

January 2002

We made it to Paraguay on Tuesday, Jan. 22 as planned, and thanks be to God (gracias a Dios), all our trunks made it as well. We had 6 large trunks with us, several of which were oversized and overweight, but American Airlines did not seem to care – what a blessing. It is a challenge to try to decide what to pack when you are going for at least a year without coming home, and will be staying 4 years (or more) in all. The fact that the electric current is 220 volt rather than the 110 we have in the US helped a little – but we will have to buy appliances, etc. here.

The flight is overnight and takes about 17 hours, so we were a bit tired when we arrived. We were met at the airport by John and Colleen Eisenberg, missionaries with the Mission Society and Rev. Pablo Mora, who is the head of the Paraguayan Methodist Church, and his wife Claudete. It was great to see them and to be so warmly welcomed. We had dinner at the Mora's house and they gave us flowers to welcome us to our new country.

We are staying in a small “maid’s quarters” room behind John and Colleen’s house – it is small but private and quite nice. It has it’s own bathroom, so we feel like we have our own little place to call home for now. However, it is not air conditioned, and the temperature has been getting up to around 100° F. We take a cold shower before we go to bed, and we bought a fan on a stand (our FIRST purchase!), which keeps us somewhat comfortable. It reminds us of growing up in Valdosta (for Ed) and south Texas (for Linda) as kids, sleeping on top of the sheets. Looking at the bright side – we had rain for a few days that cooled the temperature down to around the high 80° F! It stayed cool for about 2 days!

We have made one trip out into the country side to visit some of the rural churches near a small town called Yrybucua. We got to see some of the places where they want us to drill wells, and met the Pastors. We had a great time, and got to see some of Paraguay – it is a much prettier country than we had thought.

We still have not decided where we will be living once we get all our paperwork submitted for our residency visa – but it will be up north of Asuncion in the country, maybe even in Yrybucua or in a small nearby town called Santaní. We will keep you posted.

We also bought a truck (thanks again to the great folks at Cannon UMC who donated most of the money)!! The church had a Toyota pickup similar to what we wanted (4 wheel drive, diesel, crew cab/4 door) that they were going to sell, so we bought it. It is a bit older than we wanted (1991 with 298,000 kilometers), but it has been well maintained by a very good mechanic, so we went ahead and got it. It rides very “stiff” (Linda says – “like a truck”), but is very strong. We took it to Yrybucua and it pulled us out of some very nasty looking mud holes after a heavy rain storm.

We are healthy and happy, and are feeling very blessed to finally be in the field. We are making progress on the drill rig, and planning to work with several short term mission teams (as translators and drivers) over the next couple months. Thank you to everyone and please keep us in your prayers.

In His Service

Ed & Linda Baker