

ESPERANZA ETERNA

Bringing Hope for Eternity to Latin America and Beyond

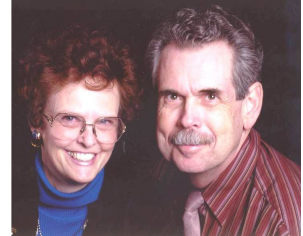
Mission-Ministry Newsletter

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I have tried to be more diligent this year in sharing news from this ministry through regular newsletters. As a result, this is the sixth newsletter of 2012! In addition to a January preview, there are reports from April, June, July, and October. All of these—plus a Guatemala travelogue, a May article entitled “Open Doors,” and a November report describing the work—are linked from the website. The website address appears above; the links are at the top of the right column. I have done fewer postal mailings during the year, in part due to continued increases in the cost of mailing.

[Picture immediately below: preaching in Peru.]



2012—A quick summary

2012 was an important year in the development of this mission work. Whereas in 2011 I made four international trips, this year I made seven international trips, spending 106 days in international travel and seminar presentations as the work developed in Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and Uruguay. Typically I average 3-4 hours of seminar teaching each day, plus individual studies. I made three extended trips within the U.S. to present seminars in Spanish-speaking churches. I also spoke in seminars and gave reports at six English-

speaking churches in Illinois, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas. While the work is not focused primarily on evangelism, in 2012 there were **16 baptisms** and **21 responses and restorations** on these trips.

During 2012, I presented seminars and workshops in **8 countries**, **33 different locations**, **about 83 churches** and **1400 Christians** represented in the attendance at the seminars.

2012—Defining more clearly what God is calling us to do

On the mission field, new churches need encouragement to keep growing, a greater understanding of the Word, greater unity and love, a process for developing leaders and elders, and training to develop into missionary churches with an evangelistic focus. Many older churches have failed to grow and develop in spiritually healthy ways and need these same things. Our purpose is outlined in Acts 14:23: strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, appointing elders in every church.

This we do in various ways. First, we follow up and assist churches with whom we have had contact in past years, primarily in Central America, often through graduates of Baxter. Second, we work with Roberto Miranda and the Latin American Leadership training program (Training for Vocational Workers) overseen by Memorial in Houston. Third, we receive new requests as word of mouth spreads the news of the effectiveness of what we are doing. Fourth, we provide training for evangelistic Bible studies so that members can share their faith more effectively. Finally, I continue to serve as chair of the board of directors of Baxter Institute in Honduras. *[Picture right: praying for families at a Family Retreat.]*



October 2012, Peru

Jan and I spent about half of October in Peru, preaching and teaching in churches in Lima and Cusco. After 50 years of mission history of the churches of Christ in Peru, there are very few churches with elders—there may be only one congregation with elders in all of Peru. Along with preaching and teaching, we helped with a Family Retreat at the Wanchaq church in Cusco where Baxter graduate Juan Fernando LaTorre ministers. This church is very near appointing elders. I have been invited to return to Peru in May, 2013 to participate in a national preachers' retreat, to help preachers understand how to help local churches develop in biblical, healthy ways. I plan to use this trip to do more research concerning the needs of the church in Peru. A blessing of this work is the opportunity to meet brothers and sisters in Christ from around the world and to make new friends in Christ.



Progress in Colombia

This work often reminds me of Paul's description in 1 Corinthians 3: one plants, another waters, and God gives the increase. During my time in Colombia in August, I learned new details of the progress of the work in El Banco, El Varal and the surrounding area. I was introduced to the work being done in this part of Colombia in 2006 when I spoke at a Leaders' Retreat near the border of Colombia and Venezuela. Armed with the good news of a new church plant and churches growing and maturing, I reported this progress to a U.S. church that had assisted with a special need in that area in 2006. The church was thrilled to learn that the seed they had sown was indeed bearing fruit. This opportunity to connect churches, especially smaller churches, with one-time needs from the mission field is an important part of this work.

2013—Looking Ahead

The 2013 schedule is expanded with presentations and seminars scheduled for Livingston (TX), Honduras, Lexington (KY), Nashville (TN), Guatemala, Tulsa (OK), Peru, Panama, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and Chile. While our involvement in this effort is without financial remuneration, we are always seeking travel funds to continue and expand this work. The average cost of each international trip is about \$2000—generally 2-3 weeks, over half of the cost is airfare and transportation with much of the rest used to help those attending the seminars with transportation. Let us know if we could visit your congregation and report firsthand about what God is doing across Latin America.

Que Dios le bendiga (may God bless you),

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[In the great cities of Latin America many people are receptive to the gospel of Jesus Christ]