



Planes with Purpose

An Update from the Hammitt Family

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Mission: Mexico

After a 30 hour drive, I (Tara) found myself in a 15-passenger van crossing the U.S.–Mexico border with ten people I barely knew. What was I doing? How did I get here? No wonder my mom was so worried! Was I crazy? Well, maybe a little!

A team from our church in North Carolina was planning a mission trip to Mexico. They were going to work with Homes of Hope to build a house for a single mother and her five children. The team would stay on campus at Los Ranchos Children's home, a ministry of YWAM. Less than a week before the team was to leave, three people had to drop out, leaving only one woman on the team and three empty seats. As I considered going, Aaron was very supportive. With four and a half days to get ready, I decided to go.

Once arriving in Mexico, we had devotions and worshipped through song every morning. As I sat and received from the Lord, I experienced His presence and couldn't help but think what a privilege it was for me to be there. We heard story after story of God at work changing lives. I couldn't help but praise Him! What a privilege to be in Mexico seeing a glimpse of what He was doing there!

Yet, I asked myself what I was doing there. Would I be able to do much construction on the house? Would what I *could* do matter? We heard over and over from the staff at Rancho: It's not about you. It's about God's glory and what He wants to accomplish. I was overwhelmed with the privilege to be His hands and feet, to be used by the Master as HE chose that week.

As some of you may remember, March 7th was Ezra's due date (of course, God's plan was that he would be born September 24th and not survive). I thought about him a lot that week. I tried not to dwell on what "should" have been. I thought I would be home with a newborn, but here I was in Mexico. No baby to hold. Every meeting we had, every song that we sang, every story we heard of God's faithfulness in Mexico, tears. A lot of tears. Sad tears? Happy tears? Just tears. It's hard for me to put into words how healing it was for me to be there. What a privilege it was to witness all the miracles that seemed to be surrounding me!

As I took it all in, I was reminded that we are called to be light in the darkness, a city on a hill. The neighborhood we built the house in was rough. The "house" two lots over was made of scrap wood and metal. Honestly, I don't know how it was still standing after the wind storm that came through. Trash blew freely along with dust and tumble weeds. There was very little vegetation. Graffiti displayed on every brick wall. It seemed hopeless. One day, Beth, Mariana, and I cleaned up trash only to return to more trash the next day. It was overwhelming.

The bright green house we built stood out in obvious ways. The bunch of gringos building it didn't help! During the week, many families stopped by to ask how they could have a house built for them. It was heartbreaking. We directed each family to the church that finds families for these houses. This church offered food, diapers, and other necessities as well as the HOPE of the Gospel. They were a beacon of light to the community that we outsiders couldn't offer.

My prayer for Mariana and her beautiful children is that they grow in their faith and that their presence in the community reflects God's glory to the people around them. I pray they would truly be a light in the darkness and a city on a hill. It's clear that God has blessed them greatly. My prayer is that they would be a great blessing to their friends, neighbors, co-workers, and classmates.

I wanted to bottle up all the feelings and emotions I had in Mexico. It was simply great. Amazing. Refreshing. Healing. Since I have been home, I find my heart less wound up in the things of this world. I feel free and untangled. I close my eyes and try to remember what it felt like to be surrounded by His presence. I long for it here in my everyday. I pray for eyes to see Him at work around me. As I hear the birds chirp, my heart longs to join them in worship. As I speak to my children, I long to show His love and grace more radiantly to them. As I see needs around me and try to meet them, I pray that I would be used by God to show His love and hope to the people around me. Like Mariana in her bright green house in the desert, I, too, pray that I would be a city on a hill that all who know me would meet Jesus through my life.



You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden... let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Prayer Points

We give thanks...

- ... for the opportunity for Tara to travel to Mexico, and for her safe return.
- ... that Aaron was not injured in the incident with MAG's airplane, and for provision of a loaner so that he can continue flying.

Please join us in praying for...

- ... timely and cost-effective repair of MAG's Cessna 172, and that the apprenticeship program would grow and thrive.
- ... Missionary Air Group's personnel and financial needs. Among MAG's many needs is an engine for an air ambulance going to Guatemala.

A Rough Start to 2017

As you may remember, MMS Aviation has been working with Missionary Air Group (MAG) for several years to develop an apprenticeship program to train missionary pilots in the context of an active mission organization. In January we were placed on loan to MAG for two years, and Aaron is MAG's first pilot apprentice. We are excited to help pioneer this new program, but we recently got a little more excitement than we had hoped for.

One morning in February Aaron was out for a routine flight. He had checked the forecast and was monitoring weather in-flight, but in a matter of minutes the wind changed, becoming gusty and significantly stronger than forecasted. After touching down on a landing, the airplane was abruptly picked up and blown toward the edge of the runway by a strong gust. Despite application of full power, the airplane dropped back to the ground and departed the side of the runway, resulting in significant damage to the aircraft. Thankfully Aaron walked away unharmed, but the airplane did not fare so well.

From our perspective, it makes no sense that this would be part of the Lord's plan for us. This is not the story we planned to tell, and Aaron certainly did not plan to kick off the new apprenticeship



The team began with only a concrete slab, and by the end of the week Mariana was able to move into her new home.



Tara and Beth had the opportunity to present a house warming gift from Antioch Community Church to Mariana and her children.

program by damaging MAG's beautifully-refurbished training aircraft, for which many people labored and sacrificed time, money and resources.

There is a lot we could say about the process we've been through over the last couple months—much more than we can cover in this newsletter. We wish there was a simple answer to the question of why God allowed this to happen. The reality is that we may never have an answer that satisfies our desire for an explanation. Yet, we find comfort knowing that we are in the hands of a good and sovereign God. Though we don't see the whole picture, we have seen many good things begin to come out of this situation, for which we can give God thanks:

- The Lord sent an FAA aviation safety inspector who is a former missionary pilot and, while faithfully performing his duties as an FAA inspector, was extremely encouraging to Aaron.
- We and the other folks at MAG have had opportunities to demonstrate the peace and hope of Christ to the FAA representatives, and to many people at the airport, by the way we have responded to this tragedy.
- This was a humbling experience, but Aaron was overwhelmed by the grace displayed by the MAG leadership and coworkers.
- This situation has provided opportunities for MAG to cooperate and strengthen our relationship with other mission organizations.
- Through divine circumstances, God provided a loaner airplane so Aaron can continue flying while MAG's airplane is repaired.
- The insurance company settled quickly and did not total the airplane.

Dealing with this incident has been difficult (and is not the way that Aaron wanted to get on a first-name basis with the FAA), but God has used it as part of the growth and development process for Aaron and for MAG. It's difficult now, but we believe that Aaron will be a better pilot, and the apprenticeship program will be stronger as a result of having gone through this.

Thank you for your care and support for us, through the good times and the rough times.

Please stay in touch with us between newsletters through our blog, Facebook, or email. We'd love to hear from you!

www.planeswithpurpose.com

facebook.com/PlanesWithPurpose

mail@planeswithpurpose.com

We serve with

MMS Aviation

P.O. Box 1118
Coshocton, OH 43812
(740) 622-6848

www.mmsaviation.org

