



To Every Tribe

Jesus is worth it

Dear Brethren, Family, and Friends,

June 11, 2009

Our team just returned from a small town in Tamaulipas, Mexico where we had a four-day evangelistic and dental outreach. This was the fourth short-term mission trip that we have taken to this town of two hundred residents. We planned to do Bible studies with the local people for this trip and the other main goal was to get dental experience and meet the dental needs of the town. We wanted to show these people, who are mostly non-Christians, the love of Christ in a practical way. A missionary dentist has been training five classmates and me for a total of two weeks over this semester. Our team of ten set up camp next to a small municipal building in the center of town. Our tents were on the edge of the soccer field, and the clinic and Bible classroom were in the municipal building. I had only worked on two live patients' teeth prior to working in this clinic, but now I have a lot of experience doing exams, drilling, cleaning, filling cavities, and doing sealants.



We used all hand tools and brought in our own water, since To Every Tribe works mostly in places where there's no electricity or running water. This means there's no pain for the patient, and no anesthesia needed! I saw about fifteen patients who each had an average of three cavities each; some had small ones and others had several rotten teeth. Many cases took a long time to finish. The dentist was with us to answer questions and to do extractions or difficult procedures if necessary. We saw patients Friday and Saturday from 8am to 7 or 8pm. We examined our patients on three homemade exam tables and sometimes had to see patients in their chairs when it got crowded. On Sunday afternoon people unexpectedly showed up asking for dental work, so we put in six more hours with them. **We saw and treated a total of sixty-four patients** of all ages (mostly women and children). This would be about a quarter of the town, so I think it was a good turnout, but we would have liked the opportunity to talk with more men.

Saturday night we had an evangelistic Bible study on John 3 and Numbers 21. On Sunday we went to a Baptist church in a city thirty minutes away. **Sunday night I led a Bible study for the kids, teens, and a few parents on *The Parable of the Sower***, (Matthew 13) through which the possible responses to the gospel were analyzed and the gospel was presented (see photo below). Since this is an oral culture, I decided to memorize the parable, the gospel summary, my questions for them, and the conclusion. I found this method to be far more effective than going verse-by-verse through a study like we're accustomed to doing in American churches. Another great opportunity was on Thursday afternoon

when I witnessed to a man named Roberto for several hours (see photo below of Roberto in the middle with the light-colored shirt). He came to see what we were up to. Roberto is in the Jehovah's Witness religion, and after talking to him about what he believes, I shared from Scripture that Jesus *is* God and that we are saved only because of His atoning death on the cross, not our works. I showed him that even his censored version of the Bible says that these things are true, but sadly Roberto went away unchanged. He has, however, now heard the truth, which may make a difference to him someday. It was a blessing to all of us to show kindness to this man, since he is an outcast in his community. Roberto still came to the dental clinic and Bible study on the weekend. We saw that one of the few Christian men is growing in the Lord, and we are very encouraged that God is doing a work there. I enjoyed every aspect of the trip, except that I missed Leanne and the girls who remained in Texas.

Please pray for our continued work in this town, and for further direction for our family as we prepare for long-term ministry in Papua New Guinea.

Teaching Matthew 13 to youth an parents.



(Above—ministering to Roberto).



Thank you for your love and support! Take care, and God bless you!

Love in Christ,

Matt

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