



CPI Co-Workers Persevere Despite Violence In Nayarit, Mexico

By Steven Shepard

Christy and I, along with Gary and Carolyn Ackerman, recently returned from Tepic in the state of Nayarit, Mexico, on February 17. A dramatic rise in violence involving 2 warring drug cartels and government authorities was evident. Just two days before we arrived, two Mexican marines were killed in a mall parking lot. Our visit, however, seemed normal except that on the main roads going in and out of the city there were heavily armed police and speed bumps. Of course the local people were also talking about the violence, but they told us that foreigners are not being targeted in Tepic like they are on the border. Because of this, plans are still going forward for a mission team in July. Meanwhile the Mexican pastors and churches are learning to trust in the Lord in a greater way. During our time we visited with two pastors, spoke at a conference, and at church gatherings.

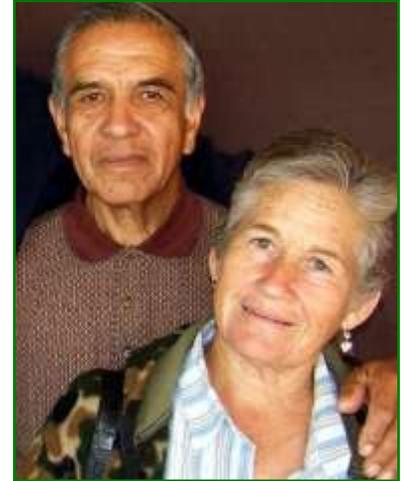
*In 2000 CPI began working with native Huichol missionary **Domingo de la Cruz and his wife Asucena (top right)**. They have been used of God to establish a church in a large, remote, formerly unreached, mountain village in Nayarit despite considerable opposition.*



***Lenon and Meri Gomez (bottom right)** are CPI's newest co-workers in Nayarit (since 2008). Lenon has planted 3 churches in needy towns on the outskirts of Tepic.*



***Jose and Olga Lopez (right)** left their home and two businesses in Mexicali to move to San Cayetano where they have since pioneered that town's first church. In 1993, Jose accompanied a CPI team on an exploratory trip with a vision to start a new work somewhere in Nayarit.*



The Necessity and Power of the New Birth

Article by Steven Shepard

In John 3:7 Jesus said to a prominent Jewish religious leader, **“Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”** This was intended not so much as a command but rather as a declaration of something absolutely necessary, not only for Nicodemus, but for every person. What does it mean to be born again and why is it necessary?

It is necessary because in our first birth, we arrive with a corrupt nature that loves sin and is hostile towards God. Sin separates us from God and leaves us spiritually dead. We live self-centered rather than God-centered lives. We do not desire God and are therefore unable to please Him, love Him, or surrender ourselves to Him. When we are born again, we are born of the Holy Spirit. We receive a new nature inclined towards God. Only by receiving this new heart is it possible to enter God's kingdom. Until and unless we are born again we will remain faithless, unrepentant, unconverted, and therefore still dead in sins and deserving of God's judgment.

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The Necessity and Power of the New Birth *(continued from page 1)*

This second birth is essential in the formation of a true Christian. It is the difference between having only an external facade of religion and having true salvation. Counterfeit Christians can repeat a sinner's prayer, be baptized, serve in the church, and even sacrifice to help the needy. But their works can never win God's favor because they are the fruit of ungodly motives. Reforming our sin nature is impossible. We need a new nature; we must be made a new creation.

Being born again always dramatically changes us from within. We can know this change has occurred by observing certain evidences in our lives. We now believe in and persevere with Christ. Our affections are turned toward the Lord instead of this world. We love the Word of God. We deeply love our brothers and sisters in Christ. We hate sin and struggle against it. We strive to be obedient to the Lord. These are characteristics that could not have been produced by our old sinful nature. But how does this dramatic change of heart occur?

We cannot cause ourselves to be born again, just as we cannot cause ourselves to be born the first time. Nor when we are dead can we cause ourselves to live again. God must act upon us by His Holy Spirit. He does this as we are confronted with the Gospel message. He draws us and calls us to Himself. Then after we believe and are justified, God seals us by His Spirit (marks us as His own), adopts us into His family, and preserves us until we are with Him in glory. If we are born again, the rest will always follow. Paul said he was "confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ". (Philippians 1:6)

Verses for study:

Sinful nature & inability to please God or reform ourselves (Rom 5:19; Eph 2:1-3; Is 64:6; Rom 7:18; Rom 3:10-12; Rom 8:7-8; Jer 13:23; Eph 4:17-18; Jer 17:9; 1 Cor 2:14; Matt. 7:17-18)

The new birth and its necessity (Ezekiel 36:26-27; 2 Cor 5:17; Titus 3:5; John 1:12-13; John 3:8; Gal 6:15-16; Col 2:13; Rom 8:9; 2 Cor 13:5; John 6:44; 1 Peter 1:3)

Evidences of the new birth (1 John 3:9-10, 14; 1 John 5:1,4; 1 John 4:7; 1 John 2:3-4; James 4:4; Eph 2:10; 1 Peter 1:2; Titus 2:11-12; Rom 8:5; John 8:47)

Once we are born again God will preserve us (1 Thess 5:23-24; 1 Cor 1:8-9; Jude 1, 24; 1 Peter 3:3-5; John 6:39, 40, 44; John 10:27-29; Rom 8:30; Rom 8:15-16; John 5:24; 2 Tim 1:12)

CPI Prayer Requests for 2011

1. **Matses tribe in the Amazon jungles:** for the training conferences conducted by the Matses pastors and for the new churches in Brazil to be strengthened and grow.
2. **Yaminahua tribe in the Amazon jungles:** for strong Christian leaders to be raised up and for churches to be established in all the villages.
3. **Pastors in Peru:** for funding to help start a Print Shop business that would help sustain a Pastors' Training Center and new church plant in Lima. (about \$10,000 is still needed)
4. **Huichol of Mexico:** for more conversions in Guadalupe Ocotan.
5. **Short-term missions:** for God to unfold His perfect plan for each of the 3 summer teams in 2011.
6. **New fields:** for guidance and provision to pioneer church planting among the unreached in Africa and to adopt new church plants in west central Mexico.
7. **The Shepards:** for God's anointing,

(Right) CPI sent funds for food for families affected by flooding around the jungle city of Pucallpa, Peru.



(Bottom) Steven and Christy Shepard minister at a seminar in San Cayetano, Mexico.



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