

"TIS HEAVEN TO ME . . . I COUNT IT A PRIVILEGE HERE"

Elba Ramirez - January-March 2002 Prayer Letter

Beloved Financial and Prayerful Supporters—

ALL GLORY TO GOD

Our heavenly Father has given me a new year to behold Him in all His greatness, power, beauty and holiness. O, the wondrous works among those whom I have been called to serve. Our Great God is indeed Worthy of all Honor and Praise! *"Tis Heaven To Me."*

MUST CARRY THE BLESSED WORD

I count it a privilege here to see that Biblical steps are being taken in this ministry. May God be praised! Seven years ago, Rev. Benjamin Cortés was sent to start a new Church. Now his Church has seven couples who have been taking turns to preach and teach in our first Mission in San Luis Rio Colorado. Though it is a 4 hours drive from Tijuana, sometimes the trip takes up to fourteen hours due to the old van. GOD . . . has given the increase and this congregation needs full time missionaries. Thus, the Holy Spirit has separated ANGEL and REY for the work He has called them . . . *"Tis Heaven To Me."*

ACROSS THE BURNING DESERTS TO THOSE IN SINFUL STRIFE

At the "mother" Church 34th Anniversary, our seven missionary couples sang "If Jesus Goes With Me" with much conviction. There was no one dry eye in the sanctuary as ANGEL and REY sang the second stanza: "It may be I must carry the blessed word of life *across the burning deserts to those in sinful strife.*" San Luis is an extremely burning desert half of the year and a very cold one the other half, with no air conditioned, nor heating systems. But, "If Jesus Goes With Me. . . I'll go anywhere." I have never accompanied a singing group with so much joyful emotion as I did them. *"Tis Heaven To Me."*

'TIS HEAVEN TO ME

At least, 20 times the old van broke down in the way coming back from that mission. The missionary families had to sleep in the cold and dangerous night on the side of the road until Pastor Benjamin and someone else would pick them up to bring them home at 4 o'clock in the morn-



ing. The way has nothing but mountains where many robbers hide to attack those with car problems at night. One weekend, there were only pinto beans to eat because all the food was accidentally dropped and they had no money. With a below zero weather with the wind factor these men had to build a "home" for a member who "lived" in a card board miserable house. This old lady, at first rejected fiercely the Gospel, BUT GOD, in His infinite compassion saved her . . . now she is the most faithful member of our mission. Needless to say, these missionary men had lived what they sang . . . *"Tis Heaven To Me."*

A PRIVILEGE HERE HIS CROSS TO BEAR

ANGEL ORTIZ, was converted only 5 years ago from a life of alcoholism and wife beating. He became a respectable deacon, studied in our Bible Institute making much more effort than those who had a higher educational background. One day I had to tell him about his 8 year-old girl not being submissive to someone else's SS Class. He immediately apologized for not teaching his girl submission and respect to authority. Next Sunday, she apologized publicly and he gratefully thanked me. Pastor Benjamín called him "mature." *"Tis Heaven To Me."*

REY is the fellow whose life was so deep in drugs and in the passing of Mexicans illegally across the border . . . BUT GOD saved him! He changed his name from Christ the King to only King or REY.. GOD has blessed him with a godly wife and a beautiful baby daughter. Marvelous Grace of Jesus . . . *"Tis Heaven To Me."*

I COUNT IT A PRIVILEGE HERE

Have you ever made a photocopy and be pleasantly surprised because it came out just as good as the original? Well, I count it a privilege to work in both, the "mother" and the "daughter" churches Pastors David and Benjamín Cortés lead. When the large Church sent Pastor Benjamín to start a Church, they provided him with a salary, housing, a car and even bought him a new suit. So now, Pastor Benjamín's humble congregation sent these two missionaries with a salary, housing, a car, medical insurance and a new suit each. *"Tis Heaven To Me."*

GRATITUDE

This *very* poor congregation gave the large Church a \$200.00 dollars gift for their Anniversary (how I wish you could see the poverty of these brethren to appreciate this). And not only that, but the young Church wanted to share the blissful and significant moment of sending forth in prayer OUR FIRST TWO MISSIONARIES and their families with the "mother" Church. Some of you Pastors know what this kind of gratitude means. *"Tis Heaven To Me."*

