

LATIN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT*Developing Healthy Churches and Leaders in Latin America and Beyond***Mission-Ministry Newsletter***Bob and Jan Young, 10704 S 89th East Ave, Tulsa, OK 74133*www.bobyoungrsources.com

This year began with a flurry of activities—a long “to do” list and several trips for ministry and missions activities. In addition to the schedule of mission trips, my goals this year include finishing work on the evangelistic Bible study series, writing more seminars to address the needs of the Latin American churches, and writing materials to help explain Bible passages that present special challenges in the Latin American churches. I will continue to format and post seminars and materials to make them more accessible in Latin America.

The first Sunday of the New Year, January 5, I preached at the **Area-Wide United Worship Service at McAlester**. I met with the elders at the **Main and Oklahoma Church of Christ** (the congregation that hosts this mission work) and presented a mission report at the evening service. It was a snowy day with treacherous roads; the morning trip which normally takes a little more than an hour took 2 ½ hours. Thankfully, we traveled safely and the return trip to Tulsa that evening was much easier.

As soon as I got back from Honduras in December, I began the process of renewing my passport. Renewal requires submitting the old passport and being without a passport for a time (usually 4-8 weeks) so I did not schedule any international travel in early January.

I received my new passport the first week of January so I decided to go ahead and apply for Global Entry to facilitate travel and help with sometimes tight schedules. I received almost immediate acceptance, but had to schedule a personal interview to finalize the process. There was a time available at the DFW airport on January 9, so I drove to Dallas for the interview. I took advantage of the trip to meet with Don Calhoun from “Ambassadors for Christ” about plans to transfer the **Spanish evangelism work** to me (including rights to the Spanish translation). When that is finalized, I will move ahead with printing and distributing the lessons.

Sunday, January 12, was the one Sunday I was in town at Park Plaza during the month of January. When I am away for extended periods of time, I miss my local church family. My absences make it difficult to be as involved as I would like, especially in the Hispanic work. I appreciate the prayers and the help Park Plaza gives to the work. In mid-January, Jan and I took advantage of the unscheduled time to visit her aunt in California for five days. Airplane problems on the return flight meant we had to overnight in Houston, but fortunately we were able to spend time with Roberto Miranda, talking about mission work and doing some **mission planning for 2014**. We finished the trip to Tulsa the next day.

That left me with less than a week to finish preparations for my **Guatemala** trip, January 25 through February 11. On this trip, I spent time in three different parts of Guatemala—west, central, and east. Working with **Sololá** as a base, during the first week I preached and taught in three different congregations around Lake Atitlan, presented a two-day seminar on Biblical Interpretation in **Chichicastenango** with leaders from about 10 congregations present, and spent time in Bible studies and with the local preacher, Adán Benavente.





I spent the next week in **San Juan del Obispo**, preaching, teaching, and presenting another seminar. I made a survey trip to **Santa Maria** to study future church planting opportunities. The church in San Juan del Obispo is a new church plant from December 2012. The church is doing well after 14 months but is a little discouraged. Several prospects are attending regularly so I spent a lot of time sharing the gospel; I also encouraged those recently baptized to remain faithful. I met with the five men who are providing leadership for this infant congregation to encourage them and give them some practical ideas about future plans.

The last week I spent four days in **La Unión**, about 15 miles from the Honduran border in the east-northeast part of Guatemala. One leaves the main road and takes a secondary road to get to La Unión. The secondary road stops at La Unión. Traveling further into the mountains is very difficult, possible only with a four-wheel drive vehicle, much of the time spent in low-low axle. The roads are steep and in poor condition, especially after the two days of rain which came just as I arrived. The church in La Unión reached an attendance of nearly 80 four years ago, but a serious mudslide which forced the residents to temporarily leave the town and a disease in the coffee plants which decimated all of the plants in the region caused many of the Christians to move away. The church had to begin again and has reached an attendance of 30-35. La Unión is one of 10 municipalities in the department of Zacapa, and there are 33 villages in the municipality. The church in La Unión has a plan to develop churches in these 33 villages. Currently there are six churches. I presented a weekend seminar for the churches on the topic of "how to understand the Bible." Imagine my surprise when I got to "the end of the road" and found almost 150 assembled to hear the word of God. It was an experience that blessed me and impressed me as I observed the sacrifice many Christians make to walk to worship or to take pickup taxis (standing in the bed) over very difficult roads.



After weather delays in January and early February, the Park Plaza community groups finally got underway the Sunday after I got back to the U.S. and I was able to meet with my group for the first time. I am excited about being a group co-leader this year, but concerned about the times I will be absent due to ministry and mission works. The last weekend of February, I went to **Houston** for a mission planning weekend especially focusing on mission efforts related to the work of **EVO**. This meeting (normally in December) gave me an opportunity to plan several of my mission trips for the rest of 2014. On Sunday, I taught and preached at **Northwest and at Memorial**.

In March-April-May I am teaching a Wednesday night adult class at **Park Plaza**. I was asked to teach "Restoration History" which I am excited about doing, but it means some extra study and preparation time as I review materials I have not looked at or thought much about over the past few years.

March 9, I was invited to return to **Dierks (AR)** the first place I preached full-time after college. Teaching and preaching at the Westside church on Sunday gave us the opportunity to renew friendships and talk about missions. The church surprised us with a contribution to the mission work, and the potluck luncheon gave us more opportunities to talk about the good things God is doing in this work. On March 23, I will present a mission report at the **Fort Gibson (OK) church**.

Finally, I have received good news concerning the fruit of our labors. The **Wanchaq church in Cusco, Peru** appointed their first elders on March 9. On March 16, the **Pilanqui church in Ibarra, Ecuador** appointed elders. Last week I received a message from **San Juan del Obispo**, Guatemala with news of four more baptisms, including a woman I had the privilege of studying with last month.

I am committed to spending more time writing this year, although the continual travel makes it difficult to establish a set writing schedule. Nonetheless, in the first three months of the year I have completed a new

seminar on biblical interpretation and have responded to several requests for explanations of Bible passages. I have finished preparations for the Restoration History series (which I plan to translate also to Spanish) and have begun a new written study of Romans. Plans are underway for trips to Peru, Honduras, Colombia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua in the next several months. I have received a number of other invitations, so I will have to be selective as I fill the rest of this year's schedule.

We thank God for all who support this work. We are especially grateful for your prayers. The work of strengthening and edifying local churches in order to develop healthy model churches, developing biblical leadership in the churches, and equipping local churches for ministry, evangelism and missional church planting is possible only by God's grace. God calls us and places us in service according to our gifts, opening and closing doors as we seek to make his purpose our purpose. [Note: all reports and some travelogues are posted and available at 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]