

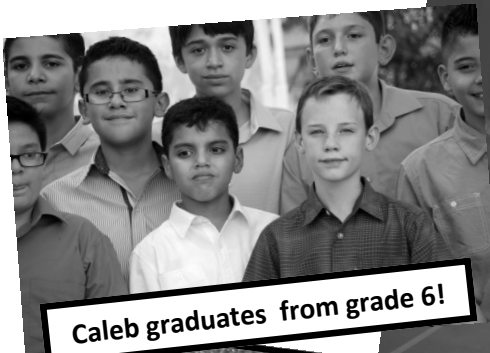
Behind the scenes...

(with the cast)

GST.ca

"being not hearers who forget but doers who act -they will be blessed in their doing". James 1:25

December, 2014



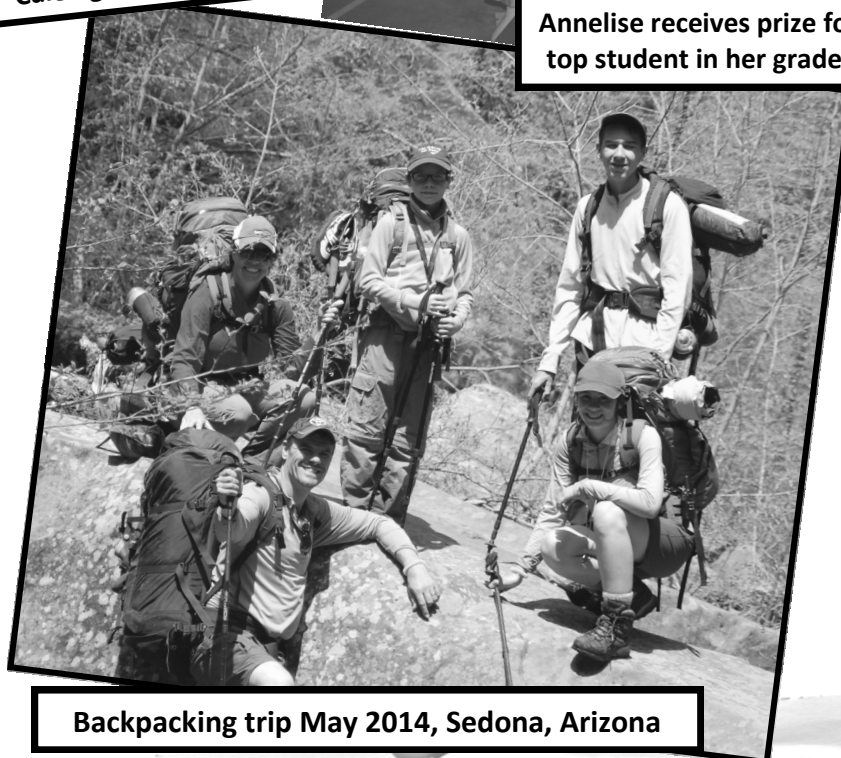
Caleb graduates from grade 6!



Annelise receives prize for top student in her grade!



Talson turns 16!



Backpacking trip May 2014, Sedona, Arizona



On December 31st we will celebrate 20 years of marriage

Dear Family and Friends,

We hope that you and your family have had a blessed Christmas and that 2015 would be full of God's blessing, provision and care. We want to thank God for His goodness to us in 2014. We couldn't have imagined all that we would go through this year and we are so thankful that we were in the hands of the One, Jesus Christ, our Lord and our God, who DID know. Shelli's health crisis, which took us to the lows of her being in an induced coma in Mexico to the highs of seeing God heal her, was definitely the part of the journey that has left our lives changed forever. God's faithfulness in our trials, the blessing of being part of His amazing, caring international family (you!), our human frailty, neediness and dependence on God, His provision for His church in times of change and an opportunity to learn and grow are all ways that we have been impacted through this trial. A simple bacterium, unperceivable by the human eye, set off a chain of events that only God could have used for good. We can trust this all sovereign God! His plans and purposes are good and perfect! The fact that the baby born to a virgin named Mary in Bethlehem not only created the universe but also unilaterally and absolutely holds together it's every atom is reason for great peace and joy! He is with us and we can trust Him!

