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**July/August 2015**



- ✓ *And he said, certainly **I will be with thee.** Exodus 3:12*
- ✓ *...so **I will be with thee:** I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Joshua 1:5*
- ✓ *Fear thou not; for **I am with thee:** be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Isaiah 41:10*
- ✓ *...and, lo, **I am with you always,** even unto the end of the world. Matthew 28:20*

The God-given challenges before Moses, Joshua, Isaiah, and the disciples were utterly intimidating, and they felt completely inadequate. He alone is the factor that makes possible the completion of tasks that require more than we have to offer. God says: ***I will be with you***, and His fulfilled promise has never been more obvious than during the past two months in Tepic.



When Eren (Pastor Martín's wife) and I left Llanfairfechan, Wales, last year after our whirlwind short-term mission trip with the NVBC AWANA team, where our plan was to encourage the believers and introduce the AWANA children's outreach opportunity in the Libanus Baptist Church, we both agreed: "We can do this in Mexico with our Tepic OANSA leaders! It's time for our 'children' who have advanced through the ranks of Cubbies, Sparkies, etc.... in the IBBM-Tepic OANSA club and have grown up learning to lead by following, to use

their God-given gifts and years of discipleship and training to reproduce themselves in a remote setting." The task was daunting; most mission assignments are. We chose a church in Veracruz, on the opposite side of Mexico, a 16 hour-drive from Tepic, virtually another world away. Twenty-nine Tepic OANSA leaders volunteered to invest everything in their power to prepare to the max, raise the funds, and set apart the time to reach out to others who have not had the same opportunity.

We prepared an AWANA-style 5-day vacation Bible school. We translated and printed up the student workbooks that we used last year in Wales into Spanish. Game time was crazy-exciting, and each day the Tepic young people took charge of the teaching time. We prayed that God would send us 70 kids; He answered our prayers with 125 and His fulfilled promise, ***...lo I am with you always...***





Kids like Zahid heard for the first time ever that:

1. God Knows Everything About Me
2. Jesus is God's Son Who Came to Save Me from My Sin
3. Bad News, Good News (I've sinned, and I'm lost; but Jesus forgives and saves.)
4. Our God is the One and Only True God (I will obey and serve Him.)
5. Grace and Truth (What are they?)

They were convinced that our sin separates us from God, but Jesus offers His free gift of forgiveness. OANSA is not an end in itself but a tool. Discipling children to become **Approved Workmen who Are Not Ashamed**, works! The investment in the lives of the IBBM-Tepic

children has gone full circle as they are now young adults who not only serve at home in their own children's club and church (Very important!), but also they have worked to win other children to Christ and establish, by their example, a brand new children's ministry far from home.

When we returned to Tepic after 12 days of intense ministry and a 16-hour trek back home, we were graphically reminded of Kirt's notorious assertion, "The enemy lurks in the shadow of every victory to destroy, discourage and debilitate. Plan for it!" Pastor Martín and Erén opened the door of their house only to find that a leak in an upstairs bathroom had inundated the entire house during their absence. The ceiling and walls were black with incubated mold, electrical wiring shorted out, light fixtures full of water, the ivories had fallen off their waterlogged piano, the kitchen cupboards that Martin had hand-crafted, hanging from their hinges, the shoes and clothes in their closets, saturated, the living room furniture, indelibly stained.

Without missing a beat, they set to work to discard the losses and affirmed that in spite of them, **God is with us; He will not fail us or forsake us.** Please pray for God's provision to replace what they have lost, and join with me in thanking God that their material loss did not stop them from three days later, duplicating the Veracruz OANSA effort in yet another church in a town only an hour from Tepic, Jala. "The enemy?...Plan for it!"



On a much happier note, while we were in Veracruz, Tim and Heidi welcomed baby Mia Rene into our family on July 26. She weighed in at 7 lbs. 2 oz. and was 20.5 inches long. She's another healthy blessing from heaven and has already brought immeasurable joy to our family. That's 10 Mellberg grandkids in less than 10 years! I pray that as they seek to shepherd the heart of this beautiful gift from our Father, Tim and Heidi will remember and remind us of His promise, "**Fear thou not; for I am with thee.**"

All because of Jesus, in His love, and for His glory,

Debbie Mellberg

P.S. If you want to take the time, you can enjoy corresponding digital photos and videos here:  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/debbiemellberg/collections/72157658071652865/>