

# Merry Christmas

From the Kratochvil Family in Nicaragua

Dear Pastor and Church,

December 2007

As many of you know, we are now home in the states for our first furlough and will be seeing many of you very soon. It was a sad thing to say goodbye to those that we have come to love so dearly in Nicaragua. On Wednesday evening, November 28<sup>th</sup>, we said our goodbyes for we knew we would not be seeing our people on Friday the 30<sup>th</sup> because our plane was leaving at 1:50 AM. Nadia and I talked on the way to the airport of how hard it would be over the next year, yet we had to trust God to take care of His church. After arriving at the airport and checking in our luggage we were thoroughly surprised to be met by a large group of our church who had taken a bus with their families in the middle of the night just to let their pastor and his wife know how much they loved them and were going to miss them. If we didn't have mixed emotions about leaving before, boy did we ever have them now. It was just the sendoff we needed to remind us of what we are returning to the US to share, and what we have waiting for us in Nicaragua. Besides this blessing, I believe the greatest I received before leaving the country was given me by one of our teenagers, Maxwell. He asked if we would truly be returning next year. The Nicaraguans have seen many missionaries come and go since the Contra war in the late 70's and 80's. Many have come and started churches only to leave a short time later and never return, thus leaving baby churches and Christians without leadership or direction. I assured him that we would definitely be returning and that he did not have to worry about that. To which he responded, "Good, because if you would not have come here I would not be saved, and I want you to come back." Oh yes, we will definitely be going back!

In our last service at Iglesia Bautista Esperanza our youth Sunday school teacher and fulltime, staff member, Valeriano, shared a devotion with us to prepare our minds for the upcoming holiday. He challenged us to remember God's "unspeakable gift" as mentioned in 2 Corinthians 9:15. While it is true that in Nicaragua they do celebrate Christmas and the tradition of giving gifts, they do not seem to be overcome by the materialism that we see so prevalent here in the US. Christmas takes on a whole new meaning and significance when we are not focusing on the gifts we give, but rather on the "unspeakable" or indescribable gift that God gave through His son Jesus. Please pray for Valeriano as he basically will be in charge of the work in our absence. I have spoken to him since we have left and everything is continuing on just as before. Pray also for the Sunday school teachers and the rest of the ministry leadership as they continue to minister to the children, youth and adults of our baby church. Pray that the church will grow and that souls continue to be saved over the next year. The church is the Lord's, and he will continue to protect it and bless it just as he has always done.

On behalf of the Iglesia Bautista Esperanza in Las Palmas, Managua, Nicaragua, and our family, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. May God richly bless you for your love and service for Him. Thank you for another year of faithful prayers and financial support. Only God knows all that has been and will be done because of your faithfulness. We love you and thank God upon every remembrance of you.

Your missionaries to the Nicaraguan people,



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