

February 2008

Time for a new update and a culture lesson! We are definitely back in Mexico!

I (Nancy) had to pay our land taxes this week. Now, being in Mexico has its advantages and disadvantages. Our land tax for the whole year here is 279 pesos which at the current exchange rate is only \$26.32. So Tuesday, Betty (my neighbor and buddy) and I headed out early to the "Hacienda Municipal" to pay our taxes. We arrived at 9:45 am and found a line already formed outside of the Hacienda. We joined the line and a fellow promptly came by and gave each of us a number (this is new, other years there were no numbers given). Betty asked him whether we could leave the line with our number and come back a bit later and return to our spot. He told her yes, that we could come back in about an hour and as long as they hadn't already called our number, we could rejoin the line. So we went to a nearby cafe for breakfast and a cup of coffee. At 11 am, we returned to the line to find our spots, which were still outside the building but closer to the door. As the line crawled along, I called Tom about noon to let him know we were still in line and finally at the door. Little did we realize that this year the line snaked inside and around the courtyard. Before I tell you how long we waited in line to pay \$26.32, let me say that last year's (nor the past three years) line was nothing like this, it was about an hour maximum. We were in line this year 5 3/4 hours! It was 6 hours to the minute from when I got my number to when I finally walked in our front door. They changed mayors and changed systems this year. Unfortunately this new system is terrible! Fortunately, the new mayor is not terrible!

We had a meeting with the new mayor on February 11 to introduce ourselves and Tom's tank ministry to him. It was a short meeting but he asked what he & the local government could do to help us. We promptly told him of the driver's license snafu and gave him photocopies of Tom's old license, his visa, a letter from Migration, and a copy of the law that says we can have driver's licenses as long as we are legal with Migration. He promised to call the Director of Transit. February 13, Tom received his two year license for Chiapas! Praise the Lord! It also turns out that there was a Canadian lady in the same boat as we were and Tom broke the ground so that she too can get her license with her immigrado status.

Also along in the praises, the Luv truck was repaired and returned to us last week on Friday. Monday morning, we sold the truck! Tom spent Monday morning at the Hacienda Estatal to get plates for the Tahoe and to turn in the plates & pay fees on the Luv (to register that it was sold). He spent 3 1/2 hours there doing his paperwork. Mexico specializes in waiting lines, as you can see. We now are done with government lines for a bit until we find out what to do to get special permission to own land in our names here in Comitán.

We are all relatively stress-free, now that the headache lines are over. David enjoyed the lunar eclipse last night, when the clouds parted enough to see the moon. Both boys are glad to be back in a routine and back at their music classes. David is now old enough to be in the church youth group here and has been involved in planning a conference for the end of March for all the Presbyterian youth in the area. Joey will be attending and helping at a Christian camp for Junior High students at the end of March also. I am busy getting budget-type information together for a work team that may be coming at the end of July/early August and catching up on correspondence. Tom is adding more resources to his new Spanish website (<http://www.paginasprodigy.com.mx/RACHMEXICO/>), working at the Equip land, and preparing to work in a new barrio on tanks. So the Lord is keeping us all busy.

Thank you all for your continued interest in our ministry, your encouraging emails and for your prayers on our behalf. We greatly appreciate our home team and pray that the Lord will always be glorified!

Joy in the Journey,

Nancy, Tom, David and Joey