



*Faith and Family ~ As I've pondered for the last few weeks about my marriage, my ministry, and myself, I have to say that God is good and gracious. No, I have not "ARRIVED" yet, but it is not about the final destination as much as about the ride itself. Life does not have to be perfect for me to be grateful. Our oldest daughter broke her right ankle just a few days before leaving for Italy to work on an internship toward her master's degree. Broken and bruised, when her day came to fly, she flew off. Oh sure, she's in constant pain, but she's overcome fear and even pain to some degree and she's enjoying teaching as much as she possibly can. Are there things she needs to change and overcome herself? Of course, she does! But, we're very thankful for the challenges she's taken on. She's due back home on December 19 and we look forward to reconnect with her. Our married daughter, Priscilla, is expecting our first grandchild - a boy. Wait a minute... did I just say "our first grandchild?" Incredible! She and Brad are very happy about the news and we join them in the celebration. We'll have to wait until April to see if he is born with dark brown hair or if he's a ginger like his dad. Sylvia is our 17 year old senior looking into colleges already. Amazing! Mary and I are so thankful for her life.*

***Maranatha Matters** ~ A few weeks ago I was thinking about the years God has allowed us to spend with our group, from the hard days when I was working 50 hours per week to provide for my family "while doing ministry on the side." Images of our small church lot, full of mesquite trees, weeds and rocks came to my mind. Then I thought about the tough days when we started building, then when we had our church inauguration and then when I declared to our congregation that now (then) was the time for me to start working with the REAL church - the people. Since we've switched from the traditional mode to a cellular church and I've had the joy of seeing those who are being taught and challenged actually stepping out and coming alongside me and now serving God, the best concept that I raised in my mind was... "I feel like I'm in a ministry honeymoon."*

***Cuba Call** ~ By the time some of you may read this email, I may very well be on my way to Cuba. After using Ed Peders' discipleship material for over a year in Maranatha and seeing the great results, I am taking it to the Pearl of the Caribbean. I'm meeting with about 50 lay pastors, missionaries and church leaders to introduce them to this powerful program, which basically deals with having the eyes and heart of Jesus for making disciples. Hurricane Michael hit these brothers very hard just a few weeks ago. Some of them went for several days without electricity, drinking water and food. Yet, their resilient spirit derived from over*

50 years of political hardships, has so prepared them that they are on their feet and eagerly waiting for me. It is this committed and enthusiastic spirit that compels me to go there to equip and further empower them for the ministry God has called them to. I will be going to the rural parts of Dimas once more to encourage all, to baptize a few new believers and to marry about 5 couples. Now, this will be a first for me.

How could I close this letter without wishing all of you dear ones a very Happy Thanksgiving Day? May you and your loved ones enjoy a special family time together and come to appreciate God's many and rich blessings. Oh, and remember that only "turkeys" are not thankful on Thanksgiving.

**Franc & Mary Ortega**

**Ps. 48:14**

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