Joyfully serving Jesus and the ones He came to save,

Greg & Shelli Talson Annelise Caleb



Greg, Shelli, Talson, Annelise, & Caleb Neufeld

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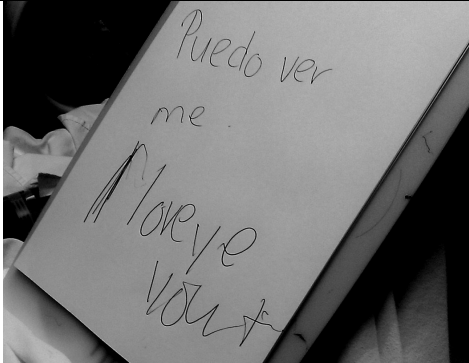
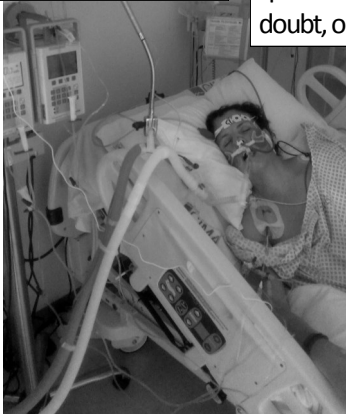
God walks with us through the valley...

God is good and faithful. That is the only truth that can give you joy in the midst of suffering. Our family and our friends were taken to a dark place through Shelli's health crisis that has changed our plans, opened our eyes, strengthened our trust and faith and given us a new appreciation of God's goodness in His plans for us and in how wonderful being part of His family is. We are very glad that it seems that we will be able to return to Mexico in the near future.

Shelli admitted to hospital July 16 with seizures and other symptoms. Leptospirosis, a bacteria spread by mouse droppings and urine, causing encephalitis is suspected and is later confirmed.

Shelli is induced into a coma due to lack of oxygen to the brain.

After coming out of the coma Shelli wrote this note. It starts to say in Spanish...*Can I see...?*(the doctor guessed "my husband" before she finished) Then when Greg entered she wrote, as best she could, "*I love you.*" She was still unable to speak at this time and was heavily drugged. Without a doubt, one of the most emotional moments in our lives.



Shelli being airlifted to a special neurology unit in San Diego, California. She spent 8 days there and then was sent to Calgary,



Miraculously, Shelli gets into the Seizure Monitoring Unit in early October rather than the scheduled date in May 2015. They remove the large doses of drugs she is on. The large seizures are stopped but Shelli is told that she does have absence seizures and will remain on a light dosage of epilepsy medication.



Shelli is feeling really well. This is her on the summit of Prairie Mountain in Kananaskis in late October. It was a slow climb, but she did it! **A huge and heartfelt "thank you" to the many of you who prayed, fasted, encouraged and helped out financially.**

Thank you for praying!

CHILDREN'S SOUP KITCHEN - "El Comedor"

In came bounding a precious little girl with her beaming smile. She smelled dirty and her hair was in knots but she wrapped her arms around me and I squeezed her back. At that moment I saw that her hair was not only full of white lice eggs but it was moving with living lice, never had I seen so many bugs at one time. I had an option, to push her away or keep hugging her. I decided to just pick-her up and squeeze harder and love on her more. -Shelli

Our entire family has had the privilege of working almost every Saturday providing not just physical nourishment, but spiritual nourishment to kids from severe poverty and homes with drug and alcohol addictions. I love seeing the same faces come through the door, memorizing scripture, answering questions about the Bible with eagerness. Lord, may this ministry produce Your next pastor, Sunday school teacher or missionary. May it break generational chains of sin!

Sponsor a month of bible program:-

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP OUT PLEASE DONATE TO
SPECIAL PROJECT- SOUP KITCHEN- #2-2472**



Shelli telling a creative Bible story.



Talson leading a craft group



Annelise leading a craft group

Miguel Alatraste

Miguel's kidney transplant is still on the horizon. By God's grace he is still growing in his faith, and able to survive day to day with joy. We ask you to continue to pray for him. *We thank you for all who have supported his medical and daily living needs up until now. You have been an incredible answer to prayer.*



136 kids attended our Summer Kids Club! **Bugs Life**

This included some of our kids from our SMILES burn ministry. Diana Aguilera lead our club and was assisted by many of our teens and young adults. A big thank you to the McDougal/Bergen team for their ministry with us! Shelli was very sick during the club and it was wonderful to see our Arbol de Vida team make it a success for God's glory!



What was Greg up to in 2014??? Greg was leading the weekly youth ministry. They finished a series on The Way of the Master— how to effectively evangelize. During the spring he lead the youth through “The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus” discipleship course. In June, our new youth pastor, Victor Lopez took over this ministry.

Men's Prayer time— Every Saturday at 6:45 a.m. ,with a coffee pot in hand, Greg headed to the church to run the men's Bible study. A small group of dedicated men have been very faithful to come weekly to this early morning Bible study.

Pastoral duties— Greg has had few dull moments, he was kept busy with preaching, worship ministry, jail visits, dealing with attempted suicides. He officiated 3 weddings, and three funerals. There were new disciples baptized too! And then there is the privilege of shepherding a very needy flock of perfectly normal humans.

