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Thinking It Through

BY ALEXANDER STRAUCH

Imitators of the Servant Christ

It appears that God gives every servant of the Lord a special subject of interest, a message, a lifelong passion. It is a subject that the person comes back to again and again throughout life. For example, J. I. Packer states that, throughout his life it was the inspiration and authority of Scripture that was of continual interest to him.

In my early 20s, I became disillusioned with the harsh ways in which Bible-believing Christians disagreed with and divided from one another. This drove me to the Scriptures for answers to my discouragement over the way Christians related to one another amidst their disagreements, most of which were minor disputes.

As a result of several years of reading and studying, I discovered that the New Testament clearly and repeatedly emphasizes the Christlike attitudes of humility, servanthood, and love that should radiate from our lives and permeate our local churches, especially in times of disagreement and conflict. This subject has been a lifelong passion.

Shortly after this time, a friend gave me the book *Brother Indeed* by Frank Holmes.¹ Robert C. Chapman's Christlike life confirmed everything I had read in the New Testament about the "more excellent way" of living (1 Corinthians 12:31), and having the mind of Christ within the congregation—humility and selfless service (Philippians 2:5).

Chapman was the spiritual mentor to George Mueller and a close friend to Hudson Taylor. Of Chapman, Spurgeon said he was "the saintliest man I ever met." As Chapman's biographers point out, he was a man of extraordinary missionary vision, and his local assembly was truly a Great Commission church, involved in mission projects in Spain, China, and India.

Early in his Christian ministry, Chapman said, "There are many who preach Christ, but not so many who live Christ; my great aim will be to live Christ." And that he did in the most un-

usual way. He became known as the "Apostle of Love." By the end of his life, Chapman had become so well known for his loving disposition and wisdom that a letter from abroad addressed simply to "R. C. Chapman, University of Love, England," was correctly delivered to his home.

We all wonder at times how we should act in difficult situations, especially in handling disagreement or difficult relationship problems. Where most of us will fail is not in doctrinal accuracy or in Bible interpretation, but in correctly dealing with difficult relationships, handling criticism, and facing church conflict and disagreement. Here is where Chapman can provide us with a most remarkable example to imitate.

I believe that following Chapman's extraordinary and inspiring example has saved me many regrets, heartaches, and broken relationships. Our local assembly has been spared division in its 54 years of existence because our elders have been committed to the attitudes and behaviors modeled by Robert Chapman.

To the proud, fighting Corinthians, Paul declared: "Yet I show you a more excellent way," that is, the path of Christlike love and humility (1 Corinthians 12:31). Chapman is a living, breathing example of the more excellent way of acting, speaking, and responding to problems.

At this particular time in our history of growing hostility and division within our society, and even within our churches, we desperately need the calm, patient, loving, humble example of R. C. Chapman.

As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ." Mr. Chapman could say the same to us today. I believe that the younger generation today needs to be introduced to the life of brother Chapman as a model of Christlike behavior and attitudes. As we begin a new year, I urge you to read afresh and consider this amazing man of God who truly imitated our Lord Jesus Christ. And to God alone be the glory. ■

Alexander Strauch is a commended worker based in Colorado.

¹ Now titled *Robert C. Chapman: 70 Years of Serving the Lord—Pastor, Teacher, and Evangelist* (Gospel Folio Press, 2008). See also Robert L. Peterson, *Robert Chapman: A Biography* (Lewis and Roth Publishers, 1995); Robert L. Peterson and Alexander Strauch, *Agape Leadership: Lessons in Spiritual Leadership from the Life of R. C. Chapman* (Lewis and Roth Publishers, 1991).

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Meeting People Where They Are

A Journey to Church Planting in Colombia



BY SAM KILLINS

The summer after my first year of college, I started to feel grown up: I had a job, I was consistently meeting with other believers, I was talking to a girl that I liked, and I was intentional in sharing the Gospel. I experienced a mix of feelings, both exciting and overwhelming. I would go to the gym and come home from my six-mile runs, only to fall asleep exhausted and wake up spontaneously at 2:00 a.m. to worship the Lord! Praying, studying God's Word, memorizing Scripture, and reading missionary biographies were how I spent my free time.

A few months passed, and I wanted to put everything on hold. I had started dreaming about becoming a mission worker in Colombia, but my father, Dr. Brian Killins (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 21), told me I should finish college first. I did not know how to balance my relationship with my girlfriend with the burden I felt to follow Jesus in Colombia—and so my life started to fall apart.