IF JESUS . . . I'LL GO ANYWHERE

The other five missionary couples and some new couples are already asking if we could open another Mission. *"Tis Heaven To Me."*

CONSECRATION

Was the central theme of Dr. H.T. Spence week of preaching in our small Church's Anniversary. We appreciate him leaving all his responsibilities as a Pastor and as President of Foundations Bible College in Dunn, North Carolina. He preached with so much liberty . . . my heart was blessed to a point that cannot be expressed with words. Pastor Benjamín and his wife told me that their home, along with our whole congregation had truly been *transformed* by these powerful messages. Pastor hopes to bring Dr. Spence again *"Tis Heaven To Me."*

. . . HIS CROSS TO BEAR

Pastor was wondering if he should let our members invite our guest speaker to their dirt-floor homes for his meals. He would have loved to take Dr. Spence to nice restaurants, but there was no money for that. When he asked who wanted to have our guest for a meal, ALL the families in the Church raised their hand. So, Dr. Spence graciously visited many homes that week. Praise the Lord, he survived! He understood perfectly the sacrifice of these families to put up a "meal" for him. Our poor Mexican people's diet and schedules are so very different than his, but he never complained. *"He Counted It A Privilege . . . His Cross To Bear."*

TIS HEAVEN TO ME

What a blessing to receive the visit of two faculty members from Foundations Bible College, Rev. Robert Wilson, Dean of the Fine Arts Department and Rev. Brian Lowry, a voice teacher. Patiently they worked long hours with our "pianists" and

"vocalists." O, the beauty of the simplicity with which they taught! Bro. Lowry told us that the Church's music should never be greater than the Pulpit, and the requirement of every choir member is to have a servant's heart. May the "pearls," taught by word and by the example of these two men from Foundations, might transform the "inner man" of everyone involved in our Church's music ministry. Pastor Cortés is very encouraged with the improvements seen already. *"Tis Heaven To Me."*

GOD HAS SAVED SO MANY THIS YEAR!

I have heard these ladies pray the sinner's prayer: BERENICE, two MARIAS, LETICIA, SUSANA and SILVIA. May they truly grow in the knowledge of the Lord and understand better the Gospel of grace! *"Tis Heaven To Me."*

GOING? or COMING FROM ANYWHERE?

MIREYA, the niece of one of my best friends from childhood moved with her Catholic family to Tijuana and I was able to explain the Gospel to her this week. She was not ready to receive the Lord into her heart, but now she reads her Bible daily and has accepted to meet with me on a regular basis. *"Tis Heaven To Me."*

DENISE, a precious contact in France, to whom I have kept writing regularly called me to tell me she was surprised at her birthday by her family with an all paid for ticket to visit her friend Elsa in Mexico. Can you phantom French Catholic people crossing the ocean to visit a Mexican missionary? *"Tis Heaven To Me."*

I'LL GO ANYWHERE

Exactly when I had finished unpacking my last box putting each item in its right place, my landlady raised the rent far beyond my means. At the same time, Pastor David Cortés increased my responsibilities in the main Church and suggested I rent a house closer to the large Church. I still will work at his Brother Benjamín's small Church, Praise the Lord!!! But I must move tomorrow. In times of decisions like these, I deeply thank God for each of your constant prayers. Though you ignore the great needs at any given moment, you pray for me. And GOD answers! I must confess that as time passes, it becomes more difficult to move from one house to another, yet, *"Tis Heaven To Me,"* right?

Privileged to go anywhere with Jesus,

Elsa C. Ramirez

Sending Church:
Bible Baptist Church
2780 Mt. Carmel Rd.
Hampton, GA 30228

My mailing address:
P.O. Box 435281
San Diego, CA 92143-5281
Email: timkh@telnor.net

Working with: World Wide
New Testament Baptist Missions
P.O. Box 725
Kings Mountain, NC 28086