

ANABAPTIST BORDER MINISTRIES

SAN JUAN, TEXAS

February-March 2025

OUT OF A SINCERE HEART OF LOVE -Lyndon Yoder

Sometimes it is easy to wonder at the effectiveness of the things we are doing in reaching out to others, whether here at the border or wherever you live. I think anyone of us can have that feeling at any time about our Christian witness, but I especially have felt it here. When we first came, I did not speak Spanish. Those of you who have visited other countries know the frustratingly helpless feeling of not being able to understand what the people around you are saying. The longer I was here, the more people I got to know. The more people I got to know, the more they would share their thoughts and feelings about life. But how do you connect with someone when you cannot even speak their language?! There were things I wanted to say but could not. The things that I wanted to say to encourage someone when they were feeling down. The words that I wanted to say when someone had questions about the Bible. The normal, everyday conversations: the words just were not there. And even now, though I can understand a lot more than I did when I first got here, sometimes I am not sure how to express myself in a clear manner. When someone is going through something difficult in their life, and they share their struggles, I do not always say much, because I am not sure how to say it. Sometimes I wonder if they understand that fact, or if they figure I am just another uncaring gringo.

But while interacting with people of another culture and another language I have discovered something important. I have come to learn that I do not necessarily have to speak the language fluently to brighten their day. A smile. A cheery “Buenos días”. A cup of coffee in Jesus’ name. A coat or shoes for those without. A listening ear, even one that cannot understand every word. Sympathizing with those that have been waiting for months in bad living conditions, waiting for their cita (appointment). Praying with those who are in bad situations, who left their homes, running for their lives. To sum it up, just being a friend. When one Columbian said to me after a good hour-long conversation, “You have helped me so much today.” I asked “How?” I could not even speak his language right. But he answered, “You were just here.” What? I was just there? You know, as I thought of that incident in the months since, I believe God has called all of us to that. To be there. To listen. **Even if a listening ear cannot always understand, we can still have a listening heart.** And by the grace of God that is what we are trying to do. To live, to laugh, to give, to listen, and to love from the heart. Even the ones who can really get on our nerves sometimes.

I think of all the times I have seen my fellow team members and visitors do things from their heart, maybe without realizing it. The fellows playing soccer with the children. The girls twirling the rope for endless line of laughing, giggling children (or sometimes fighting, angry children). The ones blowing bubbles, giving out health kits and Bibles, the ones making coffee for the migrants. The ones preaching,



Praying for this man and his wife, who lost their baby.

having Bible study, the ones laughing and talking with old friends and making new ones. The ones who are willing to step out of their own comfort zone, to make life a little easier for others. In other words, just being there. That is our goal. When they laugh, we laugh with them. When they rejoice, rejoicing along. When they cry, cry with them. For that, after all, is what we are commanded to do. And we never know the impact we will have on the life of each individual we connect with. We may never know till heaven how it impacted them. But I can tell you this, that when I get to heaven, and see former migrant friends, who made the choice for the right based on the interaction we had with them, it will be absolutely, and totally, worth every tear, every long day, every tired evening, every frustrated moment when I wished for the gift of tongues.

In closing, I would like to say again we never know what impact we may have. Something as simple as friendships I have made through English Class has brought people to our church services, and something begins to change in their lives. I have seen it happen. Love others, be there for them and reach out to them, not out of a sense of duty, but out of a sincere heart of Christlike love. And I tell you, you will be amazed at the results as you may have.

A Small Seed -Jenny Muñoz

I am very grateful to God for the opportunity he gave me to work for ABM these last few months. How many times in our homes are we living such a comfortable life that we don't realize the harsh reality that many people are facing?

For some reason it seemed that my place was to work with the children, which was a pleasure to occupy that place although sometimes it could also be a challenge when trying to carry out different activities, maintain order, play without fighting, etc.

We did activities such as coloring pictures, playing with cards, singing together, telling them Bible stories, playing with balloons, just talking to them and last but not least was playing with the "cuerda". Different games such as jumping, jumping the river etc. If for some reason we didn't carry the rope, we had some very disappointed children. Either way, distracting children from their situation and watching them enjoy themselves is a blessing. Hopefully in their little hearts we could sow even a small seed that will help them in their lives later.

It was also nice to be able to get to know several mothers with their beautiful babies. Why not hold their babies while I talk to them?

