



Dearest Ones in Christ Jesus,

With God's grace in our lives, how could we not be grateful?

Gracias is the Spanish word for "Thanks". And thankful we are for cooler weather.

Receiving God's blessings also means that we are indebted to Him.

Attitudes so often precede actions.

Taking time to remember God's goodness is not just good; it is also necessary.

Eternal matters are important; therefore, we aim for what is in heaven.

Faithfulness from God is a daily blessing we appreciate and praise for.

Ultimately, happiness in life is not about what we have, but about what we enjoy.

Living with gratitude is much better than living with greatness.

Yes, it is finally cooling down here. Now it's all the way down to 95 degrees! Well, it sure beats 105. And for that, we are very thankful. Being grateful to God means that we are also indebted to God. As such, we serve His children at Maranatha and in Cuba.

Our ministry is not complete without trials, but the biblical exhortation is to "*give thanks in all circumstances*" must be above our unpleasant experiences.

Family First: God continues to be gracious to us in our marriage and every member of the family included... **and even one more.** On our family Thanksgiving weekend, Priscilla will be bringing a young man for us to talk with. This, of course, is a brand new experience for us all.

Maranatha Matters: In the midst of many ministry changes, with our youth pastor moving into a Christian radio station, we at church are adjusting and stretching to cover areas, even as I continue to do pre-marital, as well as marriage counseling, visits, facilitators' training for small groups and other needs. We had a great baptism



Four precious ones just fresh out of baptism waters.

service on Sunday, October 2, baptizing Connie Perez, Daniela and Gracia Gomez and Alberto Garza. You may remember about a year ago I wrote about Ruffy, Connie's

mother, with a severe depression after her husband's marriage betrayal and then sudden car accident death, leaving the family completely shattered. The Lord is doing a great work in the hearts of her mother and her younger brother. Daniela and Gracia are great young sisters who are taking music lessons from their dad as they eagerly wait to be officially part of the praise team, including Connie. Alberto came to

faith in Christ a few months ago at Maranatha. I meet with him every Tuesday morning and he follows me constantly to several small group Bible studies. He is hungry for the Word and is devouring solid Christian literature as well as the Bible that he has on his smart phone. What a joy to baptize him also. Saúl & Diana Berrones came to faith in Christ Jesus not long ago, but although they had been living together for a number of years and have 3 children, they were not married. He approached me a couple of months ago and told me that now in Christ, he wanted to do the right thing and marry the mother of his children... and so they did. God was glorified in their wedding ceremony and many were deeply touched as Saúl, with eyes swelled up with tears and with a broken voice shared that although he started life the wrong way, he wanted to do things right.



Saúl & Diana doing the right thing.

Cuba Calls: The Lord greatly blessed us this year in going twice to Cuba. My first trip took place in February to Las Tunas, on the eastern part of the island nation. My dear friend Bill Marietta went with and together with ministered to about 80 pastors. Then in July, Steve Roderick from Frontier School of the Bible and I led a group from that school to a church in El Bejucal, near Havana, and then to Pinar del Rio where we have a church full on Sunday morning and evening, and then had a pastors conference. This was a truly exciting time, and a first on that part of the country. I am looking forward to my next two pastors conferences in January. By the way, please pray for them

Team Work: In order to stay in the ministry, we are dependent on God's grace, first of all. The Lord has seen fit to use a handful of His children to participate in both of our ministries. We are profoundly grateful to Him Who has called us to His service and to those few of you whom He is using to be our partners. The fact that you are laboring with us in the ministry on earth means that you will also rejoice with us when we all receive our eternal rewards in heaven. Until then, may we all be found faithful and fruitful on this planet.



Happy Thanksgiving!
With Grateful Hearts,
Franco & Mary Ortega
Psalms 48:14



