



Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

The tiny village of La Vega is located 40 miles west of Guadalajara, Mexico. We arrived after sundown and cautiously made our way over the horribly bumpy road back into the small group of houses huddled on a small plain under the shadow of the towering brown mountains of south-central Mexico.

Nathan Booth, who directs the missionary language school in Guadalajara, was at the wheel of his seven-year-old car. A few dim electric lights were burning in the squalid adobe hovels, but most of the light came from small fires burning in the open hearths.

I had to strain my imagination to picture the structure where we met as a church. A mission, sponsored by the San Pablo Methodist Church in the city, the "building" was only three adobe brick walls that extended up about eight feet. There was no roof, only three or four wires strung back and forth where naked light bulbs dangled, giving an eerie light to the strange surroundings. There was no floor and the people sat on mounds of dirt and rocks and a few straw chairs that had been dragged from nearby houses.

Bob Seifert, missionary with the Navigators in the area, had provided a Moody Science film in Spanish and the little projector was whirring bravely, flashing color pictures on a screen. The unusual attraction had drawn about 75 people into the brick enclosure, about two-thirds of whom were children.

Overhead the stars glistened in the cloudless sky. A chilly wind whipped across the rocky plain and through the tiny corrals behind the adobe huts that surrounded the open-air meeting area. Cattle and burros huddled together for warmth. Many of the adults dressed in shawls, serapes, and typical straw hats wandered up and stood outside the walls, peering through the window openings or standing at the rear and looking over the heads of those seated on the ground.

The film finished, my American host, insurance executive Arthur DeMoss from Pennsylvania, stood and began to speak. The pastor of the church in Guadalajara, Raul Ruiz, stood to one side and interpreted.

I stood in the back, outside the enclosure beside several ageless Mexican women all of whom were carrying babies strapped tightly across their stomachs.

The dim light bulbs swaying in the wind provided just enough light for Art to read from his Bible and talk simply about el Senor Jesucristo.

Finishing, he asked all those who wanted to become followers of el Senor Jesucristo to stand. More than half the congregation, including several swarthy looking men in ponchos and straw hats, rose to their feet. Later they came forward for prayer and received some simple Gospel literature. None of them, I learned later from Pastor Ruiz, had ever heard the Gospel before.

I looked around at some of these men. Wizened, brown-skinned, hands gnarled from years of heavy work and feet shod with heavy huarache sandals. Most of them were extremely ignorant and none had ever been farther than 40 miles from his birthplace. I thought to myself, it was men like this that el Senor Jesucristo called to become his first disciples, beside the Sea of Galilee. Who knows, perhaps under the power of the Holy Spirit, these new fishers of men may now lead their friends to accept Him as their Saviour also. I sincerely pray so.