

Jerusalem Evangelical Ministries (JEM)

A Story: “Anna”

Written by: Lanny Anderson, Missions Field Director, Dec. 1, 2015



Her birth name is Anita, but they call her ‘Anna’. Anna is nine yrs. old and one of many children that live in the impoverished village of Cheque, Sonora, Mexico where people labor in the vegetable and cotton fields nearby for minimal wages that rarely provide for nutritious food and the daily necessities necessary for a healthy lifestyle. And this is the way it has been for generations, not only in Cheque, but in the several other villages in the Sonora agricultural region. Their shack homes (casas) are usually built with

wood pallet framing, pieces of throwaway plywood and sheet metal, plastic materials, sawdust board, and even cardboard. The floors of these homes are of dirt which they sweep each day. This is why they are identified as, “People of the Dirt”, whom many city dwellers and people who live in the larger surrounding communities shy away from. This is because sanitation is extremely poor, and there is the concern that people will be susceptible to communitive diseases.

People living in village environments like Cheque are required to dispose of their own personal garbage which is usually burned a short distance from their homes. They are also responsible for methods of disposing of human waste. Such methods are very crude and often provided or constructed in close confines to their homes and their neighbor’s properties. Water quality is a continual problem in this region and is usually boiled before use. The water is usually provided by a water delivery truck or old metal pipelines running along village roadsides with standup faucets.

There has been a gradual effort by the Sonora government to improve the educational system in these village areas. Nevertheless, village children seldom reach more than a fifth grade level of achievement and start working in the fields in their early teens. This is not because they are hindered by physical or mental disabilities, but rather from a lag in their educational development resulting from inconsistent attendance and little financial support.

Such is the village environment that Anna lives in without choice. An environment where people have little human hope of escaping a life of poverty, disappointment, and despair and are constantly bombarded with the temptations of falling into religious deception, witchcraft, superstitions, addictions, immoral values, and crime that only offer false hope. The only answer is ‘Christ’.

Anna is one of those special young ones who respond with sincere child-like faith to the ‘Gospel of Christ’. She is the youngest member of the Cheque worship team and is always faithful to be on time at every gospel

meeting, singing with sincerity in her heart to the Lord. She also demonstrates the same-like faithfulness when attending children's Bible instruction and other ministry activities during the week.

On one occasion at a Sunday meeting, while I was preaching and teaching the Gospel, I noticed Anna sitting in the front row near the altar where I was speaking. At an appropriate time during my message, I felt prompted by the Holy Spirit to pause and spontaneously step down from the altar, kneel on one knee before Anna, and ask her in a gentle voice, "Anna, do you love Jesus?" Without hesitation, before all the people, she said, "Yes". Then in the Spirit I said, "I know you do, Anna, and remember, no matter what happens in your life, in difficult times or in troubles, Jesus will never leave you or forsake you." "He will always be in your heart." As I said this, Pastor Maria interpreted my words in Spanish for Anna to hear with understanding. I then went on and completed my message.

Whatever future significance and purpose the words I spoke in the Spirit that day will have in this child's life, only the Lord knows. I only know that the Lord has given Anna an awareness of Himself in her precious heart. How else would a child like this sit attentively in 100+F heat for two hours or more without parental or any other adult prompting. During my visit, Anna always was one of the first ones to meet Pastor Maria and I when we came to the village for meetings, and was always there to say goodbye when we departed.

There are many stories of faith yet to be told in our ministry to the Mexican villages we serve. May we not forget these people; the poor, forgotten, neglected, and rejected! Why? Because there are many children like Anna, and others of all ages, that are foreknown to God. They are waiting for brothers and sisters in Christ to show them the way home to the Father. **Mark 16:15** "Go into All the world and preach the Gospel (Good News!) to All creation."

May the Lord send more 'Laborers' into 'His Harvest'! May He be Praised Forever! Amen!