Sometime in my second year of college, I wrote the following journal entry: "The yoke of preaching Christ to an unbelieving people compels me. My passion has faltered in understanding more of the implications and obstacles to doing so; and even by writing here, I'm trying to fight my weakness; but my longing is still there. . . . To preach the Gospel where strength is re-

quired—Oh valiant Savior, give me the gaze of one who knows a challenge, a vision stung by blood that drips from Your brow!"

Eventually, I finished college, paid back my student loans, and took an exploratory trip to Colombia. After my travels, the elders from my church commended me as a worker to a southeastern town called San José in the jungles of Colombia. It was there that my dreams touched the ground, and I was faced with the brutal challenge of starting a church. I would play basketball with a group of guys and invite them over for a Bible study, but only one person showed up. I would go out and share the Gospel in the streets, but no one seemed to care. I started helping an indigenous community build a makeshift bridge over a flooded area that obstructed their road, but the project fell through. A month went by, and I started to feel like a joke.

After two years, I had experienced everything from dengue fever to almost being enlisted in the Colombian military!

Above (L-R): Sam and his fellow believers reach out to the homeless, sharing food and the Gospel with them on Friday nights; Functioning around flexibility, the Bogotá church has met for worship in many ways, including as a bicycle church; Alongside a man in Cúcuta who runs a boys' program, Sam freely preaches the Gospel to the young generation; Through the baseball team he set up, Sam builds relationships with young Venezuelan men.

Then I stumbled across a soccer game, and the guys needed an extra player, so they asked me to join in. I did, and it was the most miraculous game of my life! I scored a goal and helped set up another; from then on, the young men kept inviting me back to play. In turn, I invited them to a Bible study, and 20 showed up! Little by little, I started to set up the framework for us to become a church.

The rhythm of ministry

Disappointments, frustrations, progress, and new birth followed by disappointments, frustrations, progress, and new birth all over again seemed to be the steady rhythm of my ministry. After two years, I had experienced everything from dengue fever to almost being enlisted in the Colombian military!

And yet, there was a steady group of about 20 unlikely followers of Jesus with all kinds of problems in their lives, gathering together to remember the Lord and learn from His Word—including me.

I handed over the leadership of that church to mature believers and moved back to the USA, where another relationship fell through. What else was I supposed to do, other than take random jobs and start sharing the Gospel?

A flexible church

Three years later, I was commended again to go back to Colombia where my dream was revitalized. When I arrived, a couple of friends and I started up a college and career group in an already established church. This weekly Bible study grew to about 30 people until five of us, who lived closer to the center of Bogotá, decided to start meeting together on Sunday evenings to break bread. Initially, we met in a tea house but got kicked out because our music was too loud! Instead, we arranged to meet in a restaurant.

Around the same time, a friend invited us to travel downtown and share the Gospel with homeless people every Friday night. By this point there were about 20 of us meeting every Sunday evening to learn from the Scriptures, encourage one another, break bread, and pray. Ten of us would meet on Wednesdays to have a Bible study, and we would also gather together every Friday night before going into the city center.

Our group has always been willing to try just about anything for the Lord. On multiple occasions, we visited rehabilitation



centers without knowing what we were getting into. Once we tried having a bicycle church, where 15

of us rode to a central location and stopped to break bread and worship. There was also a time when we held church in a park, but the police were called. We held game evenings and arranged English classes, which we invited newcomers to and, likewise, shared the Gospel.

We are a flexible church that is not tied to a location. This means we can meet anywhere, in a conference room, restaurant, or theater. Whenever someone wants to receive baptism, we climb a nearby mountain where the brave new believer will step into freezing-cold water and get baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

When the fellowship grew to about 40 people, and we had matured in our faith, we started arranging short-term mission trips. The church in San José, where I was first involved in mission work, is still continuing, so we occasionally travel there to encourage them. More than a year ago, a devastating landslide swept through a southwestern town in Colombia, killing more than 500 people; we organized a mission trip to provide relief and Christ-centered counseling to anyone in need. During Holy Week 2018, a group of 12 individuals from our church took a trip to Cúcuta, a northeastern city bordering Venezuela, to share the love of Christ with Venezuelan immigrants.



Top (L-R): When a Christian desires to be baptized, the church hikes up a mountain to commit the life to God at the top; At the top, the believer is baptized in the cold mountain waters. **Above:** Five members of the original college and career group are now involved in the Bogotá church.



