

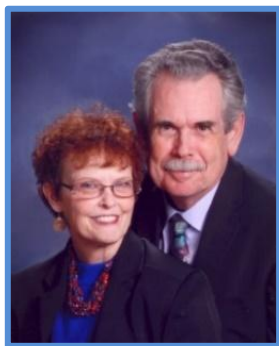
LATIN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Developing Healthy Churches and Church Leaders in Latin America and Beyond

Mission and Ministry Newsletter

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We Have Not Traveled This Way Before

2025 will soon end. 2026 will begin. The end of a year, the beginning of a new year. We have had this experience before, but this time something is different!

In Joshua 3:4, God prepares the Israelites to enter the Promised Land. He reminds them, “You have never traveled this way before.” Charting new paths requires clear vision. Entering uncharted territory demands faith. Life lived with God is an adventure. Relying on past experience will not be sufficient for walking new paths. Walking God’s way requires wisdom and God’s guidance.

As we come to the close of 2025, we are grateful for all that God has done through us (and in spite of us). We are grateful for all who have walked with us. God’s eternal purpose and saving mission in this world have been front and center -- bringing the lost to Jesus, disciples making disciples who advance God’s mission wherever he puts us. We have been diligent in advancing God’s eternal purpose, resourcing churches throughout the western hemisphere with Bible teaching, evangelism and discipleship training, leadership development, and church planting efforts.

In 2026, we will celebrate milestones. Especially satisfying to me personally is that I will celebrate 60 years of ministry. Jan and I will celebrate 57 years of marriage. We look back on 45 years of international mission involvement. Since our retirement from the university twenty years ago, we have devoted full-time to advancing God’s mission in the world. Milestones are testimony to God’s sustaining grace.

This newsletter finishes Volume 20. Twenty years of mission reports and news. Our goal has been to strengthen and encourage the church, enabling God’s people for the primary task God has given us.

At a retreat of preachers and church leaders from Colombia and Venezuela in 2006, I was asked to unpack a section of 2 Timothy: “Developing Relay Generations for the Race.” Twenty years later, across Latin America, God has blessed us with a fresh generation of workers who capably carry the torch—in Chile, Uruguay, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. The vision has come into focus and the task has been picked up by national workers across Latin America.

We are grateful for churches that have provided financial support for the mission across the past twenty years—Northside (Mena, AR); Main and Oklahoma (McAlester, OK); Fort Gibson (OK), and more recently Springbrook Hills (Dewitt, MI), and Holmes Road (Lansing, MI). Along the way, countless other churches and individuals have partnered in advancing God’s work.

We are doubly grateful that Main and Oklahoma and Fort Gibson have agreed to carry the torch forward in Peru, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic where fledgling works still need help toward maturity.

PRAY ALWAYS FOR THE ADVANCE OF THE GOSPEL AROUND THE WORLD

God's method for accomplishing his purpose is clearly revealed in the New Testament. Committed disciples of Jesus make more disciples. They share worship and provide support for becoming more and more like Jesus. With equipping and encouragement, they work together to advance His cause and purpose. This mission is the heartbeat of discipleship, and the heartbeat of Christ's church.

In the ministries and mission works we have undertaken, we have tried always to prioritize disciple-making. We are called to be like Jesus and to shine the light of Jesus' glory to the world. We are called to be glory-bearers. Jesus came seeking and saving the lost. We follow him. Make disciples—baptizing them and teaching them. Making disciples naturally leads to planting new churches.

Thank you for your support and prayers in 2025. May Christ be exalted!

UPDATE: Memories of Faith and Family, Ministry and Mission

The book is now at the publisher. We look forward to sharing our story—a story of walking through God's open doors. The book should be available early next year.



[proposed cover picture]

Baxter Graduation: November 2025



Baxter's 2025 graduation was moved forward two weeks to avoid any potential problems associated with the Honduran election cycle. We were accompanied by **Robby and Lisa Walkingstick**. Robby serves as a mission deacon at the Fort Gibson church of Christ. One highlight of the trip was meeting with Jormar and Gloria, missionaries supported by Fort Gibson as they work in Honduras (picture, left). I was honored by be part of the graduation program as I left the dedication prayer for the graduates.

(The result was that I did not get pictures from the graduation event.)

Before the Sunday morning area-wide worship, Robby took a picture of Jan and me standing in front the amphitheater plaque (picture, right). The initial amphitheater improvements were completed during my service as board chairman.

Jan and I were reminded of the first time we attended Baxter graduation—twenty-three years ago. It was a delight to renew many friendships in Christ.



Mission and Ministry Updates

God is at work through his faithful servants.

In Peru, I had an online study with a man who is very interested in the gospel. The online study was set up by **Raul Chumbile**, a missionary who serves in Chimbote.... funds have been sent for a moto to help with the work in the **Dominican Republic** (thanks to **Liberte Ministries**) ... also in the DR, land has been purchased in **Barerra** to construct a more permanent meeting place.... plans are being developed for a survey trip to the **Dominican in early 2026** to plan future church building construction projects... Jan and I were saddened when new medical concerns made it necessary to cancel our **January-February mission trip to Cusco and Curahuasi, Peru**.... We were blessed to spend time with **Northside in Mena** in November, sharing a mission report and preaching....

Retirement: Making Sense of Life's Changes

What are we to do when life situations require changes in our lives and activities? