

SERFAM NEWS

April-June
2004

Bryce & Noreen King—Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship in Mérida, México

CENTRO EDUCATIVO "BLAS PASCAL" Teaching Teachers

The mind of man plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps (Prov. 16.9).

When we began thinking about starting the school, one of the things that I hoped to achieve was to have an impact on the academic community here in Mérida. My idea was that we would eventually start a College and that this would serve as a way to fulfill this vision. In my mind and according to my plan, it would take at least 10 years to reach this goal... *then the Lord did something totally unexpected.*

Earlier this year, we sent Lupita and Ayve (our Director and Assistant Director) to a conference for school administrators. During the conference they attended a workshop that had to do with the Educational Reforms that will be introduced in the 2005-06 school year. One of the main concerns, and the focus of this particular Workshop, was *Constructivism*, the educational methodology that will become the national model when the Reforms take effect.

When the speaker began the Workshop, he asked if any schools were currently using the constructivist model... Lupita and Ayve were the only ones to respond. During the course of the Workshop Lupita was given the opportunity to discuss some of the challenges our staff and students have faced as we have been working to apply this model throughout our curriculum.

After the Workshop, the Staff Development Coordinator from one of the major Public School Systems (COBAY) spoke with Lupita and Ayve about her specific concerns. It turned out that the COBAY offices at the Federal level have mandated that all of their teachers must take a Continuing Education course on Constructivism and that she would be organizing the training course. Her problem was *finding someone to teach her teachers!* As you may have already guessed, she asked Lupita if our school would be willing to offer a Continuing Ed. Course for her teachers and paid for by their administration.

After this discussion, Lupita submitted a proposal for a course that would cover 4 modules and would include 5 of our teachers to provide

the instruction. After a bit of negotiation, our plan was accepted and is currently being offered on a trial basis to 125 teachers... if the trial goes well, there are an additional 700 or so teachers in the state that will also need to take our course! In addition to beginning to have the impact on the local Academic Community, this has been a great economic windfall for the school and for our teachers.

In addition to getting paid to teach these courses, we hope that a percentage of the profit can be used to fund a Continuing Education program for our teachers to pursue postgraduate degrees and to continue in their professional development.

All this is to say how much fun it is to work for a God like ours. I am constantly sur-

prised by his activity on behalf of the school and at the different ways that he does things according to his timeline rather than mine (for more on this, check out the other articles). Please be in prayer for wisdom for our teachers as they continue working with the teachers from COBAY and that they will have individual opportunities to discuss not only our methodology but also our foundational principles.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Teaching Teachers	1
Thinking Maps Update	2
Augusta Christian	3
Project Update	4

SERFAM
A.C.
Mérida, Yucatán
MEXICO



Lupita and the troops pray to get ready for the first day's class at COBAY. Pictured: Alejandra, Josué, Lupita, Josefa & Ayve (Background).

THINKING MAPS UPDATE

If you have been keeping track of some of the things that have been going on here, you might remember that Leslie Fortier, a member of Woodlands Pres. Church in Hattiesburg, MS and English teacher at Jones County Junior College, has been working with our staff to help them to use "Thinking Maps". These maps are an invaluable tool for helping students to learn how to organize, categorize and present information. There are 8 different maps that are used for different types of cognitive functions varying from brainstorming information to showing analogous relationships. Since the original workshop in November 2003, our teachers have been incorporating the maps in their regular classroom instruction. Following is a brief note from Les regarding her last visit here May 22-29.

Maps, Maps, and More Maps!!!

The purpose of my May visit to Blas Pascal was two-fold. First of all, I wanted to observe in all the classes where the teachers had been using Thinking Maps to make sure they were being used as designed, to observe teachers using them as they instructed their classes, to see examples of student-created maps for assignments, and to make copies of samples to share with the folks back in the states. Secondly, I wanted to work with the English teachers to help them coordinate their curriculum in the most effective way possible. I was delighted with progress in both of these areas.

A tool is effective only if it is used in the way it was designed to be used and if it is used often enough to become a natural, even automatic, part of a process. The class is eleventh grade literature. The teacher and students construct a detailed bubble map on the board describing the Medieval Period. Next the teacher writes an assignment on the board for the students to complete for homework; it includes three maps: another bubble map, a multi-flow map, and a tree map. The teacher shows me notebooks of students that display many maps used over the course of the semester. The eleventh grade English teacher uses a tree map to categorize adjectives that demonstrate a connotation of good, bad, or neutral and another tree map to categorize –ed and –ing adjectives. The ninth grade math teacher uses a circle map and two brace maps to organize facts of geometry. The biology teacher uses circle maps and brace maps to help students gain an understanding of sexual organs in humans and animals. A tree map categorizes spelling patterns for eighth graders. A double bubble map compares and contrasts radio and television communication systems. Seventh graders illustrate children's stories they have written in a three-dimensional flow map. And the list goes on. All of these maps and more were used as I observed classes and talked to teachers and students during the week of May 24-28 when I returned to Mérida for the fourth time.

It's one thing for the teachers to use the maps in their instruction; it's quite another for students to demonstrate their understanding by including maps in reports and projects they have done throughout the semester. I saw maps used to organize essays, to explore the causes and effects of environmental problems, to compare and contrast present day culture and ancient Mayan culture, all done by students. How gratified I have been to see the way these teachers and students have begun to incorporate the maps into their curriculum as a viable and vital tool in the learning process. I've conducted training in the use of the maps for several schools in the states. The spirit and effectiveness with which the maps are being used at Blas Pascal tops them all!!!

Thanks for your help too Les!