Where God leads

While sharing Christ's love with homeless people in the center of Bogotá, we noticed that there were a considerable number of Venezuelan immigrants. We told them about our church and the following Sunday 10 of them showed up! We were really encouraged. My friend and I started meeting with them in the hall of a run-down hotel three times a week, teaching them from the Word and praying for them before they headed out into the streets to find work. We also invited 30 people every Sunday afternoon for lunch.

Slowly but surely, more and more of our Venezuelan friends have been incorporated into our church and 60 people now meet regularly. A handful of our Venezuelan friends have received baptism. We have assisted three families with children in finding housing and a few more individuals who have started new jobs through offering ideas, recommendations, or references. We have also set up a baseball team with many of the young Venezuelan guys with whom we made contact at public bus stations.



This ministry to immigrants is an interesting phenomenon. Sometimes I wonder, if God wanted me to be a missionary to Venezuelans, why did he not just send me to Venezuela? But if I start thinking like that, I would also have to ask why I had to finish college or have relationships fall apart or get sick with dengue fever. Naturally, a lot of that was a result of my own mistakes, especially in my relationships. In all these things, God was

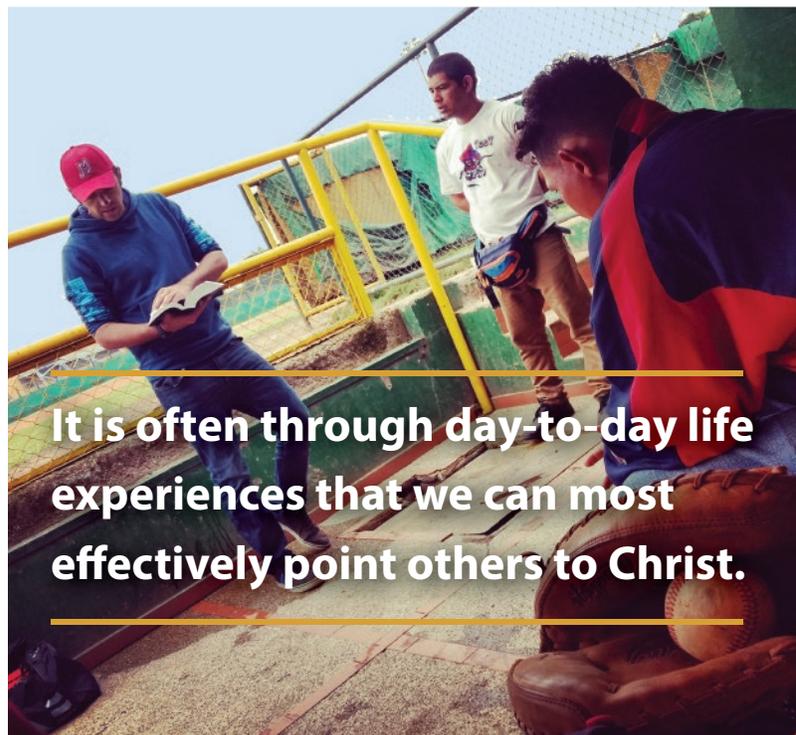
forming His character in me to train me for what was coming next. More than Bible knowledge, as important as that is, it is often through day-to-day life experiences that we can most effectively point others to Christ. It may take suffering and patience just to get us to the point where we are humble enough that God can use us. Perhaps it is once we have gone through difficult experiences ourselves that we can finally empathize with those around us and help them in their own struggles.

When I was in college, I prayed that God would "give me the gaze of one who knows a challenge, a vision stung by blood that drips from Christ's brow." I do not think I had any idea, back then, what I was praying for. Yet, He has been faithful to continue working in and through me. ■



Sam Killins was commended from Lone Star Bible Church in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, in 2013.

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It is often through day-to-day life experiences that we can most effectively point others to Christ.

Top: Venezuelans gather at a restaurant to fellowship, share lunch, and hear the Gospel. **Left:** Sam and his friends use activities like playing baseball to connect with Venezuelan immigrants. **Right:** In the time following baseball practices, Sam shares Scripture with his teammates.



Flight for a Cause

Aviation Strengthens Ministry Efforts in Zambia

BY CHRIS BRUNDAGE

For the past five years, I have been involved in mission aviation at Chitokoloki Mission Hospital. Chitokoloki is a busy, rural hospital with 110 beds and a team of missionaries, including a doctor, nurses, administrative support, and maintenance workers, from Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Chitokoloki is situated more than 350 miles from Lusaka, Zambia's capital city.

