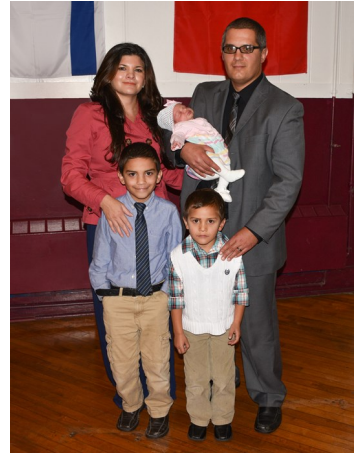


THE STEVENS FAMILY

MISSIONARIES TO HONDURAS

March–April 2016

Prayer Letter



Greetings once again from Honduras to our co-laborers in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is hard to believe that three months of this New Year have already passed. No wonder the Bible says in ([Psalm 144:4](#)) and in many other verses that the days of man “are as a shadow that passeth away.”

With that in mind we realize that our responsibility as Christians is to redeem the time that God has given to us, because “the days are evil” as the Bible says in ([Ephesians 5:16](#)).

At this time I would like to share with everyone what has transpired in our ministry since the writing of our last letter.

*About a month ago I believe that the Lord gave me peace about doing something that I had been praying and fasting about for some time. Those of you who regularly read our letters know that Brother Noel and Sonia Yanes are the couple that my wife and I have been training for a number of years now, with the hope that they would eventually take over the church in Quebrada de Lajas one day. Many years ago Brother Noel left his job, because he believed that the Lord wanted him to be in full time ministry. He left his job in faith, not knowing how the Lord would provide for him and his family. He never asked me to support him and his family financially so that he could train for the ministry. But seeing his desire to serve the Lord and his willingness to trust God by faith led to the Lord touching our hearts about giving him a weekly salary. I would call it a fair salary, not so low that he and his family could barely live, but not so high that it would influence them to not live by faith and trust God, like all Christians are called to do.

So here we are almost four years later. As Independent Baptist missionaries seeking to first and foremost fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we realize that the ultimate goal is to establish Independent, autonomous, self-supporting Baptist Churches with national leadership. Easier said than done in a very poor country like Honduras, but regardless, it is still God’s way. So, I said all of that to say this.

A few weeks ago my wife and I had a meeting with Brother Noel and his wife Sonia, and I explained to them that for a number of different reasons relating to the ministry in Quebrada de Lajas I would not be giving him a weekly salary any longer. I was very careful to explain my motives for making this decision, which ultimately were for their own spiritual growth, as well as for the church in Quebrada de Lajas. I had no idea of knowing how he and his wife were going to respond to this, and I was prepared for the worst, even if it meant that they were going to leave the ministry. Right now some people reading this may be asking themselves how I could do such a thing. Well, a wise missionary once said that you will never know the heart of a national (in this case Honduran) Christian as long as they are being supported by foreign (in this case American) funds to serve God, and we have seen here over and over again how true that is. We believe that this will help Brother Noel and his wife in due time to know if the ministry to them is a calling, or a job. If it is a call of God, then they will continue to serve the Lord where God has called them no matter how difficult the circumstances may be. I truly believe that. On the other hand, if the ministry has been simply a job to them, then they will most likely grow weary and quit during the difficult times.

Please understand that this was one of the hardest things that we have ever had to do. Noel and Sonia are a faithful Christian couple. They have proven their faithfulness over a span of four years with us. Even still, we understand that we can never know their hearts like God does. We love them dearly, and we want what is best for them according to God's perfect will for their lives. In our flesh we want to continue to financially support them. But I know that if we continue to do that then not only they, but the other members of the church will never fully understand the spiritual principles behind an Independent, autonomous, self-supporting Baptist Church, which is the only kind of church there is in the Bible.

This is God's church, not Jason and Arlen's church. For that reason, we have to do things according to the guidelines that God has given to us in his word. I realize that this is a very touchy subject amongst pastors and missionaries, and that many hold to different views on this. It is probably fair to say that each missionary has to be led by the Lord in this matter according to a number of circumstances, one being where God has called them. But I do believe that each one of us missionaries need to ask ourselves at some point, what are we doing, and where will it all ultimately lead?

If you are wondering how Noel and Sonia responded to this, let me say that the Lord was in this. They told us that they understood what we were saying, and that they had been thinking about this matter for some time as well. Brother Noel has since found a job in the community, and he is still serving in the ministry at Quebrada de Lajas.

Time will tell what will happen here. I would ask that everyone reading this letter would please faithfully pray for this dear couple.

*We want to thank The First Baptist Church (Primera Iglesia Bautista) in Brooklyn, NY for their involvement and very generous offering that allowed us to have a well built on our property. We also want to thank the First Baptist Church of Meadowview, Mesquite, TX for their financial contribution toward this project as well. I cannot tell you what a blessing it is to have running water every day, and also for the time that it has freed up for me, since I now don't have to transport water every day in my truck.



*We are now having Sunday morning services in Rodeo, instead of Friday afternoons. We have wanted to do this for some time, and since we made the change two months ago the people of the church have been very encouraged. Please continue to pray for the work in Rodeo.

*On May 6-8 we will be having a revival conference at our church in Quebrada de Lajas. We will be having two different preachers preach on Friday and Saturday evening, and then I will preach the Sunday service. Please pray that the Lord would stir the hearts of our people for personal revival, and that lost souls in attendance would be saved.

*Finally, we want to praise the Lord for three teenage girls in our church who recently made professions of faith in Jesus Christ. Pray for them as we speak to them about Believer's Baptism. Their names are Maria Fernanda, Marsela, and Dilcia. Please forgive the length of this letter, but I believe that the Lord wanted me to share these things with all of you who have financially and prayerfully invested in our family to enable us to come here. May God continue to use you and bless you as you faithfully serve Him.



Our Sending Church:
Christ Independent
Baptist Church
Pastor Victor Rivera
1618 Womrath Street
Philadelphia, PA 19124

Because Christ is Risen (I Cor. 15: 19-20)

J a s o n , A r l e n ,

M i c a i a h , J e r e m i a h , a n d M a r y E l l e n S t e v e n s

John 12: 32- "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

Missionaries to Honduras

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