

LATIN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Developing Healthy Churches and Church Leaders in Latin America and Beyond

Mission and Ministry Newsletter

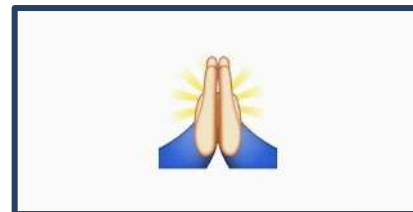
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www.bobyounresources.com



A quick look back at 2020....

We near the end of 2020 -- what an unusual year! Memorable, challenging, difficult, amazing! What have we seen? What is God teaching us? Will anything be different in our new normal? I have seen God's superior ways and thoughts. I have learned more dependence on God. I have learned new rhythms in my spiritual journey; I have grown in prayer.



God's Ways Are Not My Ways

Some of you know my New Year's practice of setting specific goals rather than making resolutions. When I began writing this newsletter in early November, I decided to look back at my 2020 goals. Considering what we have been through in 2020, I anticipated unmet goals and disappointment.

I share an excerpt from my January 2020 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)

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 read this list; I am amazed. I was praying about how to lay firm foundations for the future of Latin America Leadership Development. I had evaluated future needs, I had made some adjustments, I had specific methods and activities planned. I thought we were ready for 2020. Then the pandemic interrupted our plans – but consider what God has done! God is at work, answering our prayers beyond our expectations. (The bullet points below correspond to the bullet points above.)

- The pandemic made it necessary for new Christians to step up in evangelism and church development. As new Christians accepted responsibility for the advance of the church and the spreading of the gospel, God provided more workers. Through the use of technology, new workers and leaders have surfaced. Now national elders are involved in cross-national training and leader development.
- The uncertainty of the pandemic significantly increased contact with unbelievers. Online campaigns reach dozens of unbelievers, multiplying contact with unbelievers in comparison to pre-pandemic evangelism campaigns. As I reported in my previous newsletter, according to a Barna survey, almost one-fourth of unbelievers in the U.S. would welcome a spiritual conversation with a Christian. I am not sure the US church has responded well to the opportunity, but across Latin America, many Christians are sharing the gospel with greater diligence.

- Some new Christians have struggled with physical separation and lack of personal meetings, but many new Christians are actively sharing the Good News with friends. An increased number of online Bible study options has made discipleship development and training more readily available.
- National churches have had to get by with a minimum of outside help – a characteristic of a healthy church. With less US presence, the churches have matured spiritually.
- National churches continue to reach out in church planting efforts, using technology when travel is not possible.

Concerning the five objectives (the second list of five bullet points above), all have been met – increased use of technology, more video materials, more written materials, multiple distance learning options, and new partnerships with the national churches.

News from the mission fields

Every week I receive news of the power of the gospel to save, new Bible studies, new Christians. Here are a few recent pictures -- those present after five are added to the church (top right), a baptism in Peru after new sister in Christ, recently baptized, taught her friend (lower right), three more baptisms (upper left), three more baptisms (lower left). In the midst of difficult circumstances in many places, 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. As I see the spiritual development of the churches during 2020, I believe the Lord is getting his people ready so that the churches are poised for increased growth and effectiveness in 2021 and beyond.



PLEASE READ: The Changing Shape of Mission Work

In my previous newsletter, I observed that **the pandemic is changing the shape of mission work**. US churches are being challenged to rethink priorities, methods, and best practices in mission and ministry. Many mission budgets are struggling with decreased gifts. National churches have continued to spread the gospel while many US missionaries are stateside. In fact, national churches are evangelizing hundreds and planting dozens new churches. The commitment and capacity of the national churches to share the gospel in their own countries and contexts has been accentuated.

It Is Time to Join Hands – in Prayer and in the Work!

The primary goal of mission work is to take the gospel to the entire world. Look at the biblical model. Study, think, apply! Once the gospel has been proclaimed in a region or country, the churches and Christians in that area must be challenged and equipped to continue the multiplying process. A great need in missions is to escape mission work that operates by addition and to learn multiplication. *A great need to for US churches to join hands with the national churches – praying together, facilitating the work, helping with resources to do what the national churches cannot do by themselves.*



The pressures on budgets are causing some US churches to look at their mission efforts through fresh eyes. More and more churches are awakening to the fact that the result of mission work must be more Christians and healthy churches. Mission involvement must set expectations and include withdrawal plans. *The mission funding model that has been used by most churches since the renewal of mission interest in the 1950s will not be workable in future generations that will have fewer financial resources, seek personal experience, and be less committed to evangelism and mission.*

During the pandemic, what has happened in mission work has been mirrored in local ministry in the US. 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 in mission work, 2020 has been both a stellar year and a difficult year. 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. Indeed: “God had prepared us for just such a time as this.”

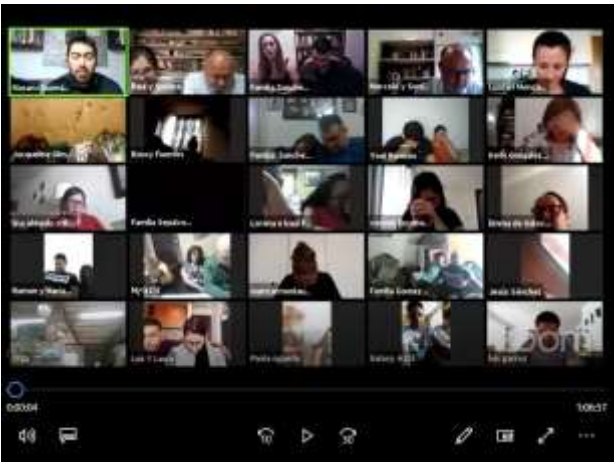
My activities

I have not been able to travel out of the US since March. I have limited my US travel, accepting only a few in-person invitations. International seminars and conferences have been presented virtually. I recently preached at the Nogales church in Santiago, Chile (screenshot, left). There were almost 50 devices connected online and “Facebook Live” views numbered 270 as we finished. Two new Christians who had been baptized the previous day, a couple with a young son, were introduced.

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.

In addition to my international teaching schedule, 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 new videos produced and distributed. Links to written and video materials are available on my website: www.bobyongresources.com, and on my YouTube Channel: **Bob Young Ministry and Missions**.



Specific things you can do

Pray. The personal impact of COVID-19 in the churches in Latin America is incredible, with numerous deaths. Pray that the churches will continue to sound forth the Good News. Many today are seeking the stability and security that our Savior, Jesus Christ, wants to provide!

Share. Throughout 2020, funds to facilitate the evangelistic work of national Christians have been sent on schedule. I am grateful for donors who have 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 89th 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),

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All across Latin America, sprawling cities, teeming with multitudes of seeking souls, are being penetrated by the salt and light of our brothers and sisters. In the villages that dot the hillsides and landscapes, the gospel goes forth! Will you pray that the lost will be found?



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.