Reasons for flying

Since a road trip to Chitokoloki requires about 16 hours of driving, the hospital owns a Cessna 206 airplane. The Cessna 206 is a sturdy, little six-seat airplane, common in bush-flying environments. It is well equipped with GPS, tip tanks for extended range, and a short takeoff and landing kit, among other things. With the tip tanks, the airplane can stay in the air for seven to eight hours. The airplane is used extensively for travel between our station and the capital city. The main people who use the plane are visitors to our station and, sometimes, the local missionaries.

Chitokoloki is blessed to have many skilled visitors every year, and road trips to accommodate all these visitors would not be feasible, so the plane is used to bring people to and from the mission hospital. Visitors include surgeons of a variety of disciplines, nurses, dental assistants, medical and nursing students, electricians, mechanics, and well-drillers. We have an airstrip right at the hospital, which makes flights convenient, especially when there are medevac flights. These flights are not as common, but when they do happen, the passengers are usually people with conditions we are unable to treat, such as some types of cancer or hydrocephalus in babies.



From top: The Lord has blessed Chitokoloki Mission Hospital with a safe flying record over the past few years; Up in the mission's plane, visitors can witness the beauty of the Zambezi river; Chitokoloki emphasizes healthy spiritual lives within its employees and holds devotions each day before work; Chitokoloki's dedicated medical team works daily to improve people's physical lives.

Obstacles to flying

Mission flying in Zambia is not as challenging as it is in a place like Papua New Guinea, which has very short mountain airstrips. Almost all of the airstrips that we fly into are hard surfaced with grass or gravel and are about 1,000 meters long. However, things like weather observation and reporting are not the best, so there are some challenges in flight planning. God has answered prayer with regard to weather, and in the last five years, there have only been a handful of times in which the plane has had to divert due to weather.

Zambia has a wet season and a dry season. The dry season lasts a little more than half the year and is sunny every day. The heat from the sun results in turbulence, so afternoon flying in the dry season can be quite rough even for the toughest stomachs. The wet season is wet, as the name suggests! Thunderstorms are an almost daily occurrence, but most of the time they are localized, and flying around them is possible. The clouds during this season keep things cooler, so the flying is smoother and more pleasant. Each season has its advantages and disadvantages. Please pray for good weather during flights!

Other outreach efforts

The flying is busy enough, but when I am at the station, there is a lot to do besides flying. Keeping things maintained or improving them is a constant source of work. Airstrip fencing was a recent project, and at the moment, we are fixing up a guesthouse at the station. Any practical skills learned from the trades are very useful here, and I've had to learn a lot—especially from YouTube! With a facility like Chitokoloki, there is never a lack of things to do.

The irregular flight schedule that comes with a job like flying makes it difficult to be consistently involved in regularly scheduled things because flights can come up any day of the week. Fortunately, there are missionaries here who are able to commit to regular ministries, like Sunday schools, evangelistic meetings, regular devotions with mission workers, and Bible studies with young people. My wife and I are involved in one local Sunday school, and I have a chance to preach to outpatients at the hospital. The Sunday school that we help out with has more than 100 kids and is quite rowdy. There are only a handful of local Christians to help out, so it can be difficult to keep a lid on things and get the message across! We appreciate your prayers for it. Please pray that the Gospel would have an impact as it goes out in the Sunday school and in a lot of different ways here, particularly in the hospital and the outpatient unit.

In summary, on a station like Chitokoloki, flying is only a side job. It is my main reason for being here, but there are many other



things on a mission station to keep busy with, and flying is only a part of it. Please pray for safety in regard to weather, airplane maintenance, and pilot decision-making and for help with all the other activities going on at Chitokoloki. We have had no incidents in my five years here, and I'm often reminded that safety is of the Lord. Thank you for your prayers and interest. ■



Chris Brundage was commended from Thunder Bay Gospel Hall in Thunder Bay, Ontario, in 2013. He serves with Alison, his wife, who was commended from Shimna Gospel Hall in Newcastle, Northern Ireland, in 2017.

From top: Besides its aviation and medical work, Chitokoloki reaches Zambian children through Sunday School; Joey Speichinger, Chitokoloki's aircraft maintenance engineer, is one the mission's long-term team members; Chitokoloki's Cessna 206 makes travel more convenient and emergency flights easier.

