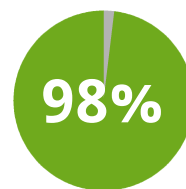


**JOURNALS** POSTED ON JUNE 1, 2017

## Flexing the "Gratitude Muscle"



DENISE & JUAN ARAGÓN



SUPPORT PLEDGED



MEXICO

*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!  
His faithful love endures forever.  
Has the Lord redeemed you? Then speak out!  
Tell others he has redeemed you from your enemies.  
For he has gathered the exiles from many lands,  
from east and west,  
from north and south. Psalm 107:1-3*

Over a year ago, Denise subscribed our daughter, Ziba, to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. Imagination Library's seeks to foster a love of reading among preschool children and their families by providing them with the gift of a specially selected book each month. I love books, so I appreciate Parton's vision and generosity. Every month Ziba gets a book with a good story and an important lesson for kids.

A few days ago, Ziba got another book in the mail. After looking at the images in her new book, she left it on the carpet. When I saw the book, the title got my attention **Ten Thank-You Letters**. I picked it up and read in just a few minutes. I thought the story was simple but powerful. As Pig writes a thank-you letter for his grandma, Rabbit comes to look for him to play. Pig explains that first he must finish writing a thank-you letter to his grandma for the nice sweater she got him for his birthday. Pig sparks Rabbit's interest and inspires him to write a thank-you letter to his grandmother, too. And while Pig writes his long thank-you letter, Rabbit writes ten thank-you letters to people he is grateful to for their kindness and the ways they've helped him to be better.

As I read the story, I was encouraged to think about people we are thankful for as we start this new season of our lives. This is not, by any means, an exhaustive list. In the past months, we've written and sent dozens of thank-you notes to many of you. This time we just want to follow the story line of the book and express gratitude to ten different groups and people:

1. The West Virginia Baptist Convention, each one its associations and churches. We're grateful for your prayers and support even in our new journey.
2. WV American Baptist Women's Ministries. You've been faithful partners of our ministry and continue to be as we obey God's call to Chiapas.
3. Pastor Mark & Mrs. Cathy Houser, Roger & Rhonda Ledbetter and all our Lubeck Community Baptist Church family for your love, welcoming and embracing us when we first came to WV over 9 years ago.
4. John & Lisa Simmons for your love, friendship, counsel, believing in us and journeying with us, and offering your lives as an example of commitment to God's mission.
5. John and Donna Vetter for your love, friendship, hospitality, embracing and adopting Juancito and Ziba as your West Virginian/Nicaraguan grandchildren.
6. Iglesia Bautista Comunidad Nueva Esperanza and Iglesia Bautista Comunidad Luz y Vida. For the honor & privilege to share not only the gospel but our own lives with you all these years.
7. For the support and prayers of our new IM family and support network in the American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains, the Central Region, the Great Rivers Region, ABCOFLASH, and in Pennsylvania, Georgia, Indiana, Florida, Ohio and New York.
8. Our Mission Partnership Team (MPT). For your great support and encouragement as we build our support network and respond to God's call.
9. Our prayer network and even those who are not "officially" in our prayer network, but who have been lifting us up in prayer.

10. Our newly formed Nicaraguan Mission Partnership Team (MPT). For joining us in this adventure and embracing the vision to involve Nicaraguan youths, young adults and churches in God's mission in Chiapas.

Most Sundays our church family, Iglesia Bautista Comunidad Nueva Esperanza, takes a time to flex "the gratitude muscle." Everyone - even the children - gets an opportunity to express gratitude to God for something that happened during the week. Many times it's been a time of laughter as we have Mexican-American kids thanking God for Chinese food! What are you thankful for? I'm sure you have many reasons to flex your "gratitude muscle." Do it and inspire others to do likewise!

Again, we are grateful for your life, your love, prayers and support.

Juan & Denise Aragón

Picture by [Geórgia](#).