

## Notes from Dan and DeAnn!!

*\*You are so vital to the ministry here. Thank you for praying for what is going on in Mexico!*

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### Finally...we have our Visas!

#### Prayer Requests:

- Pray for good reintegration of Victor into the team as he is returning the 1st of March.
- Pray for Eddy and Cristina as they are in process with his visa and also raising support.
- Pray for 2 students from each Catalytic location to go to our national conference. I don't think there is any better momentum builder or alignment activity that we have. Specifically from Puebla, Pachuca, Aguascalientes and Acapulco.
- Pray that the Spring Break groups and Summer Project groups coming down would have successful trips.
- Pray that DeAnn and I would continue to grow in our relationship with God and in our relationship with each other.

I have written this before (or at least I should have written this before!) but I'm going to write it again anyway. In Mexico everything just takes longer...way longer! And this visa process took even longer than way longer!

Thank you for your prayers. I can't imagine trying to get this FM3 visa (a religious ministers visa) without prayer. Let me just tell you what this does for us.

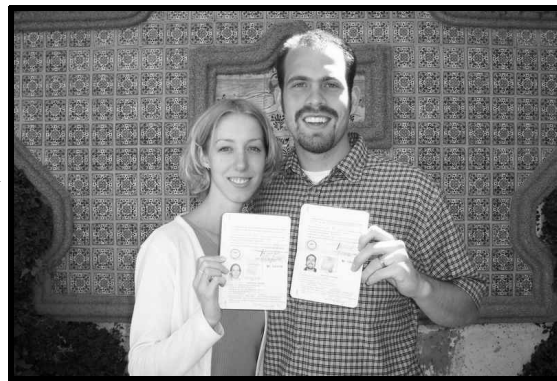
With a FM3 Visa we are legally able to preach, hold meetings, organize events, etc. Without this visa for doing any of the above we could be deported. Not a really fun option! While we have been in Mexico we have had our visas "in process" so we were technically covered under the FM3 visa...we just wouldn't be able to show anyone that we were. Now let me run through the "visa acquiring timeline."

Last summer, June 2003, we started work on the visas. We asked for prayer due to some extremely close deadlines for paperwork submission. And we got the paperwork in on time. We were then supposedly going to pick up our visas in August at our briefing. Obviously, that didn't happen! Next we arrived in

Mexico. Driving a loaded to the brim mini-van on a tourist visa. The border guards had to be wondering what tourists needed with pots and pans and a desktop computer. But they let us through! We then heard that the paperwork we had submitted was going to expire before we were going to be back in the states and that the nonrefundable deposit we had paid was simply that, unrefundable. We worked with the agency and got an extension on the paperwork.

Then at Christmas we made a trip to Chicago to do the final part of our paperwork (and I won't go into the details, but it wasn't easy.) But to make a long story short, on the last day before we would have been late in registering

our visas we were in Mexico City finalizing everything. We still weren't convinced that was the end of the story, but Matt Hiller, the STINT coordinator here in Mexico, handed me the visas five days ago. God is good. We have not had any trouble not having them and he obviously wanted us to grow in patience! Thanks for all the prayers and praise God with us that we finally have our official FM3 Visas!



Here we are, Visas in hand!

## And Here's the Rest of the Story...

*"Did becoming older bring me closer to Jesus?"*

This article is brought on by my reflections over the past three weeks, beginning with our STINT retreat and

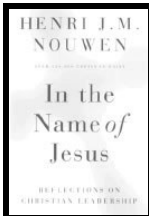
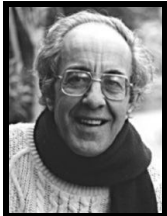
the study we did there on the book "In the Name of Jesus" by Henri Nouwen. This book was very impacting. Nouwen had written books before this during his time as a Priest and a professor at Yale and Harvard, but I believe that a huge life change, that of going to minister at a communal living home for the mentally handicapped, gave him great insight into Christian leadership. "In the Name of Jesus" was the outflow of what he learned.

In the introduction Nouwen wrote the above question; "Did becoming older bring me closer to Jesus?" This question struck me and I began to look at my life and see how far had I really come in my spiritual journey. I have grown and continue to grow but my question (being a business major) was how was my ROI or Return on Investment. I have been a Christian now for years, gone to church, led Bible Studies, been in Bible studies, evangelized, read my Bible and prayed. But if I were to be critically honest I would have to say that if my life were a business venture and I were a venture capitalist, I would never have invested in myself. My ROI is pretty poor.

But the reflections do not end there. Nouwen didn't leave me feeling this way without giving some hope for a better return in the future. I was so struck by this simple book and the simple truths found within that I needed to share these with you. There were three temptations and three solutions (a form of teaching my mind enjoys!)

Number 1: The temptation to be relevant (or competent) Based on Mat 4:3-4. The question is "where is my identity most rooted?" In what I can do, or in Christ? Nouwen's solution was to root our lives in contemplative prayer or "dwelling in God's presence, to listen to God's voice, to look at God's beauty, to touch God's incarnate Word, and to taste fully God's infinite goodness." From this I had to ask and examine the time I spent in prayer. I think it would be a good thing for all of us to ask ourselves if our prayer time is more than just passing the time with our eyes closed!

**"When spirituality becomes spiritualization, life in the body becomes carnality."  
-Henri Nouwen**



The author and the book.

Number 2: The temptation to be spectacular Based on Mat 4:5-7. The question is "how often do I want people to see me as someone who is spectacular?" To fulfill this desire we lose so much intimacy with the Father. We give up our dependence on Him. For this Nouwen suggests we practice the disciplines of confession and forgiveness to the end that we minister in community. Confess sin together. Pray together. Work together. Minister together. In this way we cannot be the center but the God of the message and His message are.

Number 3: The temptation to be powerful Based on Mat 4:8-10 Nouwen says, "What makes the temptation to be powerful so seemingly irresistible? Maybe it's because power offers an easy substitute for the hard task of love." Christian leadership cannot be based on power and control but on love. And if it is on love, both for God and His followers, then the Christian leader needs to be willing to be led by God even if that means to places we would rather not go in order for Christ to be made manifest in our lives. Nouwen suggests that only through theological reflection, seeing life through the eyes of God, may we truly live lives led by God. Then we may be able to comfort the grieving, have faith in times of trial, and praise God even when our souls ache.

I have done such an injustice to the content of this book but in my effort I hope that you have seen something of what it offers. If you are a Bible study leader, a lay minister, a youth pastor, a pastor, etc. let me suggest taking this little book and reflecting on it. I believe that only good things will come of it.