The Philippines

A 10-Day Visit Gives Great Blessing



BY ALLAN & FIONA WILKS

Each year, brethren missionaries in the Philippines hold a conference, through Christian Missions in the Philippines Inc. (CMPI), at a Christian resort center approximately 50 miles from Manila. This year, Allan was asked to be the conference speaker, so in late September, we flew to the Philippines for a 10-day whirlwind visit that greatly blessed us.

Experiencing daily life

In the short 10 days of our trip, we experienced many of the elements that make up daily life in the Philippines. When we arrived in Manila, we were greeted with the city's legendary traffic and the country's tropical weather. During our stay, we had the opportunity to see the beauty of the countryside while we hiked up a mountain and to witness both extreme poverty and opulence in Manila and the surrounding areas. But it was the people we met along the way who had the greatest impact on us.

For the first week of our trip, we were hosted by veteran missionaries David and Ruth Harvey (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 8), who were commended to the Lord's work about 50 years ago. Throughout our time with them, we enjoyed their warm hospitality and lively fellowship. They fully included us in their lives for the week prior to the conference and invited us to join them in the various local ministries they are a part of.

Visiting local schools

The Harveys have been involved in planting a number of assemblies in the greater Manila area, and several of these have elementary schools associated with them. David took us to visit one such school, which is called Lynwood Christian Academy and is located across the road from the Cainta assembly. There, we saw how much the young children love "Grandpa" Harvey,

and the students' and teachers' friendliness toward us was heartwarming. As funds become available, the school hopes to grow, building more classrooms and taking on more students.

We also visited Lyncrest Christian Academy, which is associated with the Hillcrest assembly. Here, we realized the creative ways in which these assemblies reach out to their neighbors. The Lyncrest school was having its spiritual emphasis weekend, which included two nights of sleepovers for the middle schoolers. The students then put on an amazing program for the parents on Friday evening.

All our lives, we have heard about Faith Academy, the international K-12 Christian school located in Manila, and we were thrilled to finally visit it. On our first day in Manila, we attended an end-of-the-quarter concert and enjoyed the high quality of the student musicianship, both vocal and instrumental. The next day, Todd Eichenauer (MPH Day 8) gave us a tour of the school, and we met many fine, dedicated teachers and staff. Though the school is modern and well situated, it is always in need of more teachers and staff.

Interacting with Filipino culture



On Saturday, we had the privilege of attending a wedding at which David officiated. He has married more than 350 couples over the decades, and unsurprisingly, we met some of those couples during our short visit. We were welcomed warmly, in spite of being unknown to virtually everyone there.

At this wedding, we witnessed the interesting Filipino tradition of *ninongs* and *ninangs*. The couple asks male and female

Top (far left): Beautiful grounds surround the Rizal Re-Creation Center, where CMPI's annual conference is held. **Top Row (L-R):** Dealing with traffic is a part of everyday life in Manila; Lyncrest Christian Academy hopes to increase its number of enthusiastic students; At a Filipino wedding, *ninongs* and *ninangs* stand in support of the couple. **Above (within text):** Having seen hundreds of couples married already, Dave and Ruth Harvey continue to encourage Filipino couples.



principal sponsors to stand up with them, at the wedding itself, as friends, and as support in the future. The couple in the wedding we attended had 13 ninongs and 11 ninangs, which were in addition to the wedding party!

Engaging with ministries

On Sunday, we accompanied David and Ruth to the little town of Apalit, 50 miles north of Manila, where the assembly was celebrating its 11th anniversary. The believers loved being together, and once again, they welcomed us warmly. We enjoyed seeing many young men open the Scriptures during the lengthy worship service. We were served a midmorning macaroni snack at our seats, followed by the main message, which David gave. Once the morning meetings were over, there was joyous feasting with mountains of food that had been prepared over the previous two days.

On the way back to Manila, we stopped at the nearby Emmaus Bible Camp for a brief tour. This excellent facility is used throughout the year for Bible training and other camp sessions. It can accommodate 180 campers although they have had as many as 350 for an overnight retreat. The camp is in the process of building a new chapel as funds become available.

On Tuesday, we were able to see the building in downtown Manila that is shared by Our Daily Bread and Bible School of the Air. Our Daily Bread has a large literature ministry in the Philippines, and Bible School of the Air, which former missionaries Cyril and Anna Brooks began, does radio broadcasts and Emmaus correspondence courses throughout the country. On the same property stands the house where Rose Brooks, the late missionary to the Philippines and the daughter of Cyril and Anna, lived for many years. Both of the ministries have had a large impact in the Philippines over the decades.