Angie is a mother who is at Casa Migrante in Matamoros. The first time I remember seeing her she was pregnant with her fourth baby. Perhaps very distressed not knowing how everything was going to turn out with the birth of her baby due to her situation. Next week we arrived to visit there, and she already had her baby. A tiny but seemingly healthy baby.

This was going to be a precious creature that I was obviously going to try to find every time we got there and in this way be a blessing to this mother who often seemed troubled.

So that's how it went for about three weeks. We shared phone numbers and the very next day I received a message from her that her baby had died. It was possibly a cradle death. "Of children is the kingdom of heaven." The baby is so much happier but just imagine the anguish this family has to go through on top of the burden they already have. God's plans are perfect. If you want, you can remember this family, especially the mother. Lately it's been like her situation was too much for her and she still didn't have much desire to talk yet.

Another one of "my babies" was Katalella in Senda 1. Her parents are from El Salvador. Katalella was born when they were already in Mexico.



Katalella

They got their appointment to enter the U.S. on January 16 but were kidnapped having to pay 12000 dollars. After about 15 days they were released, which seems like only a miracle of God because their family could only send 3500 dollars. Thank God they managed to reach Senda 1, but the trauma remained.

This is how I got to know them. So, this was one of the "casitas" that I was going to visit in the camp. Holding the baby, and talking to the mother which she seems to love to talk, telling me about her past life, etc. They still had hope that they could legally cross to the other side because God knows the debt they have in El Salvador.

I will also tell you about Margaret, a little girl from Honduras who was only 13 years old and that I met in Pumarejo. If you talk to her, it can feel like you are talking to someone who is 20 years old or older because of her manner of speaking. She has a very sad history. It seems to me that her mother doesn't let her do a lot of

Katalella and her family



what she wants because she loves her, but for Margaret it is difficult.

Then we became friends spending time talking, praying, and many times with tears in her eyes, just wanting to tell things about her past and that someone listens to her. My desire is to be able to be a help to her and that despite the life she has already had, the rest can be with a purpose that is worthwhile.

Working for ABM for two months seemed a very short but very good experience. It can seem so unfair to see people just like you and me suffering in this way. I was shocked by some words that a child said to me one day in Pumarejo. He said something like this: "Why do they say that Jesus is God if Jesus was born when everything was already created?"

Dear friends, this child, with an eternal soul, was obviously thinking. What will become of his future? My hope is that for the rest of my life I can be a blessing to people who really need it.



Jenny and Margaret

The harvest is indeed plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Luke 10:2.

Opportunities -Lynwood Yoder

Tuesday, January 7. The lights and ambiance of the ABM base was a welcome sight after traveling a thousand miles, leaving 10-11 inches of snow behind. We were warmly received despite a cool evening for southern Texas. We arrived just in time for a tasty supper prepared by an immigrant family! Wonderful! And thank you Lord, for your provisions and answer to prayer.

Wednesday, January 8. This morning, we were to meet in the kitchen at 7:00, prepare our lunches, load our supplies in "ol' Betsy" (a 15 passenger Ford van), and then meet in the library for reinforcements and prayer before our departure to Matamoros, Mexico. Since Spanish is my auxiliary language, I was expected to lead out in the service and translate. (Thanks, P.H.) The names of the seven people crossing were Audrey Yoder, Jenny Muñoz, Lois Ann Histand, Marilyn Gehman, James Brandenberger, and Brian Brandenberger, and I. The Lord blessed us with a good day, seeing many people and realizing that my Savior loves each of these individuals.

Thursday, January 9. As each new day unfolds, the reality is before us that the opportunities of today may never again come our way. Again, as we gather and prepare to cross, it's such a comfort to know that our Heavenly Father cares for His own. The day at the 2 camps in Reynosa passed as in normal fashion, interacting and conversing with people. The frigid weather in Northern U.S. obviously wasn't contained as it found its way here as well. At both camps we prepared and served coffee to those who desired. At 40*, breezy and misty, the cold volunteered its way to the very bones of our body till we left for home by 3:00.

Thus, the following days passed with the normal interaction here at the base. Christmas week, Brian and Martha Brandenberger experienced a matter that was not so pleasant. The CPS stepped in and demanded certain criteria after an incident with their youngest child, Adriel. In light of their demands, James and Betty, parents of Brian, were summoned to come to their rescue for several weeks. Yesterday morning, the 14th, a direct answer to prayer came as we were together for staff meeting, informing Brian's that the case was cleared and lifted. Praise the Lord! James and Betty leave for their home in IN tomorrow, the 16th, to take care of some loose ends and then fly to Oregon on Saturday, the 18th.

