

The Truth Sets Us Free

September 2022



Youth Jail Retreat

The young man was standing right behind me. We were gathered outside the youth jail, preparing to enter when I heard him speak to me. He didn't ask me my name or present himself, but speaking in Spanish he simply stated, "How does it go? ...'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand..." I knew these words from Ephesians 2:10 well — we have been preaching them to the youth behind bars for years! We remind them that God knows them; God made them. And if they turn to Him, He can use them for His work!

I turned around and recognized the young man speaking to me. Ricardo! He had been released from youth jail five years ago. He stood out during his time in jail as one of the natural leaders, a sharp young man who would wind up winning most of the competitions we ran for the youth. Once he was released, he sought out Spectrum staff member Carlos Oliveros and got plugged into a church close to where he lives in eastern Tijuana. Five years later he was now returning to the youth jail to share the gospel alongside us with his worn-out white Bible in hand. I gave him a big hug (and maybe teared up just a little). He told me, "I'm excited to go in... because this is the place where God brought me years ago." What a joy to see how God transforms a life! He continues to reach into the youth jail and bring true freedom. We saw 21 boys baptized on the last day of our three-day retreat. Praise God! We realize the work with these young men is only beginning. Pray for Carlos and Robin as they faithfully continue to minister to the youth each week.

We got to know Alejandra and Fernando through the hair-cutting course Spectrum hosted several years ago. They finished the classes and opened a hair-cutting business outside their home. When Spectrum would visit the neighborhood of Pana where they live, they often came to help cut hair for the neighborhood children. Crisis often comes with no warning, and in Alejandra's case, the crisis hit hard. A hernia with severe complications developed and prevented her from working and attending to her three children. The doctor said she needed an operation soon, but they were struggling just to make ends meet. The surgery was well beyond what they could afford, so they reached out to us for help. While we usually ask families to put up part of the cost of medical expenses, in this case that did not seem to be a possibility. Thanks to your generous giving and God's timing Spectrum was able



Alejandra and Fernando



A US group sharing God's word through a skit

to commit to paying for the whole cost of the \$1800 surgery. Lily was full of joy when she shared the news with Alejandra and Fernando. Alejandra will be going into surgery soon. Thanks so much for your support! It directly benefits the families in the communities we serve.

Speaking of your help, we are looking at repairing and replacing vehicles. Our 15-passenger van's transmission is dying (again). The trucks need suspension work. When I read in Scripture "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel..." I think of the good old vehicles that get us from place to place. They are not very pretty at this point, but we don't need beautiful vehicles, just ones that get us to

where we need to go. Maybe you know a church that is planning to retire a van, or interested in donating a vehicle? Or you may want to help us with some of the maintenance costs. Every bit helps. Thanks for supporting the behind-the-scenes work that keeps Spectrum moving.

A quick word on my new role as Spectrum's director: I am honored! I love this ministry, and love the people we are privileged to serve. I read an old Spectrum newsletter from 1988 where Pastor Von closed with a note on Spectrum's purpose. He said, "This is what our ministry is all about...meeting the needs of the poor and needy and seeing lives change." This remains true to this day. We are eager to show Jesus to the poor in the communities we serve. May they be blessed by the assistance we bring, and may they come to know the wonderful change God brings to the lives of those who follow Him! There is much work ahead.

Luke 3:11 "If you have two shirts, give one to the poor. If you have food, share it with those who are hungry."

For all of us at Spectrum Ministries,

Paul Alvarado
Spectrum Ministries Director



Feeding the hungry



Paul Alvarado ministering in a local church



Sharing the gospel in fun ways

Taking kids on a field trip in the Spectrum van



The Tijuana roads are tough on our trucks