



P O Box 160
La Grange, WY 82221

The Ortegas' 2023 *Marching* Orders

*We praise YOU, God, we praise YOU, for YOUR Name is near;
people tell of YOUR wonderful deeds. Psalm 75:1*

Gratitude

We thank God for you, whose valuable support has carried us through for so many years, especially the last few challenges. Incredibly, some of you have followed our spiritual journey since the 90's. Some faithful ones are now in the presence of their Lord and ours, receiving their proper reward in heaven for the labor of their hands while on earth.

Maranatha Matters

We started this year with, as we do every first day of the month, at 5:00 am with our bent knees in the presence of God at church, acknowledging our faults and praising Him for His faithfulness. Our theme for this year is: **He>me!** *He must become greater; I must become less*, taken from John 3:30. We are learning so very much from John the Baptist's humble, yet great life. On February 5, we celebrated our 34th anniversary since our humble



beginning. Some very vivid memories of special people are still quite fresh in my mind and heart, even some who have graduated to heaven. What a great spiritual/material investment they have left for us to further God's Kingdom! We were blessed with Edgar Medina who brought us a powerful message entitled: *Called to Grow*, based on Luke 2:52. Our Life Groups continue to be a powerful means through which God's Word is taken



Victor & Valeria are Brand new in their faith.



One of our Life Groups celebrating Valentine's Day.

from our church into our educators' communities to invite their neighbors. Speaking of, our newest site is one that I am supporting has produced a young new couple for the Kingdom. Victor and Valeria Bazaldua and their two children are now part of our church. On January 31, they both made a decision for Christ.

I'm currently on a discipleship course with them. What a way to end the month! An added benefit is also the great spiritual progress that each facilitator has made in their understanding of God's Word, their walk with the Lord and in the giving of themselves to His Kingdom. We have also added a special monthly event for youth and children on the last Wednesday of every month, starting in January. What a joy to see Pastor Abisai actively involved in this

new program. Music, Bible lessons and Bible memorization are all part of this new dynamic event. Yet another added ministry that I just started was the mentoring of three men (Filomeno, Mario and Samuel) who have a great potential for absorbing biblical teaching. This trio will be very valuable in our Maranatha ministry and even abroad.

Mission Matters - CUBA



Last year, tickets on hand and everything, I had to cancel our Cuba trip, as I was having major breathing difficulties. Now that that is taken care of, we are gearing up for it once more. At this time in my life, I am concentrating on mentoring the new generation of Kingdom leaders. My wife and I are taking one young man and two young ladies from Maranatha. Our faithful partner, Alberto, will also be joining us. This threesome is between 18-20 years of age, very active in church and mature for their age. They are ready for the new challenge in their walk with God. This missionary adventure is set for June 5-15. Our hearts are ready, the need in Cuba is great and your participation is much appreciated. We value your prayerful and financial support on this missionary experience. This will be our first Post-Covid trip after being grounded for the last consecutive 2 years. I have lost a couple of great Cuban friends due to COVID. They will be greatly missed when we finally return there. My last trip was February 2020, right before everything shut down due to the pandemic.

Mission Matters – Ecuador

Another missions trip I was forced to cancel last year due to health reasons was to Ecuador. The pastors' conference will be held again this coming July and I do intend to be there. Please keep me in your prayers for this ministry trip, as well. This is a great time for most of these bi-vocational pastors and church leaders to be trained, refreshed, and ministered to. I'd like to focus attention on speaking at the main church and the retreat conference.

Our Remaining Sabbatical

You may recall that on March 2020, Mary and I were going to take our very first sabbatical from our 30+ years of continuous ministry. Well, COVID once again decided to interfere and we had to cancel all trips and go into hiding, mainly caring for Sarai, our lupus-affected daughter, who was alone in San Antonio at the very outbreak of the pandemic. Well, since we could not go anywhere, we decided to return 3 weeks early and save the time for some future opportunity. Well, the future has arrived on March 6-25. Pray that this time we can finally escape and spend quality time of R&R.

Prayer Requests:

1. For family – Sarai and Sylvia must deal with their individual syndromes daily. Priscilla, Brad and their precious boys take on regular stresses as employees,

spouses and parents, dealing with their own health issues, and that of their young children.

2. For our church, as this past January we were hit hard with several church members losing close relatives from various health issues. We have 3 dear sisters in Christ (Gracia, Citlaly and Ambrosia, among several others) who are facing major health concerns.
3. For our Cuba trip, that God would prepare our hearts and health so we can then concentrate on the ministry challenges on this missionary endeavor. Pray also for the financial needs we still lack.
4. For Ecuador trip, that God would continue to open doors and help me to properly prepare.
5. For our 3 weeks off from ministry to concentrate on our physical and faith well-being.
6. Lastly, may I please ask you to pray for me – Franc. Ever since I was hit with COVID last July, my system has been on a constant “recovery mode”, while never fully recovering. I’ve been left with sudden sharp pains on both legs, very dry mouth, cough, and congestion that have lingered on since last year. While these symptoms do not necessarily come daily, I can’t seem to fully overcome them either.

As I end this letter, should any of you feel led to participate on our Cuba trip, especially, please send your tax-deductible contribution to our Tentmakers Bible Mission office at Box 160, La Grange WY 82221 (or for online giving - Here is the link https://tentmakersbiblemission.org/tbm_special_projects/cuba-fund-project/), or to our church at: IBCM, mailing address: P O Box 6453 McAllen, Texas 78502.

With Eternal Gratitude,

Franc & Mary Ortega

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Our newest program targeting children and youth.



We greatly rejoiced at celebrating 34 years of God’s faithfulness.

