

News From The Beauchemins November 2017



Dear friends,

This letter is long overdue. We had hoped to get it out last month but a number of things set us back. Thanks for your patience.

A dear friend reminded me last week of what he called the “first things,” that Jesus was missing in our newsletters. As he spoke those words, I took them to heart. It led me to pray and rethink how we should talk about ourselves, our faith and our ministry. I didn’t share it with Denise at first, as I didn’t want to add more on her plate.

To write about ourselves is, frankly, not easy. Writing a short, well written letter takes much more time—especially if it’s going to be personal. Longer letters are usually not what most people want or need. It’s a challenge to find the right balance. And when your lives are extremely busy, it’s that much harder. But the part that weighs on me the most when writing our letters is that I don’t want to leave an impression of myself greater than I am. It’s like I need to prove the value of what I’m doing each time newsletter month rolls around. That’s not easy at times when you wonder if the vision or dream you hope to achieve is really possible—especially when a project drags on and on like mine has.

I think I need to lay it all at Jesus’ feet . . . stop thinking about how I might come across . . . just be as honest as I can about our lives and ministry. You deserve that. My task is to live, walk, write, do all things in sincerity and truth and leave the rest to my Father. I must remind myself often of what Jesus said about seeking first His kingdom and righteousness, and he’ll take care of the rest.

Denise and I have lived in the same mobile home park for over 16 years now. We are a small community and word gets around about the people who live here. Most of our neighbors know we were missionaries in Africa and are involved in dental ministry in Mexico and elsewhere. About three years ago I organized meetings in our park to deal with stressful park issues we were facing and again 3 months ago I spear-headed a community newsletter to all our 40-50 residents over the course of 5-6 weeks in dealing with a pressing problem we were all facing. I think people here got a sense that we genuinely care for our community.

A few weeks ago, Denise and I were walking by a couple sitting outside and started talking together as we have on numerous occasions. On that evening though, Juan began talking about his inner life, about his deep feelings of guilt before God and admitted he was not a good person. So shocked and stunned by such deep, soul searching sincerity, I listened and listened. When he finished, I told him that I didn’t see myself as a good person either and shared with him how in Jesus we are transformed by His Spirit in us. I’m looking forward to talking to him again, so we can go a little deeper.

The exact same thing is happening with my neighbor across the street (another Juan). Not too long ago we had a very deep conversation in my living room as he started asking me questions about God. That was not out of a vacuum as I’ve helped him out in various ways over the last few years. So I talked to him at least 45 minutes about my faith, and after, he asked me if I could teach him the Bible. We will hopefully start that soon.

Last week, my next door neighbor shared with me that her granddaughter was one of the victims killed in the church shooting near San Antonio. It was in the context of my helping her with an issue with her

SUV. I was able to express to her my deepest condolences and hug her and tell her we will be praying for her and her family. I offered to help any way I could. I'm keeping in touch her about this.

I was talking to another neighbor recently about the sickness of his daughter and listened to his story and told him we will be praying and offered him our assistance in any way we could. They're in their 70's and need to drive their daughter for weekly dialysis treatments. She's in her 50's and needs a kidney. I asked him if I might qualify as a donor and he said I was too old. They are strong believers in Jesus.

Another neighbor, Connie, lost her husband and mom this last year (and her dog) all in a few weeks time. She's been through so much. Denise and I stop by from time to time to talk with her and encourage her. We've offered to help her with anything she might need and of course invited her to come over for coffee or tea anytime, that we would enjoy her company. She's hasn't taken us up on that, yet. We welcome your prayers for her and all our neighbors as I'm sure you pray for yours.

Well . . . there are more things I could share but I think that's enough for now. I thought I would give you a glimpse of another side of us. I must say though, talking like this feels like I'm parading my spirituality. It's okay if God's wants to stretch me in this because you deserve to see the personal side of us more.

Dental Ministry Update

I think it's good at this point, to look at how our faith in Jesus is lived out in the context of a dental ministry such as ours. You know, dental care in missions virtually always takes place in relationship with local churches—with national believers. This bridges language and cultural barriers we would otherwise face. Local believers are members of the communities we serve—they already share their faith in Jesus in the context of daily life. Medical and dental clinics create unique opportunities for them to enhance these relationships and even make new ones. It's a big deal when foreigners come to town to lend a helping hand. It's a time of celebration and joy for all. Everyone comes—believers and unbelievers—interacting together in the context of Christians lovingly serving their fellow man. Please remember this when, in our letters, I hone-in on our small part—training and equipping such missionaries to provide loving dental care in a team ministry.

I need to emphasize another point here: everything we do as followers of Jesus must flow out of *genuine* love for it to truly mean something—both to God and to those we serve. People can sense it if we truly care for them or if we are merely going through the motions.

When Jesus saw the suffering crowds, His heart broke for them in their suffering (Mt 9:36-38). Pure compassion compelled Him to action—nothing else. Paul cautions us that our good deeds, no matter how sacrificial they might be, if done without genuine love means nothing (1Cor 13:3). Only true love can impact the world for Christ. I have been stressing this point in our classes the last few years as well as to myself. This is easier said than done. It falls on each of us daily, to seek God in prayer to fill us with His genuine agape love and compassion—we simply cannot manufacture it. I'm not satisfied by performing “acts of love” when I don't truly feel compassion in my heart for those I serve.

