

# Mission to the Children

## News Update

Website: [www.missiontothechildren.org](http://www.missiontothechildren.org)

Email: [info@missiontothechildren.org](mailto:info@missiontothechildren.org)

May, 2021

### PASTOR'S CORNER

*"I am the Vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him is the one who bears much fruit, because without me you can do nothing." (John 15:5 EHV)*

#### Bear God-Pleasing Fruit

Jesus tends to illustrate deep, biblical truths in a simple, understandable way. That is no exception with his illustration of a vine and its branches to explain how Christians bear God-pleasing fruit.

It was commonplace to see the vine's skinny trunk strung out along the ground or on terraced poles in 1<sup>st</sup> century Israel. Sprouting from the vine were branches that were expected to produce fruit. Yet not every branch would produce this desired fruit. It was not the vine's fault. Rather, the fault lied with the branch itself or its connection

to the vine. Until that problem was fixed, it would be impossible for a branch to produce its expected fruit. Jesus explains that he is the vine, and the branches are Christians who have faith in Jesus as their Savior.

In keeping with the illustration, Jesus goes on to teach that Christians can only produce God-pleasing fruit if they are connected to their Savior. If that connection is lacking, then Christians will be unable to produce any fruit that is truly God-pleasing.

As society begins to reopen and ministries consider which pre-Covid methods to use in sharing the gospel, Christians are again encouraged to bear God-pleasing fruit. It is for that reason we wisely review Jesus' lesson of the vine, the branches, and its fruit so we may bear God-pleasing fruit to the greatest possible degree.

As a branch must be connected to the vine to bear fruit in the first place, so we must be connected to Jesus if we are to bear God-

pleasing fruit. This connection is not a surface level knowledge of Jesus or a faint memory from our past. It is a connection where we remain in Christ and Christ remains in us. As sinners, we need this deep connection to our Savior because we daily sin and daily deserve the full punishment for our wrongs. Yet, because of our connection to Christ and his connection to us, we receive the full forgiveness of our sins that rids us of all guilt and punishment. If this connection is lacking, we run the risk of losing our ability to produce such God-pleasing fruit. As a vine-connected branch is expected to produce much fruit, so are Christians expected to produce God-pleasing fruit. We hear God's encouragement to bear this fruit by selflessly loving one another and our God. We can show this selfless love in all sorts of places - in worship, at work, among our friends, or in the rural villages of northern Sonora. For so long the coronavirus has dampened our spirits and canceled many of our preferred methods of bearing God-pleasing fruit. As a result, God's children have faced increasing temptations to be complacent in bearing their fruit, so they look more like fruitless branches of

the vine. Let this not be. Rather, let us consider how we might be fruitful branches of our Savior vine in ever-increasing ways as society begins to reopen. While it will take a while for us to bear God-pleasing fruit at pre-Covid levels in worship, at work, among our friends, and in the rural villages of northern Sonora, the encouragement still stands for us to carry out this wondrous charge. And as we do so, let us prioritize our connection to the vine so that we are always filled with a forgiven life that is empowered to bear God-pleasing fruit. Amen.

*Pastor Tim Patoka*

### *President's Corner*

As we ponder the events of the past 15 months, we can readily see God's providential hand in all that has occurred worldwide, in our country, and especially in our mission. Despite the pandemic, limited sources of income and return of the cartels to the area we are privileged to serve, communications have continued. Yes, the number of school supplies and Christmas gifts and Posadas had to be limited, as well as our travel across the border. And, still, our God allowed us to do what could

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be done along with our Mexican volunteers and Pastor Alejandro.

As I write this, John Kramer has just returned from a trip to accessible villages, dropping off food coupons and delivering two sewing machines to the women.

A special blessing was performing a Baptism and receiving a request for another one in June. John was able to do services while there as well.

What a blessing!

As we pray for our fellow Christians across the border, we do not know what God has in mind; but we do know he will direct our paths. Our WELS friends all over the U.S. have continued to fund us as well as pray for the Mission. We are currently planning events for the summer and fall, well aware that we are still constrained by international rules and border closures. We cherish your prayers and gifts on behalf of this vital mission.

Long-time members of Mission to the Children are mourning the death of a dear friend from Grace Church in Safford, Addie Shelton. She has been involved from the very first inception of the Mission and continued to work on behalf of our Christian brothers and sisters in Sonora throughout her later years. Many were blessed by her love, labor, and prayers. To God be the Glory!  
Your Sister in Christ,  
*Ruth Schaller, President*

### *Trip Report*

*Trip Report April 2021*

On the 25th of April I made a one-day trip to the villages of Sonora. I left Grace Lutheran Church at 8:30am in the Mission's van with a small load of two Treadle sewing machines donated from Christian friends in Minnesota. It has been a year since my last visit in March of 2020. Ryan Vanek from Las Vegas and I made that last trip just as COVID was hitting the area last year. That was the last

time the mission has visited the villages except for Sasabe on the border.

My first stop was at our church in



Sasabe where I performed the church service at 11:00am along with both Sacraments. The little young baby was very sweet and simply looked at everything happening to her. The Holy Spirit brought another person into the Kingdom through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. An event that brought joy to everyone...including the angels of heaven.

Next, Benjamin from Sasabe joined me to Atil, Tubutama and La Reforma where I gave a shortened version of the sermon from Sasabe and passed out food coupons. The Murrieta store in Atil is now closed as Mr. Murrieta is now too old to run his

store. I visited with him thanking him for being our coupon store for 20 some years. A new store was chosen for coupon exchanges and the two of us were off to the next town.

The people attended all our Bible study/devotions in numbers similar to a year ago. They had patiently waited for our return, always hoping that the mission would be there the next month. Yet they also understood that COVID rules were keeping us away. They were happy to see us back.

According to the CDC, even now, I will need to quarantine for 7 days upon my return to the States. That is not the fun part. Because of the need to visit so many places and doing everything in one day I did not visit Altar on this trip.

It appears now that I will visit Altar on the 16th of May to either attend or perform the funeral of my dear friend, Pastor Alejandro.  
By John Kramer

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### ***IN MEMORY***

A shepherd went home to be with our Lord this week. This shepherd watched over and tended his flocks. He fed our Lord's word to them. His job is now finished, he kept the faith, and the Lord took him home.

Pastor Alejandro graduated from the seminary in Mexico. Upon his graduation he was assigned

to served two congregations, one in Sasabe and one in Altar, Mexico.

He served these two congregations for over ten years. He was also involved with MttC Vacation Bible Classes, Children's Sunday School and so much more with all of the villages that MttC served.

Pastor Alejandro will truly be missed by so many people both in Mexico and here in the US. For all of us who are left behind, it is with great sadness but also with overwhelming joy that we know he is with our Lord. We will miss you forever. Peace be with you.