

JANUARY 2025

# HAL & CHERYL LARGE

## SERVING THE LORD IN GUATEMALA

Dear Praying Friends,

As Cheryl and I were preparing with our new church for its upcoming Vacation Bible School outreach, the Lord spoke to me from 1 Thessalonians 2:4-8 in a way that was both encouraging and challenging.

“But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness – God is our witness. Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others ... But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. So affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.”



We have been “approved” and called to share the gospel because of the righteousness of Christ and His suffering. It is not “...by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior” (Titus 3:5,6). We must speak in grace and obedient faith. We cannot put our confidence in our human abilities or have selfish motives. It isn’t about me. It isn’t about what other people think of me. Paul shared the gospel as fruit of his fear of God and dependance upon the Holy Spirit. It is our prayer that as we live and minister here in Guatemala, the children and adults will be drawn to the Savior who loves them and gave His life for them. We are encouraged because we are approved and called by His grace. We are challenged to live in the presence of Christ and serve in the power of the Holy Spirit.



The church Cheryl and I are attending is a small group of believers who meet close to where we live. They are in the initial stages of planting a church. The pastor, Benjamín, started leading the group in February. The first week of December, we did a Vacation Bible School outreach to the surrounding communities. It was wonderful to be part of a family of believers who came together, each participating as they could, to reach not only the children, but their parents as well with the gospel of Jesus Christ. During November, we met together as teachers, with Benjamín, for four weeks to prepare lessons, songs, and audiovisuals. The first Sunday of December, all the folks came together early to decorate the five cars of the congregation with balloons. With the sound system cranked up, we went out in parade to play songs and invite each of the three communities we visited to Vacation Bible School. At each community, everyone scattered out with invitations and candy for the kids.



Monday afternoon, the children began to arrive with many of the moms staying as well. We had an opening ceremony with songs, games, and a Bible lesson. Then the children were divided by age for a time of more personal instruction and application of the Bible story. We also had a memory verse and refreshments. I was teaching four or five young people from 12 to 15 years old along with the five or six moms who were there in the main meeting room. Both children and adults were very attentive. When we finished VBS, I was able to take three families home to the community nearest to our home. On Thursday, Cheryl made 80 sandwiches, which we served with cookies and a drink. Each day, someone from the church made refreshments and we all enjoyed the food.



VBS went from Monday to Friday. Sunday afternoon was the closing celebration with all the children and their parents. There were 12-14 adults who visited the church with their children. Many said they would be returning. Each class participated in the celebration, with songs and memory verses. There was a clear gospel message presented with a challenge to the adults to bring Christ into the home. Afterwards, there were two piñatas to break and candy to collect. VBS brought the whole church together in joyous celebration to bring the gospel to our closest neighbors. Please pray for a family we have met and are actively trying to bring to Christ. Efrain and Sara live about two miles from us with their three children and two grandchildren. We visited their home, had dinner with the family, and are in contact with them to meet again. They live near the church.



Cheryl and I were able to receive our residency papers. This permitted us to apply for and receive, two weeks later, our very important personal identification cards (DPI). With this card, we were able to obtain our Guatemalan drivers' licenses, formalize the bank account that we had opened with just our passports, and put our utilities accounts into our own name. We are close to being settled now into our new homeland.

As we are adapting to a new culture and country, Cheryl and I thank God for His calling in our life. We have been called to Jesus and to participate with Him in God's work of redemption by living and proclaiming the gospel, by His grace. We have been approved by God because we have come into Christ's righteousness, by faith. We are sustained by the Spirit of God who is in us. In this calling, all of those born of God are now being transformed into the image of Jesus as we grow in Him who is our Savior. How we need to walk in Him in these days in which we live! We walk by faith and in His promises (2 Peter 1:3):

“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through them we may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world.”

Thank you for your prayers for us,

*HAL AND CHERYL*



Would you partner to provide the support we must raise for the mission of World Reach to serve in Guatemala?

- Go to [world-reach.org/donate](http://world-reach.org/donate) to give once or set up monthly recurring gifts under the campaign for “Large”
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