

May 20, 2001

I'm not really sure how I got into this situation. A year and a half ago I would have thought that my "calling" was to be a Christian programmer. Surely missions, especially foreign missions, could be left to those with more ability and desire. Yet somehow I find myself taking two months unpaid leave, and going to **Mexico City** as a short-term missionary.

God is not sending me unprepared, however. For one thing, I am dating a woman, **Joy McMasters**, who has a gift for language, enjoys teaching, and loves the people of Latin America. Last fall, she challenged me to allow God to use me the ways He desires rather than just how I am comfortable. Since then we have attended a Spanish language church (Iglesia Biblica "El Calvario") in Burbank. It is strange how familiar everything seems now, even though I guess the meanings of the songs we sing, feel confused by the words people greet me with, and debrief the sermon with Joy over lunch each week.

We will be leaving for Mexico City on June 14, just after Joy finishes her junior year at UCLA. We will be serving with the **Spearhead Program**, a part of Latin America Mission, and it is difficult to imagine a missions opportunity that fits us better. Joy will be reaching Mexicans by teaching English in conjunction with a local church, and supporting summer Spearhead teams. I will be learning Spanish, working with computers at a local church and the Spearhead office, and possibly teaching computers in addition to team ministry activities such as clown shows, mimes, and contact evangelism. This will be Joy's third straight summer in Mexico's capital, but my first opportunity to be immersed in the Mexican culture and language. Please **pray** that I will be enthusiastic and teachable. As she puts her Spanish major and Teaching English as a Second Language minor to use, please **pray** that Joy will touch the lives of her students and deal well with the uncertainty surrounding the ESL program she will be both creating and teaching. Our return flight is on August 9 so Joy will have more than a month of summer left before her senior year, but I'm going right back to programming with NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab in Pasadena.



Joy and I consider ourselves partners in ministry, and invite you to participate with us in God's good work. Most important is prayer. As Paul says, "Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador ... Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should" (Ephesians 6:19-20). Other prayer requests include: **safe travel** both to and around Mexico City, as we will be taking the overcrowded *Metro* (subway) and small busses; **health** since new places bring new potential ailments; sufficient **rest** between intense times of learning, ministry, and travel; and **wisdom** as we minister to others in new ways and a new setting while continuing to build our relationship with each other.

You may also commit to encouraging us by writing us, either via email or physical mail. Be sure to let us know if you'd like to hear from us, too. I might even get around to writing something! Finally, you have the opportunity to share in the cost of the trip. Together our costs total about \$3500 for housing, food, airfare, training, my Spanish class, ministry expenses and spending money. Joy and I look forward to your response. Please use the enclosed **response card** to tell us how you would like to be involved.

Yours in Christ,

Jon Ericson

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