Les with Staff in the November Workshop

AUGUSTA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL Senior Class Trip to Mérida

May was a busy month here, especially from the 13th to the 18th... *but it almost wasn't!*

Some of you might remember that our daughter, Sara, graduated last year from Augusta Christian School. While Sara was going to school in Augusta, we began a relationship with the school that has allowed us the privilege of hosting their Senior Class Trip for 4 of the last 5 Senior Class groups. This year we hosted a group of 67 students and teachers, but as I mentioned before; it almost didn't happen.



This isn't a picture of the students waiting in Atlanta... this was part of the VBS project in a *verysmall* church in downtown Mérida.

We began working with ACS at the end of last summer to coordinate this year's trip. Because the group was so large, we put together the Hotel reservations, rented buses to move everyone around, organized the meals and set up VBS ministries in 2 small local churches with a couple of months advance notice. Although everything was ready to go on our end when May 13th rolled around, the flight out of Atlanta wasn't. An extremely severe weather system that had produced heavy hailstorms and some tornadoes had moved into the Houston area and forced the airport to close down incoming and outgoing flights. When the group arrived in Atlanta and received news that it was highly probable that no flights would be going into Houston that day, they began waiting *and praying*... we

received news about the delay late that afternoon and we began notifying the hotel, buses *and praying*.

To make a long story short, they finally left Atlanta at 7:30 PM, about 15 minutes after they were supposed to be leaving Houston to come to Mérida. Arriving in Houston, they touched ground long enough to pick up the passengers awaiting the Houston flight and finally arrived here about 2:00 AM.

We adjusted the schedule to allow them to have a few extra hours sleep and then began activities that included a trip to the ruins at Uxmal, an excursion to Cuzamá to swim in some beautiful Cenotes (sinkholes), some time at the beach and a 2 night Vacation Bible School project in two different churches. In spite of a rough start, it was a great trip for the students... both relaxing and educational.

One exciting aspect of hosting the ACS group was that 8 students from Byron's advanced English classes in CEPB worked along with them as translators during the VBS activities. It was great to see some friendships develop between both groups and we hope that some of these turn into lasting relationships. We also had the opportunity to talk with Carolyn Giddens, the High School Principal, about future interchange activities with both teachers and students.



Overall, we are very grateful for the privilege of hosting the trip that almost wasn't... we were proud to see how well the students behaved and their love for the Lord manifested in their enthusiasm in working with the children from the churches.

A SPECIAL THANKS TO:

CEBP Foundation Group

The Jolly Evangelistic Foundation
Southeastern Equipment Company
Sunbelt Nissan
First Pres. Church, Dothan AL
First Pres. Church, Washington NC
Wynndale Pres. Church, Terry MS
Dr. & Mr. Ken Byrd
Dr. William K. Johnson
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Knott
Mr. & Mrs. Ernie Oswalt
Dr. & Mrs. Weems Pennington
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Smith

Student Scholarships 2003-04

Mr. Luís Canto
Ms. Dulce Canto
Mr. & Mrs. David Hoffman
Dr. & Mrs. Rubén Madera
Dr. & Mrs. Ricardo Santana
Shalom Pres. Church - Men's Group
Shalom Pres. Church - Session
Shalom Pres. Church - Youth Group

Project Development 2003-2004

Christ Pres. Church, New Braunfels TX
Evangelical Pres. Church, Annapolis MD
Second Pres. Church, Memphis TN
Trinity Pres. Church, Charlottesville VA
Woodland Pres. Church, Hattiesburg MS

In Our Next Issue (Tentatively)

Project Update

Teaching Teachers Update

Other Stuff

PRESBYTERIAN EVANGELISTIC FELLOWSHIP

PEF, the Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship, is a nonprofit faith mission whose purpose is to practice, train and equip God's people to do Biblical Evangelism, anywhere, anytime with anyone. The PEF Center in Decatur, GA houses our administrative team. The US team is spread across many states, and the International team labors in twenty-five nations and two regions beyond our domestic borders. For more information about PEF Ministries or short-term ministry opportunities, please call the PEF office at (800) 225-5733 and speak to either Laurie Miller or Peter Siaway.



SERFAM, A.C.

SERFAM, A.C., is a satellite ministry of PEF in Mérida, Yucatán, Mexico and is directed by Bryce King - General Director, Manuel Glory - Treasurer, and Wilbur Madera - Secretary. As a non-profit organization, SERFAM, A.C. offers family services through the development of educational, recreational and community projects. Our primary goals are to evangelize, promote biblical values and minister to family and community needs while at the same time providing leadership training for Mexican men and women.

PROJECT UPDATE How You Can Help

If you have been following the development of the school, you will remember that in the last update we were looking at the possibility of purchasing a large piece of property for future growth. As we have been praying for direction over the last couple of months, we have concluded that the Lord is leading in a different direction. After having rejected our offers to purchase the property next door (more than once), the owner has expressed interest in selling us the rear third of his property... sufficient area for needed facilities. This adjustment changes our timeline and priorities to the following:

1. Complete the construction of a Library/Computer Lab (end of 2004).
2. Purchase the land next door (end of 2005).
3. Construction of new Jr/Sr High School Facilities (finish by August 2007).
4. Open Elementary School (August 2007).

If you would like to help support this project financially, are interested in organizing a missions trip or would simply like to visit Mérida to learn more about how you can be involved, please contact us directly at:

brycesking@yahoo.com or pefmerida@yahoo.com

Tel. 011 52 (999) 946-6436

Hey! Check out our Updated (finally!) Website
www.geocities.com/pefmerida