

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**Throwing plans and schedules out the window**

As is my custom, I wrote and sent the first mission newsletter of 2020 (March, Vol. 1) in late February. When Jan and I returned from the Dominican Republic in mid-March, the coronavirus threat was becoming clear. By the time our grandchildren went home from their spring break visit with us, schools were closed for the rest of the year. That same week, the pandemic was official, and we were on our way to changes that have had a far-reaching impact on our lives. We have had to completely rethink -- how we do missions, how we do ministry, how we do church, how we do life!

Who could have predicted how rapidly our world would change? It was soon clear that the pandemic was not only changing our lifestyles in the United States, it was changing the mission fields and the mission work facilitated through Latin American Leadership Development – travel restrictions, quarantine, curfews. The evangelistic and discipleship work that was still being done by the national churches amazed me! God had prepared us for just such a time as this. In the midst of confusion, doubt, concern, and questions about what the pandemic meant for the specific mission efforts I work with, I decided it was time for a mission update. I also wanted to report on the Dominican Republic mission trip. Two weeks after the coronavirus crisis was declared a global pandemic, I wrote and sent a mission newsletter update (April-May, Vol. 2).

Will we ever return to the life we knew before? While many are wishing for a return to normal, I am praying that the church and God's people will not return to normal. I am praying that the new opportunities, open doors, new methods of reaching unbelievers and the unchurched, and increased activity and interest will encourage us and empower us to reach out with the gospel as never before. Many are searching; people want to know. Opportunities to proclaim the gospel abound. May we seize the moment. May we not fail!

God was preparing “for such a time as this”

After ten years of full-time involvement in this mission project, in late 2019 I decided to use the first few months of 2020 as a sabbatical. During January and February, I worked on preparing new lessons, video production, and additional written materials. The digital classroom project that was begun in late 2019 was finalized. God was at work; God was preparing his people.

In the Dominican Republic, planning for a Digital Evangelistic Campaign had begun in 2019. The planned date: Semana Santa 2020, the week before Easter. Who could have known? The initial numbers show that about 175,000 people in the Dominican Republic tuned in to hear God's word during the campaign. Personal Bible studies and follow-up are underway as I write this newsletter. How incredible was God's timing!

The focus of Latin American Leadership Development (LALD) is the training and development of national workers, many of whom are vocational workers. During the pandemic, many of the national workers now have more time available for the Lord's work. Evangelism has continued and increased -- Bible studies by phone, the use of technology, and personal Bible studies as permitted by law. In church planting efforts, new Christians are accepting the responsibility for evangelism and discipleship in the local churches. In the places where LALD provides logistical support for the work of evangelism and discipleship, I have received reports of dozens of baptisms -- in Peru (the evangelistic outreach was done by a new Christian); in various parts of Colombia (in the new effort in La Hormiga, in Bogota, and in Santa Marta); in several locations in Ecuador; in Chile; in Venezuela; in Honduras; and in Nicaragua. In a recent digital conference in Bogota, 20 unbelievers tuned in to hear God's saving word preached.

New opportunities ended the sabbatical

Increased Activity. The last month and a half have brought an increasing number of requests for teaching through the use of the Internet, technology, and video. The mission work has resumed with more projects and more activity than ever, although without travel.

I took a quick look back at the last month and a half—about six weeks.

- 58 New video studies produced and being made available on my YouTube channel
 - 26 Total remote presentations – conferences, sermons, classes, seminar sessions (international and US)
 - 17 New videos written and produced for online Bible class, studies in the Gospel of Mark
- I am no longer on sabbatical!

Video Production. Video production continues at a rapid pace. You can review the studies available by video (in English and in Spanish) by visiting my YouTube channel (“Bob Young Ministry and Missions”).

Digital Classroom Project. The exponential growth in the number of mission points that are using digital technology for outreach, Bible classes, seminars, and worship provides new opportunities for developing the virtual classroom concept when it is once again possible to assemble small groups of Christians in classroom settings for intense Bible study and training.



The gospel sounds forth without hindrance

Across Latin America, the gospel is sounding forth. I remind you of quotes I shared in my last report.

A brother from Ecuador writes, “*God is opening a great and effective door in this time, we must take advantage of technology to reach more souls...*” The churches are reaching out with the gospel.

A church leader in Colombia writes, “*The coronavirus has us inside our houses, but we are evangelizing from our houses because this pandemic has served to cause unbelievers to now seek the Almighty.*” All across Latin America, souls are being won by the preaching and study of God’s word. People want to know!



Sharing the “Good News” in English

Three times each week I am sharing God’s Word in English. Effective teaching combines multiple communication tools.

