

## Dear Everyone

Greetings from Autumnal San Francisco. Today is the first day this year that most of us are wearing long sleeves. The big hope is that some colder weather might help to mitigate the ongoing dengue situation. For an update, this article from the BA times is as good as any ( <https://www.batimes.com.ar/news/economy/argentina-is-running-out-of-bug-spray-amid-record-dengue-surge.phtml> ) and it should be noted that numbers of recorded cases only includes those with severe symptoms who have been treated in hospitals, since folk with more mild symptoms have been asked to stay at home, to release pressure on medical services.

Those who sat through our talk in the UK this year may remember that we mentioned the possibility of developing some work in Acapulco neighbourhood. Acapulco is a mostly forgotten corner of our town. It is the overspill of San Francisco across the provincial boundary from Cordoba province into Santa Fe province, which means that Cordoba doesn't have to recognise its existence, and Santa Fe mostly prefers not to. This results in ongoing social issues related to poverty and lack of access to services. Stolen goods from San Francisco often end up crossing into Acapulco as Cordoba provincial police force do not have jurisdiction here, and it is a point of entry for drugs into the city. It is the only neighbourhood here that might be considered dangerous; we go in and out by bicycle in daylight, but we probably would think twice before doing so at night.

Our church has a couple of families living in Acapulco, one of which has started to open their home once a week and invite their neighbours to a small house-group. Hazel has been going along and thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to get to know people better on their home turf. I have been invited to lead some Bible studies, and thus have discovered that they love to talk(!), respond brilliantly to open questions, and that their literacy levels are a challenge to my "British university" style of leading Bible study. This is also exacerbated by the lack of access to broader healthcare; those whose reading might be improved by using glasses, mostly don't have them. So we are experimenting with different ways of accessing the Bible, and making the most of sharing and learning from each other along the way.

One detail absent from most news articles on dengue is that it disproportionately affects neighbourhoods such as Acapulco, for various reasons; these neighbourhoods are least likely to be fumigated by the municipality, they are also unpaved and poorly drained, leading to standing water by the road-sides which are breeding grounds for mosquitos, and the exhorbitant price of repellent for households already struggling to meet the costs of living in our current economic climate (inflation now running at 279%). Yet another way that climate change affects the poorest.

Issues involving our wider household have moved into centre stage the last few weeks. Ex-teen was hospitalised with hemorrhagic dengue (involves bleeding and caused her blood counts to drop), so we took her older child (Big Brother) to stay with us for a few days. During this time we discovered that he hadn't been to school yet this year, and when we got in touch with the school, they described his attendance last year as "sporadic". A few other factors also came to light which suggest that BB's needs have been being inadequately met probably for the last year and a half since they have been living independently. So for now he is staying with us, and going to school and we are putting in some supports to help him to catch up there. He is finding this challenging, not just because of the work, but also because it has been a considerable time since he has had to get out of bed in the morning every day. When the after-school support group that Hazel works with restarts in the Catholic church, we will get him involved there a couple of afternoons as well. We are also trying to encourage Ex-T to face her dragons, accept some help for her mental health needs, and over time to move towards taking parental responsibility for BB.

Thank you for all your prayers and support. We hope you have a good month.



Hazel X Martin



Joni & Daniel



Latin Link

