

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

I think of 2019 as a milestone year in this mission ministry! This is my tenth year in this work -- developing healthy churches and biblical leaders in Latin American churches, developing strong evangelism and discipleship programs. It is my 15th year of writing regular mission reports and my 25th year of traveling regularly in Latin America. What God has accomplished over the past ten years is indeed amazing!

Only eternity will tell of the tens of thousands who have come to Christ through the shared efforts of the many Latin American Christians whose hearts are set on expanding God's kingdom in their own countries. If time permitted, I would write about new Christians, new churches, church leaders, and the awe-inspiring beauty of Latin American churches duplicating themselves as they establish more churches. Only eternity will reveal the whole story. I am praying that 2019 will be another banner year in this work, even as I

consider the possibility of slowing down a bit.

Mission projects being funded in 2019

An important part of this work is being able to answer when God opens doors, giving us opportunities to assist in short-term funding and to participate with national churches to help them toward their goals. This aspect of the work complements—and completes—the travels, seminars, and campaigns. The following projects are being funded in 2019.

→Bolivia. A work fund and building rental for a church planting team in La Paz. This is a Great Cities work that is being done by Latin Americans.

→Chile. Partial funding for a local evangelist; continued work with “Misión Chile;” assistance with funding for an international evangelist whose campaigns result in hundreds of people being brought to Christ every year.

→Colombia. Funding for an evangelist in southern Colombia. (The salary is funded by a deacon in Arkansas and an elder in Texas.) In 2018, funds were also provided for a portable baptistry for prison work (with a new church established in the prison), for a regional men's leadership seminar, and for travel to a national preachers' conference. In 2019, funding is in place to help a Colombian evangelist make a mission evaluation trip to visit a group of new churches, and for monthly travel to a church that recently began meeting in Putumayo.

→Colombia -- evangelism and church planting. This evangelistic work has focused on the possibility of establishing a new church in Puerto Gaitan, Colombia. The work has been overseen by the Los Angeles church in Bogota. The receptivity in Puerto Gaitan has been minimal, and in the next two to three months the Bogota church will make a decision whether to continue in Puerto Gaitan or to focus on a more populated departmental capital with greater receptivity.

→Dominican Republic -- evangelism and church planting. This effort is overseen by the elders in Neyba, Dominican Republic. Support in 2019 is increased to fund work with eight churches.

→Honduras, Baxter Institute. Funding supports the training national workers, plus assistance with a counseling program for women in the clinic nutrition program and for wives at Baxter to establish stronger marriages and families.

→Nicaragua. Funding for a half-salary of an evangelist-elder in Nicaragua. The local church provides the other half of the support. This one-year commitment anticipates that the local church in Nicaragua will pick up the entire support beginning in 2020.

→Peru -- evangelism and church planting. This work is under the oversight of the US board of Interamerican Bible Institute but the work is done by Peruvians to establish new churches in Peru. The funding assists with church planting work in four locations.

→Venezuela. Funds for relief efforts, evangelism, and preacher training are being provided.

→Spanish Literature Ministry. Funds to increase printing and distribution of evangelism lessons. This support will help send materials to many churches and mission points — in most of the Latin American countries and also to US churches.

Recent highlights from some of the mission projects being funded

God continually opens doors for us to help others by sharing God's word with them. Pedro Sanchez went to El Salvador to work with the Nueva Cuscutlán congregation to start the process of organizing the church and appointing elders. The national workers that have been trained traveled extensively throughout Central and South America and the Caribbean as well as to Hispanic locations in the US. The end-of-year report from Pablo in Chile tells of 42 baptisms last year through his work in various churches in Chile.



The work around Ibarra, Ecuador continues to be quite productive. The work in Pílanqui has grown over seven years -- attendance on a recent Sunday morning was 165 plus 39 children. In 2018, we helped them build a larger building on the land they purchased (*picture, above left*). We helped with materials while they used local labor and the work of the members. There are now six congregations in the area, one with elders and deacons, and we are working with eight congregations in the coastal areas and one on the northern border (*picture, above right, San Lorenzo*). We have helped with the construction of buildings in northern Ecuador and southern Colombia.



We are very concerned with the Venezuela political situation, the extreme poverty and the violence they are suffering. Our prayers are for the church in Venezuela. Amazingly, the churches continue to grow in spite of the massive exodus of families that are searching for a better place to provide for their children.



The Seed Grows Automatically—Multiplying Itself

In my previous report, I wrote about loaves and fishes. We have too little appreciated the story about the little boy who offered the five loaves and two fish to Jesus. The boy was doing what it could—his contribution seemed small, but it was the beginning of something much bigger.

In this report, I mention a different time in Jesus' life. Jesus teaches about a process that starts small, occurs

naturally and automatically, and brings great results. In the parable of the growing seed (Mark 4:26-29) he describes the seed that is planted and that grows automatically, without being watched, without being supervised. When the seed is planted, it does what it is designed to do, it does it naturally, without outside help.

Jesus is talking about the growth of the kingdom. Kingdom growth is not forced; it is natural. When the seed is planted and allowed to grow, it will bear fruit. Kingdom growth is not the result of human efforts, analysis, and grandiose programs. Kingdom growth results when the seed is planted and allowed to grow. Kingdom growth means that all of God's people must be continually planting seed, seeking the best places and times to insert the seed into the hearts of others. I work toward that end; I pray toward that end.

I rejoice that the Gospel is going forth, hundreds are coming to faith in Christ, and the kingdom is expanding! In the countries of Latin America, the seed is being planted and is growing through the efforts of God's people who live in those countries. In my reports, I have shared the same story again and again—Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and more.

