

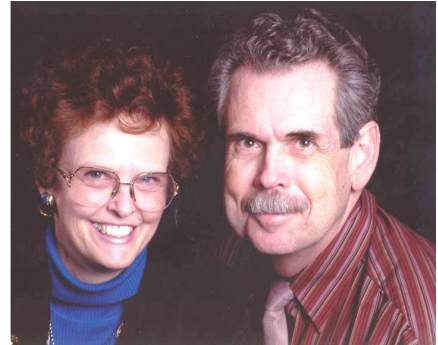
ESPERANZA ETERNA

Bringing Hope for Eternity to Latin America and Beyond

Mission Newsletter

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A Busy Three Months to Begin 2012

In January and February, I presented training seminars at Hispanic congregations in Waukegan, Illinois; Lexington, Kentucky; and Nashville, Tennessee. In January, I preached at Iglesia de Cristo--Park Plaza in Tulsa as part of a Missions Emphasis Day.

As I reflect on the training seminars in the US Hispanic churches, I am encouraged by the high level of interest and the number of members who are present for the sessions. In this respect, our Spanish-speaking brothers and sisters put us in the English-speaking churches to shame. Attendance at the daytime sessions is at times limited due to work obligations, but evening sessions are often attended by 80-90% of the members.

The first seminar of 2012 was in **Waukegan (IL)** where the local Spanish preacher is **Fernando Diaz**. After excellent sessions during the day on Friday, weather problems (8" of snow) cancelled the Friday night meeting. We made up for it on Saturday with an extended day and in all totaled over a dozen hours of teaching for the Fri-Sat-Sun schedule. In Waukegan, the English and Spanish churches share a building. Sunday morning I taught Bible class and preached for the English congregation, and immediately after in the early afternoon did the same for the Spanish congregation, followed by the final sessions of the seminar that evening. After a study of Jesus' prayer in Luke's Gospel, we had 10 responses from those committed to increasing their prayer life, and also a special time of prayer for our families. We were blessed with several visitors.

The **Iglesia de Cristo-Park Plaza, Tulsa** church continues to progress with the leadership of **Francisco Davila**. Francisco will soon retire from the City of Tulsa and will have more time to spend in ministry activities. It is always a joy to be with this congregation—I receive 2-3 invitations each year to teach and preach here.

Jan accompanied me on a February trip to Kentucky and Tennessee. We began with a stopover in NE Arkansas to visit **Rod and Lynne Boydston**, dear friends from Ohio Valley days. We spent eight consecutive days in seminar classes and preaching, four days (Sun-Wed) with the **Southside-Lexington Iglesia de Cristo** and four days (Thur-Sun) with the **Crieve Hall-Nashville Iglesia de Cristo**. **Jaime and Angelica Avila** are leaders in the Lexington church which meets in the church building of the English congregation. In Lexington, we were blessed to spend time with **Eddy and Teresa Julian**. Eddy serves as an elder-liaison for the Spanish work. We met on Sunday in the early afternoon and continued the seminar Sunday-Wednesday evenings. In a church of about 25, we had almost 20 every night. In Nashville the church has a Sunday attendance of about 80 and **Jacobo and Marcela Chalco** serve in ministry. The Nashville weather was very cold. About 20 were present for the daytime sessions; with Thursday and Friday evenings attendance somewhat higher. Saturday and Sunday activities were well-attended and the church was very receptive to the seminar studies focused in Luke.

In January-February we were with the **Northside-Mena (AR) church** for a Sunday; we are grateful for their involvement in the work. We also had the opportunity to visit with **Dale Lollar** of the Edmond church about various opportunities, and we were in contact with **Pancho Hobbes** in Oklahoma City to continue the development of the evangelistic study series.



We spent the last week of February and the first half of March in **Guatemala**. The time was spent in seminars, teaching, preaching, Bible studies, and meetings to encourage the brothers and sisters in the churches. First, we spent 10 days in **Sololá** where Baxter graduate, **Adán Benavente**, serves as evangelist. *[Some of the sisters at Sololá are pictured above left.]* The Sololá congregation was planted by brother Adán 13 years ago. In addition to preaching and teaching in Sololá, we spent a day visiting the brothers in **Santa Clara** and another day meeting with several brothers in **Quetzaltenango (Xela)**. In both cases we discussed the word of God and talked about the challenges before the church. In Sacajal met **Guillermo Poz** who was a contact of **Dan Coker** during some of the early missionary efforts in Guatemala.

During the time in Sololá, I presented a **three-day seminar** in **Chichicastenango (Chichi)**, where about 25 assembled each day for a seminar to develop leaders and workers. *[Seminar presentation (center) and attendees (right)]* In Chichi the name, Tomas, is very popular, and it was humorous that one could so often use the greeting “Brother Thomas.” Many of the churches around Chichi are Quiche-speaking, and the gospel is spreading effectively although at times slowly, with some of the churches having developed elders and

deacons. The majority of the seminar focused on a study of Titus, but we were also able to spend time answering and discussing other questions. The group was especially interested in a seminar session devoted to the study of Romans 14-15. As always, there are problems when brothers and sisters have different opinions about things the Bible does not clearly teach. We spent 7 hours each day in the Chichi seminar. On Thursday, we went to Chichi-Lemoa to visit the **Health Talents Clinic** where we had the opportunity to visit with **Kemmel Dunham** about the work at the clinic and in surrounding communities *[picture, left]*.



Traveling by bus each day, we became quite experienced bus travelers, appreciating the inexpensive Guatemalan public transportation system, although on the 2½ hour trip to Xela, I did not have a seat so I had to stand up for the entire trip. I may have gotten my \$3 worth, but barely!

From Sololá we traveled by bus to **Antigua** where we met on Sunday with the Antigua church. **Dr. Raul Duran** taught an excellent Bible class. We met **Ken Burkey** who helps with various Health Talents efforts. I enjoyed time with **Esteban Marroquin** and others. The week flew by with many appointments, including teaching the Thursday night Bible class at the Antigua church *[picture, right]*. The opportunity to visit the **Family Tercero in Milpas Altas** to share a time of prayer was a highlight; we enjoyed reconnecting with the entire family, including Marvin and Hugo.



Our last weekend in Guatemala found us in Guatemala City where I preached in the new congregation in the Historic Center of downtown Guatemala City. **Roberto Alvarez**, Baxter graduate, is the local preacher for the new church plant. The church began in late January and has as its goal to have 100 members by the end of 2012. There were 56 present Sunday morning. On Monday I taught a leadership and service seminar at **BICA-Guatemala**. A special blessing of the time in Guatemala City was the opportunity to visit with Baxter students, **Daniel Rivera and Nahum Romero** who are doing their 4th year Missionary Apprenticeship program in Guatemala.

Thank You for your Prayers and Support

We would love to share the excitement of missions with your congregation. As always, we thank you for your interest, prayers and support. We are excited about being involved in spreading the gospel and strengthening the churches in Latin America. The major cities of our world are a fertile field for the gospel. There is much work to be done; the harvest is plenteous but the workers are few.

Que Dios le bendiga (may God bless you),

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Overviews of the city of Antigua remind us that multitudes are in need of the gospel, millions in the large, teeming metropolitan cities of our world, and thousands more in countless smaller villages and towns of our world.

