teachable hearts. Until we look beyond our own problems and ask what it means to love our neighbors more fully in a virus-infested, economically shaken election year.

It seems unimaginable. But is it impossible? With God, nothing is impossible.

*Hallelujah! Thine the glory.*

*Hallelujah, amen.*

*Hallelujah! Thine the glory - revive us again!*

*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**