AND NOW??? Greg is being a long distance pastor, he participates in leadership meetings by Skype, maintains communication and gives counsel by email, messages and phone calls. He continues to perform mission duties and will be going to Hermosillo once every month and a half or so until we return to Hermosillo in July, Lord-willing.

House of grace- (Casa de Gracia) Children's Home – The children's home for abused and at-risk children, that we work with here, is being built brick by brick. Since July 2013, two dorm rooms, bathrooms and a large living room have been added, not to mention painting, tiling, and roofs put on. Thank you to the different EFCCM teams and individuals that came to help!

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP OUT PLEASE DONATE TO:

PROJECT– CASA DE GRACIA CHILDREN'S HOME– #2-5015

ARBOL DE VIDA welcomes A PASTOR!!!-

Victor Lopez received the Lord in 2009 after participating in the ministry of Olds Koinonia Christian School in Hermosillo.



He quickly grew in his faith and went on several short term missions teams including two to Cuba. Greg and the leadership team and the whole congregation could easily see pastoral qualities in Victor and decided to send him to Bible College. Victor graduated with honors and was the valedictorian for his class in May. Arbol de Vida hired him on as their first paid youth pastor in June (we just were able to officially install him when Greg was there in December). He is filling the roles of Youth pastor and church administrator (he is an accountant) He is already doing an amazing job!



BIBLE SAFARI-Diana, shown above, leading the kids club. She also prepares Bible Safari Programs with Shelli and is in charge of the distribution of our Bible Safari Material to other churches. She presently serves in the role of Sunday school Coordinator.



Ministry with one of Mexico's poorest indigenous groups (The Triquis) just west of Hermosillo, continues to happen a few times a week. Alejandro Machado leads our Arbol de Vida Team, where at this time they have been focusing on literacy, construction of simple houses, and Bible teaching. We have purchased and distributed 10 MP3 players with the entire Bible in the Triqui language as well as providing for the construction of 3 houses.

DID YOU KNOW THAT A HOUSE FOR A TRIQUI FAMILY COSTS ONLY \$700.00 TO BUILD.

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP OUT PLEASE DONATE TO
SPECIAL PROJECT– TRIQUI– #2-2472**

We continue to serve in mission work while in Canada. We will be sharing at some churches, although not at the pace we've tried to keep up on previous home assignments. We will also use this time to re-group as a couple and as a family and prepare for our return to Mexico at the end of June. We want to be able to serve for many more years! Greg will be visiting Mexico every 1.5 months, he has been very encouraged on all that he is seeing and hearing from there regarding how well the leadership is doing, the strength of the ministries that are happening and the spiritual depth of the people as they grow. We absolutely praise GOD!



Official commissioning service of Victor Lopez our youth pastor.
December 14, 2014



The Leadership team, praying over Victor.



Arbol de Vida celebrates 20 years of God's faithfulness!

A wonderful evening was had as we praised God for his faithfulness seeing how He has grown and sustained this church. 14 of those years we have been blessed to be a part of this work, along with you our supporters. A lot has happened in 14 years! We have moved from a small house church with about 11 faithful attenders to a temporary building for 5 years while we built the ministry centre which now houses the church, various ministries, dormitories for teams and has been used by other para-church organizations for leadership training, etc. We built what we use as the main sanctuary now to only be a temporary sanctuary but it is so full now that the church is in the final stages of getting plans approved and stamped in order to build a larger sanctuary on the back half of the property. In our 14 years we have seen dozens of new disciples being baptized, dozens of construction teams, summer teams and Easter teams assist us in the building of buildings and spiritual lives. We have witnessed our little church planted in the middle of a garbage dump, reach out to many with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The garbage dump has now been cleaned up and turned into 100's of family homes! Just more lives that God can touch, change and draw to Him! The first 20 years have been amazing! We pray that the future would continue to glorify His glorious name!



Greg dedicates baby David, a new addition to the Arbol de Vida family! December 2014



Bible Safari team teaching a large group of different churches "creative tool techniques" for working with children. September 2014

Financial Update

We want to thank each of you very much for your prayers, and support; both financially and emotionally. God has been so good and we praise Him for how He has provided for us over the last 15 years of ministry. Without wavering in our trust in God's provision, we ask you to pray with us as we have seen a lack of support giving over the last year. We understand that life has its ups and downs and that you, our support team, face difficult realities and times of abundance and lack too. We pray that God will bless each of you while providing for the funding we need to serve effectively. We ask you to pray for those people who God would have to join along with us financially in the incredible work He has happening in Mexico. We trust that God will continue to provide! Thank you!

