

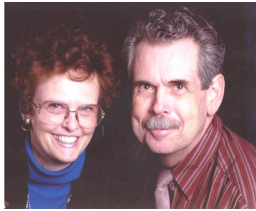
# **ESPERANZA ETERNA**

*Bringing Hope for Eternity to Latin America and Beyond*

## **Mission-Ministry Newsletter**

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This was an extremely intense, busy and tiring summer. From early June to mid-August I made three extended mission trips to five countries, spending 53 days teaching and preaching in Latin America. I was only home a part of the last week of June and about a week in mid-July. I will not schedule future trips on such an intense schedule as the time stateside was not long enough to recover. Nor was the time at home enough for Jan (or for me).

I spent almost all of June in Honduras and Panama. In **Honduras**, my first stop was Puerto Cortés (*building, pictured right*) where I taught, preached, and conducted a leadership seminar. The church in Puerto Cortés has the goal of establishing elders in 2014 but several dynamics must be addressed first. Helping the church work through the challenges was a primary purpose of the leadership seminar. On



Sunday morning my sermon topic was the Christian family; about 30 members requested prayers for their families and for opportunities to share the gospel (*pictured left, the church in Puerto Cortés*).

About 50 members from two congregations were present Sunday afternoon for a special seminar for the youth. I now have an invitation to present a seminar on spiritualism in the congregation working with the Garifuna people. At times mission trips have their perks—in Puerto Cortés, I stayed in a small seaside hotel and ate breakfast each

morning to the sight and sounds of the waves gently lapping at the sandy beach.

My next stop was in Santa Rosa de Copán to visit Phil Waldron and to see the work of Mission Upreach firsthand. In Santa Rosa I spent time with four evangelists (*all Baxter guys, pictured right*) who are working with the 12 congregations established so far. With only four evangelists working with 12 congregations, a lot of leadership development is required in the local churches. The goal is to establish 23 congregations in the major cities of the department.



In Olancho, I presented two leadership seminars for leaders from 23 congregations and preached in two churches. Before leaving Honduras, I spent a couple of days at Baxter and spoke in chapel.

In **Panama** I conducted a Saturday-Sunday seminar sponsored by the congregations at Tocumen, San Miguelito and Rio Abajo. My assigned theme was unity. There were 75 present from seven

congregations. This was my first trip to Panama and provided an excellent but brief orientation. I visited with various churches, a leading family in Ipeti Kuna (*pictured right*), and an elder from Tortí. I observed firsthand the work of the elders at Tocumen. During my time in Honduras and Panama, I spent time with nine Baxter graduates, learning more about their ministries and the challenges they face.



I spent the first half of July in **Venezuela**. This trip began with a preaching stop at San Cristóbal, followed by a four-day visit to



Barinas. In Barinas I spent every day with the team of eight young evangelists (*pictured left*), studying, listening, and providing counsel. It reminded me of my university teaching experience. In Barinas I preached a funeral—my first such experience on one of these teaching and training trips. The church in Barinas is growing very rapidly and has had almost 100 baptisms so far this year. We had 313 present for a Friday night meeting and seminar. My next stop was at the church at Barquisimeto where I preached, worked in a leadership seminar with members from numerous churches present, and preached

at three of the churches planted by the Barquisimeto church (Chivacoa, San Felipe, and Yuritagua). The Barquisimeto church has three elders and has actively worked to plant new churches in Venezuela, including three in the Amazonas. One of the elders shared with me that the church has the goal to plant 50 more churches in the next 10 years. The final stop on this trip was a return to San Cristóbal for a weekend leadership seminar and preaching. The church in San Cristóbal is hoping to reestablish an eldership. Six churches were present at the seminar and we had another baptism on Sunday.

In July and August I spent three weeks in **Colombia** and **Ecuador**. In Bogotá, nine congregations participated in the seminar in three different locations. In Bogotá I visited the team of Baxter graduates who are working to establish a new congregation in Suba. As they approach the first anniversary of the new church in October, they are averaging about 60 in weekly attendance.

In Tuluá, I preached and enjoyed spending the night with the Corrales family. During two days in Cali, I taught and preached for the church but also had a meeting with the men of the church to help facilitate progress toward the goal of establishing elders. In Pasto, it appears that the church will be able to appoint its first elders in November of this year. In Túquerres, in addition to the seminar, I taught a small group Bible study which was attended by almost the entire church—29 were present!). (At almost 11000 feet, Túquerres is the highest city in Colombia, and the temperatures are really never warm. The range on this trip was about 30-65 degrees Fahrenheit.) During the time in Túquerres, I also visited the



church in Cumbál where I spoke to the leaders for about three hours in the morning and then to the entire church in the afternoon. There were 24 present for the afternoon session—again almost the entire church. On Sunday, the church in Samaniego rented a “pickup-bus” (*pictured left*) and came en masse to worship in Túquerres. In the afternoon, I met with them for another an hour to help them resolve various growth challenges and to understand how they could best move forward. The church is only three years old and is challenged by the task of getting 20 or

more people into a small living room for worship.

On Monday I traveled to Ecuador crossing the Colombia-Ecuador border at Tulcán. I arrived in Ibarra about 6:15 PM, just in time to preach at the Pilanquí congregation (*pictured right*). During three days in Ibarra, I worked with five congregations. On the final night, there were about 120 present for the seminar in Pilanquí from three congregations (*pictured below*). While in Ibarra I stayed with a family in Atúntaqui. The husband was recently baptized and I was able to study with his wife. I believe she will be baptized soon. Both are native Indians and I will not soon forget my time with them—juice from the tomato tree, lulo (narajilla) juice, and fish for breakfast.



The next day a two hour auto trip to the Quito airport, a flight from Quito to Guayaquil, and 1½ hours of travel by car took me to Babahoyo where I preached in the evening. The church in Babahoyo is working through various dynamics in its desire to organize biblically and appoint elders. The next day, I went back to Guayaquil to spend three days with the Guayaquil South congregation. This congregation has been challenged by the departure of a team member, a family crisis within a leadership family, immorality by an influential member, and internal struggles among men who are being developed as leaders. A good portion of the time was spent trying to provide biblical and wise counsel.

**On these three trips I spent time with leaders and members from 69 congregations and had the opportunity to teach and encourage at least 1800 Christians toward greater spiritual maturity.**

I thank God for those who support this work, whether financially or in prayer. The work of strengthening and edifying local churches in order to develop healthy model churches, developing biblical leadership in the churches, and equipping local church for ministry, evangelism and missional church planting is possible only by God's grace, as God calls us and places us in service according to our gifts, opening and closing doors as we make his purpose our purpose. [Note: all reports are posted and available at [www.bobyongresources/missions/mission-reports.htm](http://www.bobyongresources/missions/mission-reports.htm).]

***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 and Christians hunger and thirst for the word of God and encouragement toward healthy church development and effective leadership]***