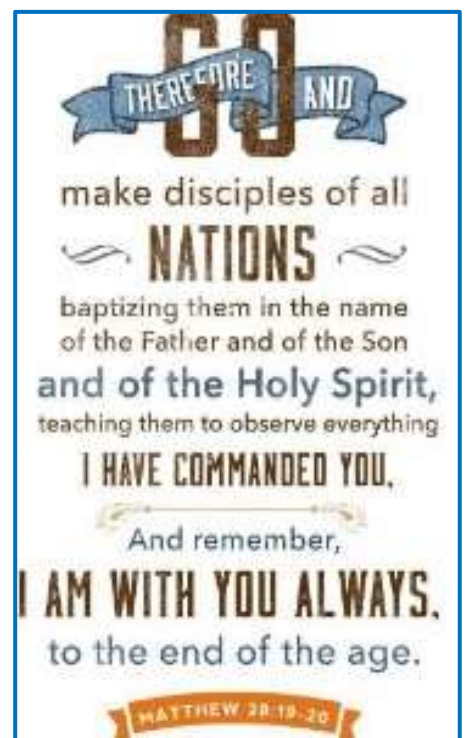
It’s Sunday Again. Every Sunday, short video sermons (10 minutes or less) are combined with notes that expand the teaching and help students explore Bible texts and themes more deeply.

“bits from bob...” Every Monday morning, I share a thought to help get the week off to a great start. These are available both in video and written format.

Wednesday W.O.W. Every Wednesday morning, I share a “Word of the Week.” These brief devotionals build a short lesson around a single word. These studies are also available both in video and written format.

Bible Classes. As time permits, I am developing and posting written Bible studies, producing video Bible studies, and conducting online classes. (An advantage of video studies, even when incorporated into an online class, is that they continue to be available as resources.)

The goal is always the same – that the gospel may sound forth and that God’s people will be encouraged to share their faith!



Schedules are being rewritten

The pandemic has made scheduling and planning difficult. International seminars and conferences for the rest of 2020 will be presented remotely with the use of technology or rescheduled. Scheduled U.S. trips are still penciled in on my calendar. I pray for the resumption of international travel in 2021. Trips are already scheduled for the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Colombia.

A part of scheduling depends on resolving eyesight difficulties and seeing improvement in other health concerns. The concern with disorientation and neuropathy continues, but on most days, I am able to deal with those problems. I am pleased to report that I have been released after surgery to correct my double vision. Although some problems with double vision remain, the surgeon said he corrected about 80% of the problem. This month, I will have laser surgery to deal with scar tissue in the right eye, but the surgery is non-invasive. After 2 ½ years of dealing with various vision problems, I hope that eye surgeries are a thing of the past.

If you want to help

Doors continue to open. Funding commitments to facilitate the evangelistic efforts of national Christians are being sent on schedule. I am grateful to the donors who continue to give in times of uncertainty. Decreased travel makes it possible to use travel-work funds to help with special projects.

Thank you for your interest in this mission work. Through my host congregation (Main and Oklahoma, McAlester, OK), you can make tax-deductible gifts (checks payable to “Church of Christ,” memo line “Latin American Leadership Development” [LALD]). **ALL CONTRIBUTIONS SHOULD BE MAILED TO MY ADDRESS** (10704 S 89th East Ave, Tulsa, OK 74133) since I am responsible for all deposits, acknowledgements, and accounting.

Thank you for your support, love, involvement and prayers. This work would not be possible without your partnership.

Dios les bendiga (God bless you),

Bob and Jan Young

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[I share again a favorite picture from when Jan and I were in Ecuador.]

On the left side of the picture, Imbabura Volcano (15190 feet) towers a mile and a half above Ibarra, Ecuador (7300 feet). Night is falling, a reminder that the night is coming when no one can work. Nightfall is also a reminder that the entire world is in darkness, lost without Jesus.

Only God's grace can change the direction of a person's life. Will you pray for the churches in Latin America that they can effectively share the glorious gospel of the Son of God who is the light of the world.

In Latin America, multitudes are receptive to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christians hunger and thirst for the word of God and want encouragement and training in evangelism, discipleship, healthy church development and effective church leadership. Thank you for helping us make that happen as we seek to fulfill God's purpose in this world – to save as many as possible! [photo credit: Bob Young]



Latin America Leadership Development is part of a network of Christians working together to take the gospel to Latin America. Through evangelism, discipleship, and leadership training, spiritually healthy and mature Christians and churches are developed, capable of reproducing themselves. A primary focus of the work is training those who will train others (2 Tim. 2:2), recognizing that the most effective kingdom workers are those national Christians who understand culture and language and are capable of developing friendships and relationships to bring the gospel to their own nations.