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That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. 1 Corinthians 2:5

Praise God for the faith He gives, the strength to carry on, and the power to overcome. An immeasurable dose of that divine power has been evident these past two months in Tepic as He has softened and transformed hard hearts, comforted and refreshed hurting hearts, and reinforced and energized committed hearts. This outpouring of His power could never be attributed to human wisdom.



Huichol students of Theological Education by Extension from the village of La Quemada studied Personal Evangelism the week before Christmas. The seven mother-tongue-translators working on the Huichol Old Testament also agreed to meet at La Quemada during the week of Christmas to continue the task of revision and in the process, to encourage the believers of that village. In addition, Huichols from several neighboring

villages converged on the little church there to celebrate Christmas together. By the end of the two-weeks filled with non-stop activity, eight new believers whose hearts were softened and transformed by **the power of God** were baptized in the frigid river just outside the village.



The power of God that comforts and refreshes hurting hearts has been especially evident at a personal level lately. Jacob and Kiki's 18-month-old son, David, was diagnosed 29 days ago with pre-B cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). David is my 7th grandchild. This new trial is not an easy one; it will include days, weeks, months, and even years of surgeries, biopsies, chemo and hospitalization, but we are determined to glorify God through it. Kiki summed up our feelings well: *It is definitely not the path I would choose, but I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that God is sovereign and in control over every cell in David's body. It's still hard, but I pray that David will be a trophy of His grace (as we all are) and that God will use this trial to bring Himself glory, salvation to some, and strengthen the faith of those who believe. David has had more discomfort in the past month than I*

have in a lifetime. It's hard to watch, but comforting to know that the God who wouldn't spare His own Son for me loves my son more than I do. We have been so blessed by the prayers, encouragement, practical gifts/help and kindness from the bride of Christ. Without her coming along side us to bear this burden, it would be

unbearable. Thank you for bearing it with us. Love, Kiki. This summarizes **the power of God** that comforts and refreshes hurting hearts. That same **power of God** was also extended to Julián's family this month.

Julián was among the group of 20 believers that pastor José López baptized on Good Friday in 2010. They are from the remote village of Guásima del Caimán, but they came to be baptized in the village of La Bendición (The Blessing) where their brothers and sisters had relocated after Julián and his coconspirators had made their lives miserable, persecuting them with all their might. When the first believers fled the village of Guásima under the weight of the persecution, Julián later told us he was so furious he drank non-stop for an entire week, pausing only long enough to regain consciousness after blacking out. The testimony of those persecuted believers, now in their new village, The Blessing, has been spread far and wide, and many from neighboring villages have believed the Truth as a result, including at last, Julián. His hard heart was softened and transformed by **the power of God**, but his body suffered the consequences of his former lifestyle. Julián died of complications of cirrhosis of the liver on February 4. While Julián is experiencing **the power of God** in person, his friends and family are experiencing **the power of God** that comforts and refreshes hurting hearts left behind.



Guest Helpers, a group of 20 retirement-age workers from Santa Ana, California, opted to leave comforts of home behind, give generously of their resources, and use their God-given talents and gifts to serve sacrificially for a solid week. They set an enormous example working alongside their Mexican brothers and sisters at IBBM-Tepic to put in insulation and a drywall ceiling in order to combat the intense heat that radiates into the church. They also crafted a beautiful new pulpit, did cement work on sidewalks and floors, electrical work, painting, and garden work. The best job they accomplished was demonstrating God's love in action and

their dedication to His service proving that *nobody can do everything, but everybody can do something*. **The power of God** reinforced and energized committed hearts in ways human wisdom never could. For assorted pictures of the teamwork click here: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/debbiemellberg/sets/72157632878530334/>

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“... the quickening of dead sinners, the enlightening of blind eyes, and unstopping of deaf ears; the softening of hard hearts, the delivering of persons from the slavery of sin and Satan, the transforming and renewing of them both inwardly and outwardly...the comforting, enlivening, strengthening, and establishing of the saints...can never be ascribed to the persuasive language of men, but to the power of God...” ~John Gill

All because of Jesus,

Debbie Mellberg