Denise and I taught seven students at our June class at the Institute of Biblical Community Development, in OK. Yes, Denise helped me train! It went very well. I wish I had time to tell you their stories, especially the Africans. One of our students, Laura Morris, came to Mexico with me in July to gain some field experience before going to Haiti this month. She went there with her friend Sandra to provide dental care for children at two orphanages. What a wonderful opportunity to field test our new program! After my time with Laura, we focused on making simplified videos so missionaries could easily learn to treat tooth decay wherever they are. Laura is my first student to actually use them to train someone working

with her. Here's what she wrote us this week:

“In short, everything went well. We treated 55 patients in 4 days! Lots of them just got a fluoride treatment. I was actually amazed they didn't have tons of decay. We did the silver nitrate two days in a row for the patients who needed it. It was great! Sandra did so well walking into this knowing nothing. She watched your videos and she said that they were great to watch before meeting me and getting hands on teaching and experience.”

It was truly a joy for me to hear these words. I needed that. If you want to know more about her trip, I have other emails with more details.

We have 15 short video lessons we filmed at the Mennonite church near our home. Denise and I were so discouraged when we lost a whole morning of filming because we accidentally deleted our clips. She filmed me treating a person in the sanctuary with the pews and stain glass windows. We thought it would add a great touch. After losing the files we didn't feel comfortable asking the pastor if we could do it all again. The rest was done in the church activity room and under a tree in our yard - you can hear our wind chimes and Latino music of our neighbors in the background. A couple more were done in our home office studio. I had intended to use video clips from the June class, but it wasn't practical because of later technique changes. The original clips were twice as long but editing streamed them down— a very time-consuming process. They will be accompanied with our basic safety notes, online exam and field operations manual. The real time investment in all this was the evolution of ideas that went on and on over the last two years which finally led to our present level of simplicity. If you're interested in watching the videos, please email me and I'll gladly send you the YouTube links.



Financial support and correspondence may be sent to:
Gerry & Denise Beauchemin 8801 Boca Chica #45 Brownville, TX 78521
For tax deductible donations please email us for information.
Phone (956) 831- 9011 Email: gerrydenise@yahoo.com

Denise's Corner



Since our last newsletter I have kept busy as usual with everyday task, leading my ladies bible study, mentoring at MOPS and assisting Gerry with the dental ministry – including instrument fabrication, video recording, and training.

In our last newsletter I also shared with you about the new clinical trial I have been participating in since January. If you're following me on Facebook, you already know how that has been going. After being taken off all medication at the end of April, my platelets began dropping rapidly, and I had to go back to weekly blood tests. My platelets have been hovering in the high 20's – low 30's. Not the best place to be. But because I'm feeling well and have no signs of bleeding, bruising or extreme fatigue, my doctors are considering me stable and have just changed my testing schedule back to monthly.

I'm thankful for the reprieve from the weekly blood tests which have been wearing on me emotionally. Week after week, I've been going to Texas Oncology and sitting in a waiting room often full of people. Sometimes their suffering is very evident. And that has sometimes been overwhelming to me - so many people suffering, facing death, and losing hope. Occasionally I get to talk to some of them and offer encouragement. Sometimes they encourage me. But always it causes me to pray more. When I started this second clinical trial, I felt encouraged to be doing something that had the potential to not only help me but also to find a solution for others with bone marrow failure. I remind myself that I felt God's leading in this direction. But some days, I wonder if I did the right thing. Is the trial working for me? That still remains to be seen. I've been off all medication for 6 months and have not dropped to the point of needing transfusions. That's a major praise! I'm sure it's a result of all the prayers and words of encouragement I've been receiving. I know they are making a difference to my overall well being. The bottom line is, my life is in my Father's hands. My hope is in Him. And He always reminds me of the words He spoke to me at the beginning of this Aplastic Anemia journey – "Come what may, there's only victory in this for you."

Gerry and I were hoping to visit Renee and her family in South Africa this year, but put it off because of my blood counts. That's been pretty disappointing for all of us. But again, I'm thankful for a family who prays and believes with me for healing. It's beautiful to hear how our grandchildren are praying for me. Our 10 and 8 year old granddaughters are even fasting some of their favorite foods and treats from time to time. I feel so loved.

More family joy headed our way December 27, 2017 via scheduled c-section! Nicole and Paul will be adding another little girl to their family. **We're so excited to meet Isla (pronounced eye-la) Denise Petrarca soon.** Isla is being delivered a little sooner because Nicole was just diagnosed with gestational diabetes. Please keep Nicole and Isla in your prayers.

Well, it seems like we blinked our eyes and the holiday season is already upon us. Gerry and I want to take a moment to thank you for taking the time to read our news, for praying for us, and for supporting us the way you do. Your encouragement means so very much to us. We pray that your hearts will also be filled with joy as you reflect on God's many blessings. Happy Thanksgiving!

Love and Blessings,
Gerry & Denise

"Give thanks to the Lord for He is good; his love endures forever." Psalm 118:29