

O C T O B E R - 2 0 1 9



SERVING THE LORD IN

# Latin America

News from Rev Dr Jonathan & Deaconess Cheryl Naumann



*Photo taken by Pastor Jonathan*

...in the "Metropolitan Cathedral of the Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary into the Heavens" located in Mexico City.

The abundance of gold in such cathedrals, here and in Spain, reminds us that the European conquistadors were often more interested in gold than in the lives of the native people they enslaved. Today people still make pilgrimages to various shrines, hoping in that way to win favor with God.

*"...desechemos las obras de las tinieblas,  
y revistámonos de las armas de la luz."*

*"...let us cast off the works of darkness and put on  
the armor of light" (Romans 13:12).*

Out of the window of the Uber in which I was riding through Mexico City, I saw a parade of taxis decorated with wreaths and crucifixes, and asked the driver, "¿Qué están haciendo?" (what are they doing?) He answered, "Chalma."

My cell phone translator came up with nothing for *chalma*, but later, searching the internet, I discovered that those taxis were taking pilgrims to the second (after Guadalupe) most important religious destination in Mexico: the shrine of *El Cristo Negro de Chalma*, or the Black Christ of Chalma.

This shrine contains a crucifix that is black because it is made of a rock called obsidian, used by the Aztecs to carve idols. The Spanish missionaries, who converted the Aztecs to Christianity, claimed in 1537 that an Aztec idol had been miraculously replaced by a crucifix, with the idol lying smashed to pieces at its feet.

Today in this mission field we encounter different idols that must be smashed to make way for Christ: the idols of self-importance, of modern technology, of promiscuity, and of materialism, to name a few.

The Christian reaction to the temptations that beset Latin America is to strive, with the help of God, to "cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light." How do we model this for those to whom we bring the Gospel? St. Paul advises in the next verse, "Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires." (Romans 13:12-14).

Our prayer - and we hope yours too - is that people here in Latin America will hear God's Word and be moved to faith in Jesus, so that they no longer revere and rely on idols, but worship the Lord Jesus Christ, for in Him alone they will find the light of Life. **As we continue to work toward this goal, we thank you for your part in making it possible!**

*Pastor Jonathan*



This autumn Santiago had frequent electricity outages and drought conditions that still affect water supplies. We are grateful that when the

cistern for our house was dry, we were able to purchase water from a water truck (above left). Pastor Jonathan has fun holding the water hose as it fills the cistern!



Dear friends in Christ,

It's always exciting for us to receive new missionaries on the field. Right now there are four women in the middle of their "orientation" period here in the DR. All of us here play a part in their field training and Pastor Jonathan leads them in daily devotions. One of the new gals, Stephanie, unfortunately twisted her ankle so badly that she needed a cast. We have the only home with a ground floor bedroom, so are enjoying Stephanie's company as a house guest for several weeks. Please do pray for fast and complete healing for her!

This month I am going to share an unusual opportunity God gave us to show His love to a young lady whom we will refer to as 'Anna'. Anna's personal story includes abuse from a young age, from which she escaped, only to be found by someone looking for vulnerable young women for human trafficking. A man of our acquaintance had assisted Anna in getting away from her enslavement, but he then became possessive of her and wanted to pursue a life with her instead of his wife. We, and others, recognized that Anna was once again in a situation where she needed to be freed from the demands of her most recent rescuer, who had moved her into his home and was becoming aggressive about "keeping" her. After prayer and consultation with others, Pastor and I realized that we were being called upon to help. I met Anna on a street corner at a set time and brought her to our home as a "safe house" for an afternoon. This took an amazing amount of trust on Anna's part to endure this scenario again! Lutheran missionaries, and Lutheran Christians brought to faith through the work of LCMS missionaries, assisted us with a safe place for Anna to live, and found employment for her. When Anna left our house, she was nervous and tearful, undoubtedly wondering if she was making the correct choice. You can imagine my joy, and the joy in Pastor Jonathan's voice, when he told me that in traveling to one of our LCMS mission sites, he had seen Anna in attendance at worship! She greeted him warmly and he was later told that she will soon be starting class to become a member of the mission congregation! God DOES think and work in ways that are higher than our own! (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Another cause for joy in October was the Mercy Center conference in Madrid, Spain, which focused on "Every One His Witness" and was attended by 45 adults and five teens, coming from 18 different areas of Spain. Though I coordinate these conferences for the region, I rely on missionaries in other countries to carry out the logistics, using our materials and trained teachers. As God wills, your LCMS mission congregations will continue to grow when their members focus on bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to more and more people!

*Please include in your prayers*

+ Thanksgiving for progress in obtaining visas for several of our seminary students + That God would protect and encourage all LCMS missionaries working in the field, and also those who support their work, that the Gospel may be spread throughout the world, according to the will of God; + Thanksgiving for the Mercy Center Conference in Spain on the topic of Evangelism + That God will raise up more men from the LAC region to serve as pastors in our Lutheran missions and partner church bodies; + That God rescued "Anna" from a desperate life of slavery; and that she may continue to grow in the faith that has been engendered in her heart through the hearing of God's Word and the love shown to her in the name of Jesus. + That God will grant safe travels to Pastor Jonathan as he goes to Puerto Rico and Spain in November



Above: Missionary, Stephanie Wilde, in our home; Below: Deaconess Cheryl at the Pueblo Nuevo mission, with the wife of one of our new seminary students.



**Thank you for your support of our work through your prayers and financial gifts!**

In Christ, *Deaconess Cheryl*

Below: Pastor David Warner teaching at the Mercy Center conference in Madrid, Spain. October 11-13, 2019.



**Tax-deductible gifts to support the work of Jonathan & Cheryl Naumann can be given:**

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