

DIVINE ADVENTURE

Christmas 2015 | Newsletter #30 Matthew & Jennifer Allen U.S. 1.858.610.8890 | mtnbikesd@mac.com

Merry Christmas from Southern California! It's the first Christmas letter mailed from north of the border in a while, and it is sent with many mixed emotions. Our family dearly misses our beloved Honduras and our friends there, yet we cannot help but praise the Lord for His goodness to us through this transition. We are so thankful for the many friends we have across the U.S. and Central America, and we'd love to have an update from each one of you as well!



After packing up our belongings and saying good-byes in Honduras the last week of June, Matthew had a few weeks to spend with family before starting his job in mid-July. Through divine intervention, he was offered a job at a company called Medimpact as a business process analyst, in a similar role to what he had previously done before we had lived in Honduras. After 9 years of being away from San Diego, the Lord brought us back to the place we began our marriage and our 2 oldest boys were born. It has been great fun to visit places that had been special to us during the 9 years we lived here - and to share those memories with the boys, from beaches to bike trails to spending Thanksgiving in the snow in the outlying mountains. Rekindling old friendships has also been a great blessing and encouragement to us, and we are thankful that we do not feel like we are completely starting over from nothing. Let us fill you in on the boyz...

Simon is a third grader at Westwood Elementary, which is the same school Joshua attended for kindergarten and 1st grade. We live one block away so he is the only one who gets to walk to school. He is adjusting well to the school here, although some of the curriculum is very different than how he received instruction in Honduras. Since he came from overseas and presented a birth certificate from Costa Rica, the school district was required to administrate an English proficiency exam, and we all got a lot of laughs upon receipt of a letter informing us that Simon is in fact "fluent in English". Wow! The kid is so articulate and can express his wit and critical thinking in English and Spanish like a little man.



Samuel is a 6th grader at Bernardo Heights Middle school and is doing as well as can be expected to adjusting to junior high at a school with over 1,500 students from nationalities and walks of life that make your head spin. Samuel is managing a new schedule and rigorous homework assignments well, while stepping up to the responsibilities given to him. We are also thankful for the the fact that he is growing in his faith and see that in his care for people. We are proud of Samuel for making good choices regarding the few friendships he has started. His first friend was a Mexican boy, and Samuel surprised him at first by speaking with him in Spanish!

Joshua is in 11th grade and after a valiant effort at adjusting to a public high school with over 3,000 students and some strange teaching philosophies, we made the choice to enroll him in a charter school. The charter school is in the nearby city of Escondido, and Joshua uses his city bus pass to go up to the school for Chemistry lab and a few times during the week at his choosing. The rest of his studies he does at home or from the library. (All of the boys love going to the library to check out books- if you've ever lived outside the US, you can't take free access to books for granted!) Joshua also got a job working at a restaurant called Soup Plantation (Sweet Tomatoes in Illinois) as a a greeter. He is working about 14 hours each week and learning a lot about financial stewardship.



Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity
and passing over transgression
for the remnant of his inheritance?
He does not retain his anger forever,
because he delights in steadfast love.
He will again have compassion on us;
he will tread our iniquities underfoot.
You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.
Micah 7:18-19

Divine Appointments

Our experiences over the last decade have allowed us to live out the Gospel in numerous contexts. As we return from “the missions field”, it is increasingly evident that where we’ve landed is every bit as much of a mission field as Honduras. Our neighbors, co-workers, and classmates are from the four corners of the earth and have come to America with their own gods. Others park next to us with “COEXIST” bumper stickers, and there is no shortage of ‘live for the moment’ ideologies.

We’re still in the throes of culture shock, but it’s amazing to observe the culture of SoCal in view of Scripture. Our family has been slowly moving through a book called “Thriving in Babylon” by Larry Osbourne, a local pastor here in San Diego. The book uses the life and ministry of Daniel as a case study on how to honor God, live out the Gospel in a pagan society, and respect the seemingly undeserving leaders that God has allowed to rule over us. My prayer in leading our family through this is that we will understand that since Daniel’s day, God’s righteous remnant has been instructed to worship Him alone, submit to authority, and invite others to know the Salvation offered through the God of Israel and His Son. Of course, the parallels between life in Babylon and the United States are obvious, and God’s Word is more relevant now than ever for His people. We are thankful that as we install ourselves here, we have found a few of the Remnant. Our family has experienced the love of the Gospel from the Church here. I thank God for rekindled friendships from years ago, and building new relationships with those who, like us, have found our identity and citizenship in Christ alone. I also thank God that in looking at various texts about the seasons His people must spend in “Babylon”, they are always followed with promises of His deliverance and forgiveness for His people and some of those they are surrounded by. The book of Micah foretold of the time Israel would spend in the Babylonian captivity (4:10), and followed this up with precious promises, like those to be fulfilled through the Christ-child, born in Bethlehem (5:2). How amazing is this link between the troubled times of life in Babylon and the deliverance promised in Christ Jesus!

Investing in Kingdom Work

We are delighted to see that our brothers from the Tegucigalpa church are taking some steps to continue constructing a worship facility in El Tizatillo. The church now meets there every Sunday, which is a huge answer to prayer.

Our family is glad that God has provided a new job for me so that we can contribute in some small way to the many financial needs we observed in the Honduran church. As the church asks the Lord for financial provision to continue construction, Jennifer and I have felt led to help Melvin and Carol purchase a new vehicle. But we cannot meet this need alone, and want to share this unique Kingdom investment opportunity with you.

Melvin and Carol serve the Lord and His people faithfully by delivering Gospel radio programming all over the rugged map of Honduras, hauling construction materials to Casitas, transporting sick church members to the city to receive care, and demonstrating pastoral care in a way I’ve never seen before. Given the complications of travel in Honduras, it is so important that the Zelayas have safe and reliable transportation. It’s fair to say (and those who have come to visit us can vouch for this) that roads take a toll on the cars and drivers, and the behaviors of other drivers obligate you to have a car with good brakes, good lights, and the ability to respond quickly! It’s quite literally a life or death issue. For this reason, we really want to get Melvin into a new car. Last year, about \$10,500 was donated through Spanish World Ministries towards the purchase of a new vehicle. Cars in Honduras cost about 30% MORE than a car in the US because of taxes and transport costs, so the goal is about \$30,000! Would you please prayerfully consider making a tax-deductible donation to help provide Melvin - a faithful servant of God - with a new means of transportation?



Any gifts* to support Pastor Melvin and the pastoral team of El Camino de La Vida or donations towards a new ministry vehicle can be sent through Spanish World Ministries.

Give on-line @
www.spanishworld.org
or via mail.



Spanish World Ministries
P.O. Box 542
Winona Lake, IN 46590

*All gifts are tax-deductible per IRS guidelines.