Connecting with believers

After our week with the Harveys, we drove with them to the Rizal Re-Creation Center, located about 50 miles southwest of Manila, to attend CMPI's annual four-day conference. The facility is located on beautiful grounds, and Christian groups use it for conferences year-round. There, we met amazing missionaries from New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the USA. We felt privileged to get to know them all, some of whom are midwives, Bible translators, youth workers, teachers, and church planters.



Together, we studied the miracles of Christ and some of the lessons that He taught through them. In addition, the missionaries gave reports of their work. It was encouraging to see how God is building His church. We were all drawn closer together as we shared the Lord's Supper one day and as we relaxed together by the spring-fed pool, as well as when we hiked up a nearby mountain.

We arrived in the Philippines hoping to be an encouragement and blessing to these tireless servants of the Lord, who work on the front lines of God's great church-building project, but when we flew homeward, we realized we had been even more encouraged and blessed ourselves. ■

Allan and Fiona Wilks are faithful CMML volunteers. Allan is CMML's vice president, technology.

Bottom Row (L-R): Children in Apalit enjoy spending time with Fiona; Emmaus Bible Camp's board meets to discuss its various ministries; Conference attendees enjoy a hike in the mountains near Rizal. (Photo by Tyler Keating.) **Above (within text):** Every year, Christian workers in the Philippines enjoy the fellowship and teaching that the CMPI conference brings. (Photo by Tyler Keating.)

Interview with Whitney Landis



A New Missionary Shares about Daily Life

As a fourth-grade teacher, Whitney (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 17) serves the Lord at Lincoln School in Guadalajara, Mexico. Building relationships, adapting to a new culture, and learning a new language are just some of the things Whitney faces as she focuses on sharing God's love with her students and new friends. Please pray for Whitney as she teaches children in Mexico for the Lord's service.

What foods do you eat?

I have access to almost any food here in Guadalajara. I cook a lot of American foods at home, but I also enjoy regularly eating authentic Mexican food! Some of my favorite foods here are *chilaquiles*, *carne en su jugo*, and a wide variety of tacos.

How do you get around?

I live within walking distance from the school I work at, so I walk to school and the grocery store. I take an Uber or the bus the rest of the time.

What's the weather like?

The weather is beautiful! Most of the year it is 50 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit. June to October is the rainy season, and the rest of the year is dry.

What cultural behavior do you find interesting?

I love how relaxed and people-oriented the culture is. Social events never have an end time, and people are rarely stressed about being on time.

Do you feel settled?

I feel settled for the time being. I don't know how long I will be here, but I have good friends and I am getting used to the daily routines.

What do you miss the most?

I miss my family and friends from home the most! I miss church fellowship in English. I miss Chick-fil-A and southern cooking.

What is a typical day for you?

I usually walk to school around 7 a.m. I teach fourth grade until 3 p.m. Then I come home and take a nap. Some days I have Spanish class or go out with friends.

How do you relax?

I like to spend time one-on-one with people. I enjoy spending time cooking or reading at home. I also enjoy traveling and spending time at the beach!

How do you get to know people?

Most of my friends also work at the Lincoln School. I live with two other teachers and spend a lot of time with people from school. I also have a good group of friends from church. We usually spend Sundays together and get lunch after church.

What is the leading religion in your area?

Although Mexico is predominately Catholic, many people still have a mixture of Aztec and other tribal beliefs with Catholicism. This is most clearly seen in *Dia de Los Muertos* (Day of the Dead). During this holiday, many believe that deceased ancestors will visit living relatives on earth for a short period. Many Mexicans celebrate this day by visiting the graves of loved ones and setting up *ofrendas* with foods and other things that their deceased relative enjoyed. The Disney movie *Coco* depicts many of the beliefs about Day of the Dead in Mexico.

What is challenging?

The language is the most challenging. It is difficult to build relationships and community while learning a language. I spend

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the day teaching in English, so it is also hard for me to take time to practice Spanish to get better.

What is exciting?

I love teaching and being able to experience new things every day. I love being able to see many different parts of Mexico.

How can we pray for you?

Pray for me as I learn Spanish. Pray that I will be able to build relationships with some strong believers as well as non-believers. Pray for me to be dependent on God and not my own strength. ■

Right (top): Lincoln School students enjoy being creative, especially while recently performing in a Dr. Seuss production. **Right (bottom L-R):** Whitney builds relationships with new friends while traveling to nearby towns; Many Mexicans celebrate Day of the Dead with an altar, such as this one, dedicated to their deceased relatives.

