

The Ramirez Family



This is the Ramirez family. In the back we have, Lapita, the mother, Jesus Jr. (Hay'-sus), teenage son, and Jesus Sr. (Hay'-sus), the father. In the front we have Nicole, standing in front of her mother, and Alexia, standing in front of her brother. They are another family that was residing in the Cheke' when we first began raising up a church fellowship in that small village in Sonora, Mexico several years ago.

Lapita was one of those believers who received Christ in our initial evangelical crusade and was baptised in a nearby canal in the village area. Unlike most of the adult villagers, Lapita had the advantage of normal literacy being raised and educated in the City of San Luis. Since the time of her baptism and confession of faith, she has become a very sincere believer growing in the Lord's 'Word' and 'Walk'. Over the years of her faithful service, she has become a diligent worker in the Cheke' church fellowship participating as a leader and teacher in children's Bible activities, teen Bible studies, intercessory prayer meetings, and as an assistant to Pastor Maria Porchas in the organization and ministry of Sunday fellowship services. Lapita has also assisted Maria with administrative tasks and management of financial records.

Jesus' (Hay'-sus) received Christ into his heart shortly after Lapita's conversion and was baptised in the newly built church facility. This was one of our first baptismal ceremonies in the facility and quite a blessed event. Jesus' is a big guy, and it took all the room in the baptismal pool to get him under the water. But, he made it to confess his faith and rose from the water in a large burst with tears streaming from his face confirming his sincere conversion. Since that time, Jesus' has grown in his love for the Lord and has become a very faithful and reliable church deacon who assists widows in need and participates in maintenance of church facilities and grounds.

Jesus' was born and raised in the Cheke' region, and like most villagers of his age was subjected to a poverty ridden socio-economic environment with most villagers attaining only a third grade level of education before having to go to work in the nearby agricultural fields for family survival. This is still the main source of village employment and pays an adult worker a maximum of \$16. a day. Jesus' currently works as a farm equipment operator and Lapita works in the vegetable packing house. Their small home is typical for the area, made of pallet walls, pieces of used plywood and pieces of scavenged building materials. Bathrooms are basic wooden outhouses. There is electricity to the property and an outdoor faucet to draw water from which must be boiled for drinking or cooking. There is no garbage service. garbage wastes are burnt directly across the dirt street bordering the residences.

Jesus' Jr. has participated in our children and teen church programs in past years and has recently been assisting in children's Bible instruction and craft activities. At age 14, he is now finishing his junior high requirements and will soon be one of our village candidates for advancing to the secondary education

level. The rural education system has been improving and most young people attain a satisfactory level of literacy before going to work in the agricultural fields in their young teen years. Nevertheless, secondary school education is still a rarity among the village families because of the academic requirements, distance of travel to San Luis, and the high cost of tuition. We are focusing our best to help resolve some of these educational issues and are gradually seeing more village secondary school candidates.

Nicole and Alexia, the younger daughters, love Jesus and participate in our children's programs and attend church assemblies with their parents. Their stories are still to be written.

It is amazing to see the resiliency of these village brethren. Despite the enduring challenges of basic survival, they make things work with the bare essentials of life, remaining faithful in their new 'Life in Christ'. And the Lord has not forgotten their endurance and faith. As Pastor Maria has reported, many of these villagers have testified of the blessings the Lord has brought to their families since placing their trust in Him. I, myself, feel truly blessed when in fellowship with these brethren. A blessing the ways of this world does not possess.

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Since that time, she has become an exceptional prayer warrior and a leader in the church intercessory prayer fellowship. Her husband, Benjamin, accepted the Lord into his heart shortly after Rasalba, being freed from a past of alcoholic

addiction. I will never forget the privilege of water baptizing this precious brother. I have never experienced in my nearly sixty yrs. in the Lord a more spiritually dramatic occasion. This precious brother was so sincerely anxious from his heart to declare his decision for 'Christ' that when to it was his turn to be baptised, he literally jumped into the baptismal tank and was headed down into the water. We were barely able to hold him to acknowledge his testimony as a believer before letting him plunge into the water to bear witness of his 'Faith'. What a precious moment it was when he arose from the water with tears flowing in expression of joy and thankfulness confirming his new life in the 'Spirit of Christ'. Oh! That we might witness more genuine conversions of the heart that I saw in this brother on that day! Soon after this baptismal event, brother Benjamin became a faithful member of the village fellowship serving as a church deacon helping those in need and supervising the maintenance and care of the church facilities and property. The older daughter, Lapita, participated in our children's and teen ministries in her younger years, and now as a faithful believer at age seventeen, serves as a children's Bible class leader and assists Pastor Maria Porchas in assembly gatherings and some administrative tasks. Her brother, Juan Carlos, also participated in children's ministries as a young boy and later received the Lord in his mid-teens in a powerful move of the Holy Spirit upon his life. After his water baptism, he immediately began a more intense study of God's Word under Pastor Maria's instruction. Since that time, he has helped in the leadership of children and teen ministries, and at the age of twenty-one, is now assisting Pastor Maria in the leadership and instruction of Sunday and mid-week church assemblies. One could say that he is a young man in training demonstrating the spiritual calling of a pastor whose heart is open to the empowering of the 'Holy Spirit'. The younger daughter, Candy, loves Jesus and participates in children's ministries. Her story is yet to be told.

The Gonzales family is a wonderful example of how God in His faithfulness has reached out in 'His Love' with the saving, transforming life of Christ for a neglected and forgotten people. There are many villages like Cheke' in the regional areas of Sonora, Mx. which need to be 'Evangelized with the Gospel'. **James 2:5 "Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who Love Him."** May the Lord's Will be Done! We appreciate your partnership and help.

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