

## **LATIN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

*Developing Healthy Churches and Church Leaders in Latin America and Beyond*

### **Mission and Ministry Newsletter**

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#### **A time to look back, a time to look forward....**

We near the end of 2020 -- what an unusual year! As a memorable and difficult year draws to a close, I believe you will rejoice with me as you read the article immediately below.

#### **God's Ways Are Not My Ways**

Some of you know my New Year's practice of setting specific goals rather than making resolutions. As I sat down to write this newsletter, I thought it would be a good time to look back at my 2020 goals. Considering what we have gone through in 2020, I anticipated unmet goals and disappointment.



I share an excerpt from my post, a list of ten specific goals. The original post is still available online, dated January 7, 2020. ([http://www.bobyounresources.com/missions/LALD\\_2019-summary\\_jan-2020.pdf](http://www.bobyounresources.com/missions/LALD_2019-summary_jan-2020.pdf))

#### **Specific Goals for 2020: Laying Foundations for the Future**

*At the beginning of the new year, many people make resolutions. I set goals! I see a new beginning. I believe it is a time to pray about what God wants to do in this ministry in coming years. Will you join me in these prayers? God will bless our combined prayers to have an even greater impact on our world for Jesus.*

- *As already mentioned, pray for additional workers and church leaders*
- *Pray for evangelism, to find those interested in the gospel so they can respond to Jesus*
- *Pray for the new Christians in their walk toward devoted, disciplined discipleship*
- *Pray for the development of healthy national churches – self-sustaining, -directed, -edified, -duplicating*
- *Pray for the local churches in their desire to be missionary churches, planting more churches*

*Pray also for these specific objectives.*

- *Increase the technological outreach of this mission.*
- *Write and produce new video and audio materials for Latin America.*
- *Write and publish more written materials, books, lessons, classes.*
- *Investigate and initiate distance teaching opportunities.*
- *Increase partnering relationships for effective follow-up.*

I marvel as I read this list of goals. I was praying about ways to lay firm foundations for the future of Latin America Leadership Development. After evaluating future needs and making some adjustments, I had specific methods and activities in mind; plans for 2020 were underway. The pandemic interrupted my plans – but consider what God has done!

- The pandemic has made it necessary for new Christians to step up in evangelism. With technology, new workers and leaders have surfaced and national elders are involved in cross-national training and leader development.
- The uncertainty of the pandemic has significantly increased contact with unbelievers. Online campaigns often include dozens of unbelievers. As I noted in my previous report, according to a Barna survey, almost one-fourth of unbelievers in the U.S. would welcome a spiritual conversation with a Christian.
- Some new Christians have struggled with physical separation and lack of personal meetings, but many new Christians are actively sharing the Good News. The number of online Bible study options has made discipleship training more readily available.
- National churches have had to get by with a minimum of outside help – a characteristic of a healthy church.
- National churches continue to reach out in church planting efforts, using technology when travel is not possible.
- Concerning the last five objectives, all have been met – increased technological outreach, more video materials, more written materials, distance learning options, and new partnerships with multiplied national churches.

## The Changing Shape of Mission Work

As I mentioned before, the pandemic has changed the shape of mission work. We have had to rethink priorities, methods, and best practices in mission and ministry. Peripheral activities and ministries have fallen by the wayside and are hardly missed. I pray we will learn from our experience—discerning the most effective ways to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. Opportunities abound to proclaim the gospel; 2020 has brought into focus new opportunities, open doors, and new methods of reaching unbelievers.



As we have seized the moment, 2020 has been both stellar and difficult. The work of the national churches and workers has continued despite the pandemic. We have seen God at work, even in times of great sorrow and loss. We are learning greater dependence on God. I believe it is true: “God had prepared us for just such a time as this.”

## News from the mission fields

Every week I receive news of the power of the gospel to save, new Bible studies, new Christians. Despite difficult circumstances, there is a spiritual awakening in many places. Many of the national workers and leaders I work with have their own employment and jobs. They are unpaid volunteers in the Lord’s service as they share the hope of the gospel and encourage the disciples. They have continued to proclaim the Good News in incredible ways.

Thinking about 2020 in comparison to past years, the number of baptisms has changed very little. Due to lockdowns and restricted travel, the number of new churches planted is lower. As I consider the spiritual development of the churches during this year, I believe the Lord is getting his people ready so that the churches are poised for increased growth and effectiveness in 2021 and beyond.

## My activities

Each week I share Bible teaching in English with videos and published articles. Effective teaching combines multiple communication preferences. Monday mornings I share “bits from bob...” -- thoughts to help get the week off to a great start. On Wednesdays, I share a “Word Of the Week” (W.O.W). Brief Bible studies and videos are posted most weekends. The goal is always the same – may the gospel sound forth and may God’s people be encouraged to share their faith!

The production of quality video teaching and written materials in Spanish has accelerated. A new video evangelism series has been produced, along with an online evangelism seminar. Mission video production in 2020 now exceeds seventy videos produced and distributed.

I have not been able to travel out of the US since March. I have limited my US travel, accepting only a few invitations. International seminars and conferences have been presented virtually. I am praying that international travel can resume in 2021. Trips that were cancelled in 2020 need to be rescheduled; already visits are scheduled to the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Colombia.

## Some specific things you can do

**Pray.** The impact of COVID-19 in the churches in Latin America is incredible. Pray that the churches can continue to sound forth the Good News. Many seek the stability and security that our Savior, Jesus Christ, wants to provide!

**Share.** Funds to facilitate the evangelistic work of national Christians have been sent on schedule. I am grateful for donors who continued to give in uncertain times. You have enabled increased involvement in various benevolent needs. Through my host congregation (Main and Oklahoma, McAlester, OK), you can make tax-deductible gifts (checks payable to “Church of Christ,” memo line “LALD”). **MAIL CONTRIBUTIONS TO:** 10704 S 89<sup>th</sup> East Ave, Tulsa, OK 74133.

**Watch.** Please take a few minutes to watch the most recent video mission update: <https://youtu.be/ixfrKncGGok>.

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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***When you support Latin America Leadership Development, you are part of a network of Christians committed to taking 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 goal is training those who will train others (2 Tim. 2:2), recognizing that the most effective kingdom workers are national Christians who understand the culture and language, are known and trusted, and easily develop friendships and relationships that carry the gospel to their own nations.***