ACTIVITIES SINCE THE LAST NEWSLETTER

→**US travels and work with various US churches.** We were grateful for the brief respite we enjoyed during the Christmas and New Year season — I was home for three weeks from December 15 until January 8. The opportunity to be with family was wonderful as we shared special family time during the holiday season (we had twelve persons present for Christmas Dinner). Because I resumed my travel schedule soon after the holidays, I did not get much writing and preparation completed for 2019. (That had to wait until the last two weeks of January after we returned from Costa Rica.) I was delighted to finish my first 2019 trip through the New Testament in twelve days — January 1-12! Spending time with friends, teaching Bible classes in local churches, and visiting God’s people in different congregations is always a blessing.



→**Heredia, Costa Rica.** Carlos Ulate invited Jan and me to visit and work with the Heredia church in the metropolitan area of San Jose, so January 9-16, we spent a week with the church—teaching, preaching, and presenting an evangelism training seminar while at the same time visiting with and encouraging Carlos and Roxana. The church has reached an attendance of 125-150, but attendance is capped because of the size of their building. Jan and I were present on a sad yet exciting day in the life of the church — the



members made the decision to sell their building and to seek a place to rent so the church can continue to grow. After the evangelism seminar on Saturday afternoon, we identified a new team of 10-12 members committed to evangelism. The church has birthed seven cell groups (currently meeting in homes) that are moving toward becoming churches in various suburbs around San Jose.



In every mission work, some factors that contribute positively to the work are not easily duplicated in other locations. In Heredia, the long-term stability of Carlos and Roxana in the area has resulted in a church that includes various family members, their children’s families, and their “in-laws.” The work has also been buoyed by the presence of two or three strong couples who came to the congregation, already being members of the churches of Christ.

The church is not wealthy but is quite generous. There is no full-time worker; Carlos has a partial teaching load at the local university and is largely self-supporting. The local church and a US church provide minimal support and a work fund.

The success of the church can be attributed to several factors. (1) The church has been encouraged to dream, set goals, and develop plans which they are actively pursuing. (2) The church is very relational. (3) The absence of a full-time minister has led to increased involvement by most of the church members. (4) The church is effectively using cell groups to reach out and to establish new churches. This appears to be an effective church planting model in the urban setting.

I applaud the decision of the church to sell their building, leaving their present location in favor of renting a facility that will better serve them. They understand the role of a building and the importance of having a physical presence, but renting will be much more practical than owning. (The perceived instability of renting is more a factor in the members’ minds than in the attitudes of visitors.) Selling the building will be cost efficient, will give better facilities for much less money, and will avoid the need to maintain a facility that is used a few hours per week.



While in Costa Rica, we spent two days with a church leader at La Fortuna. We shared several hours of Bible study (*picture, above right*). I see a great need for more Bible study resources and materials.



→**Iglesia de Cristo, Van Buren, Arkansas.** Jan and I were privileged to share a weekend with this church, celebrating their first anniversary and preaching an evangelistic campaign. With approximately 80 people present on Friday and Saturday, the activity was well supported by area Iglesias de Cristo from Arkansas and Oklahoma (*picture, left*).

Updated 2019 Calendar

The 2019 calendar is almost full. In addition to international trips, multiple mission and ministry trips scheduled in the US.

- **March**, Dominican Republic. The trip will focus on the Dominican-Haitian border. I will preach an evangelistic campaign and present a seminar for church leaders and preachers. Clark Lineback will accompany me on this trip.
- **May**, El Salvador and Honduras. I will speak at the Baxter Seminar and use the opportunity to visit other locations in Central America. Pete Shaw is planning to accompany me on this trip.
- **May-June**, Hispanic churches in Tennessee and Kentucky, visits with financial partners.
- **July-August**, Colombia and Ecuador, an annual trip to work with a group of churches near the southern border of Colombia. In Ecuador, I will present a seminar over Hebrews and visit new and growing churches in the region. Jan will go with me on the trip to Colombia and Ecuador.
- **September**, Colombia. Visit a congregation where elders were recently established and spend time with various local churches for teaching and leadership training.
- **October**, speak at Global Mission Conference, Austin, Texas.
- **December**, Baxter board meeting and graduation.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Thank you for your interest in this work. I am always looking for those who want to be part of the team — financially, traveling with me, and in other ways. Through my host congregation (Main and Oklahoma, McAlester, OK), we accept tax-deductible gifts (checks payable to “Church of Christ,” memo line “Latin American Leadership Development” (or LALD); or you can use the memo to specify the project being funded). **ALL CONTRIBUTIONS SHOULD BE MAILED TO MY ADDRESS** (10704 S 89th East Ave, Tulsa, OK 74133), since I am responsible for deposits, acknowledgements, and accounting.

May our all-powerful God continue to bless you in every way. Thank you for your support, love, involvement and especially, your prayers. This work would not be possible without your partnership.

Dios lo bendiga (God bless you),

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The world is in darkness without the gospel! As the moon reflects the sun into dark places in our world, Christians must reflect the Son into the spiritual darkness of the world. Who will take the light of the gospel to the world that lies in darkness so that people can see?

All across Latin America, multitudes are receptive to the gospel of Jesus Christ. In addition, Christians hunger and thirst for the word of God and encouragement and training in evangelism, discipleship, healthy church development and effective church leadership.



Latin America Leadership Development is part of a community of Christians who work together to take the gospel to Latin America through evangelism, discipleship, and leadership development, with the goal of developing spiritually healthy and mature Christians and churches, capable of reproducing themselves. This is done by training those who will train others (2 Timothy 2:2). In 2018, God blessed and grew the mission—several additional workers were trained and are doing the same work, and the number of financial partners increased.