

## Mission Trip Impact **The Preacher** by Bobbi Kinne

I'd like to tell you about a man named Tonio. I thought he was just the driver for the Family Missions Company, which only goes to show how wrong first impressions can be! He is a missionary, and an eloquent one. I don't know his whole story, but he and his wife Marta came to know the Lord and immediately started working for the Lord. They are not employed by FMC or anyone else, and the FMC missionaries are mystified as to how Tonio and family make ends meet, but Tonio says they live on God's good graces, things just seem to work out for them and they have blessings to spare.



In the early evenings, after our work day, we cleaned up then drove into the desert to little settlements called ranchos. We rang the chapel bell then went door to door inviting everyone to a prayer service. 20-30 minutes later Tonio would begin playing bouncy, lively songs on his guitar and people began arriving. As the songs continued more, more people arrived. (I think we Americans were quite an attraction - almost everyone lined up to shake our hands!) Then Tonio exchanged his guitar for a bible and read a gospel passage. On our first trip, I was surprised when he closed the book and began to preach. With passion and conviction he spoke to the people present, proclaiming that the word of God is not dead but living. God's word is relevant to all people - even themselves, living in this day and age and in the place and conditions that are theirs. He invited them to follow Jesus and accept the salvation God offers them. Seated on rough benches and on the dirt floor, standing leaning against walls, the people listened intently. If any children made noise I don't remember it. Sheila translated for us, but my Spanish was good enough to understand much of his preaching directly, and his words were beautiful and moving. His love of God, his burning passion to share that love shone in his face and reached out to all. I think that because Tonio is "one of them" his words and his example rang true to his listeners. I want the parish to know that the missionaries you sent supported the work of a man named Tonio and that he is an effective and passionate preacher, sharing the word of God to those who have little other chance to hear it.

I ask everyone who reads this to pray for Tonio and his family, for preachers and for missionaries.

