

We have come to the second half of the year and we are deep into our hot, humid and harsh summer, with temperatures reaching into 3 digits. I'm sure glad this is the only hell we have to endure. Thank You Jesus! Here's a list of our recent highlights:

April: We had the joy and blessing of having 4 people baptized on Easter Sunday. That was such a great experience for all 4 and for all of us as a church family. What a way to honor the Lord on this commandment. **May:** We had two celebrations. On the first Thursday of the month, we held our National Day of Prayer with a few people setting



aside a couple of hours for seeking God's face, calling out for the forgiveness of our sins, praying for our national leaders, pastors, missionaries, for our families and the future of our country. On May 13 our men and youngsters celebrated our church Mother's Day in a big way. What a great time to acknowledge and thank God for our Proverbs 31 women!



June: As always, this was quite a busy month for our family, even more so this second year. As in some years past, we organized our own VBS program and on June 4-7, after passing out flyers the Sunday before and inviting our entire neighborhood, we had a great turn out. What a fantastic job our own youngsters did in leading the invitation distribution, worship, teaching, skits, crafts and sports. We had about 50 kids each day and we finished big with water games in the parking lot. Needless to say that with our extreme heat and humidity, every kid was very excited to take a slide down and a plunge. On



June 17, the ladies and youngsters organized a wonderful program to honor the man of the house. On June 20 - 27 we had a small but dynamic group of young people from our beloved Mitchell E. Free Church (Neb.). Their timing could not be more precise. Just before their arrival, we had very heavy rainfall for 4 days, where our church roof and windows were severely affected and rain came in from different areas. The group went into an immediate work mode and took care of most major leaks, as well as repaired some other items. They also ministered in worship and in the Word. What a complete joy they were to us all.



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July (12-20): I've just returned from my Loja, Ecuador trip, where the weather was incredibly great, averaging around 60 degrees and sunny, for the most part. It was like a bit of heaven, especially considering our current Texas local weather of 107 degrees. This was my first visit there, where one of our spiritual daughters and her Ecuadorian husband have been doing church planting for over 10 years. What a great ministry they are conducting. I had the privilege of holding diverse meetings at their Semilla de Mostaza Church (Mustard Seed) in Loja. I spoke to couples in two sessions on Friday night. I had two sessions with their church leaders on Saturday morning on serving one another based on Hebrews 10:19-25. Then I spoke to their entire church on Sunday morning on Taking Advantage of Trials, based on Philippians 1:12-21. On that same day, we left to a retreat camp where I spoke on NEHEMIAH, Restored to be Used of God. While there, Sunday

afternoon through Wednesday, I also made the time to listen to individual pastors, couples and families, to counsel, pray and encourage them. What a great ministry time that was. The Calvas were very gracious in taking me for a tour in Quito on my last day in Ecuador, to see some historical sites and to visit Edison Veloso, whom I met while he was a student at RGBI over 20 years ago. I was absolutely delighted to be involved in that whole experience. Our beloved Maranatha did a fundraiser to cover my international flight and Mustard Seed Church covered my domestic flight as well as meals and lodging. Our church and I were very delighted for me to finally visit our spiritual daughter.



November 5 – 15: My next Cuba trip is set for those days. I have been using Edward Peders' discipleship material at Maranatha for over 7 months (and continue to receive training on it). I plan to introduce it in Pastor Brache's church. They are eager to receive it and, in my personal opinion, this type of material is ideal for their cultural setting, especially given their political regime. So far, those who have confirmed on joining me is Pastor Chris Whited from the Mitchell E. Free Church (Neb.), Alberto Garza from our Maranatha Church and Kim Campbell, from Fellowship Bible Church (Ok). We really appreciate your prayers for safety, health and that the Lord would use us in a mighty way. In the mean time, I connect with our brothers in the rural areas of Dimas, Cuba via IMO on Tuesday mornings for a Bible study. They are absolutely excited every time we are able to connect and to study God's Word and pray.

Family: My health has been a bit interesting, to say the least, but the Lord keeps mending me and thrusting me forward. Mary also keeps trotting along. In June we took Sylvia for her six-month check-up and we are very grateful for a favorable report. Her aorta has not grown in the last year. This is one amazing piece of information. Please continue praying for her and for her senior year in High School. **June 11** Our married daughter Priscilla and husband Brad celebrated their first year of marriage. **June 14** Mary and I celebrated our 32nd. **June 17** Priscilla celebrated her birthday and on **June 26** Sarai and I celebrated our birthdays together. As you see, June is one very big celebration month for us. We praise God for His goodness and faithfulness to us in our marriage and in our ministry.



As I write this letter, Sarai is with us, spending a few weeks before she moves on to her next step in life. She continues to be on meds and on August 13 she will be getting chemo for her Lupus. She is set to fulfill a longing to teach abroad and will be leaving for Turin, Italy on September 18 to do her internship. While there, she also expects to take classes toward finishing her master's degree. Although she is not in her best physical shape, she feels that this is the best she will ever be to take on this opportunity. We are happy that in the middle of health issues, she continues to pursue her plans. Please do keep her in your prayers. We will be expecting her back on December 19.

Before I finish, I'd like to express our profound gratitude to our four supporting churches and a few families who make our ministry possible at Maranatha, Cuba, Ecuador and beyond. What a great supporting team you are!

Eternally grateful,
Franc & Mary Ortega
Psalms 48:14

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