P.H. has been involved in the use of a tractor with a backhoe attachment, digging a water line. The water comes from a water-way down in the pasture and will be used for irrigating vegetation etc., as the sight of dry, brown grass is off limits in the eyes of the administrator.

My wife and I have fared well on the diet here at the base. After all, food is an important factor in life. Many leafy vegetables are grown in huge quantities near the base. due to a recent tip over, there was access to an abundance of cabbage... So, to those who can indulge on sauerkraut, come right on over. To those who cringe at the word; beware! If plans are to come in the near future, this specialty just may be a part of your diet!!

It's been a blessing to be here, adding more people to our chain of friendship. The words of our Master Teacher, Luke 4:18-19, ring more definite as we took note of the impoverished, the broken hearted, the captives, the bruised – each soul with their story. As vessels in the Potter's hands, we believe the Word that is shared will bring forth fruit in His Kingdom. As we begin our homeward journey today, Saturday the 18th of January, my desire is to possess a greater burden for the lost and hurting in my own "backyard", and for the many just across the border.

People, People -Edwin Glick

People, people, so many people: Little ones, tall ones; curly heads, smooth heads. Stout, fine featured; muscular, weaklings; cheerful faces, sulking faces; happy eyes, despair-etched and grieving eyes.... So many people; created in God's image. People with eternal souls, yes, every one of them. Created with a divine purpose, we say. But what about that divine purpose when you hear stories about violence, cruelty, disillusion, death... Divine purpose? To die at the whim of wicked men? To live a miserable life cumbered with "endless" struggles of poverty and oppression? Living in that "stupor" of music, movies, vices and all those avenues of filthiness and darkness that the prince of this world would entice them into? Like that old song says: "It's so easy to get lost these days ..." and another: "there is no peace on earth I said, for hate is strong and mocks the song of peace on earth, goodwill to man." Innocent children being born into such vile environments, learning all that garbage at such a young



age, and as they grow, teaching it to the next generation; and the cycle repeats all over again, it seems.

Or many other folks also, now days, who live the day with a good attitude overall, learning to cope with whatever comes; and yet so lost, lured away by the deceitfulness of the pleasures and the riches of this world. They say they believe in the Lord. They sound so confident as they assure themselves that somehow, some time, it's all going to be all right. They seem to be waiting for the Lord to somehow call them in a mightier way: maybe in a dream at night; maybe in a powerful, exciting revival sermon; for sure sometime in the next years; or if nothing else, when they meet the Lord on the Last Day they will persuade Him that they are worthy of His good favor. So blind, so willingly ignorant. Reminds me of the rich man who died and ended up in Hades, and cried out to Abraham asking him to send Lazarus back to life to warn his brothers so that they wouldn't come to this place of torment; and Abraham's response was that if they would not heed to Moses and the prophets, they wouldn't heed to someone who came back from the dead to warn them either.

And here we are, coming and going, giving them Bibles, bible story books, coffee, a listening ear [and a piece of advice or encouragement sometimes], trying to point them to Jesus...

So what? Is anything actually "hitting home" in their hearts? Is Jesus real to them? Will He ever really be to them?

Their journey is so dreary, but the American dream so awesome; their past so dismal, making the thought of turning back so unheard of. But lo: that awesome CP1 program shuts down in one minute; the door is suddenly shut right in their face. Now what? Can't go forward, won't go backward; there they sit. Bored, bored, BORED; waiting, hoping... Will they ever get to America? Will they ever be able to send money and supplies back to their loved ones at home? They thought they were following a noble calling. Was it all

a mistake? "A chasing after the wind" like Solomon of old described?

In closing: Seems to me that we ought to be grateful for all those good things that we have. Also, might we all continue to seek the Lord, and oh, that people might see that we are a people that walks with Jesus, that being a Christian is more than just an empty talk. Might His love be in us.

Do others see us as a people that walks with Jesus? Or as a people with good talk but it's all empty?



BOARD MEMEBERS FOR ANABAPTIST BORDER MINISTRIES

Chairman: Marc Sommers; marcls@icloud.com (cell: 903-413-8280)

Assistant: Derek Overholt; dereknevalina@gmail.com (cell: 903-246-1737)

Treasurer: Lavern Kauffman; lktx91@gmail.com (cell: 903-303-9298)

Assistant: Merlin Cáceres; mcaceres@emypeople.net (cell: 936-488-8454)

Secretary: Daniel Miller; dl5320@gmail.com (cell: 870-844-5320)

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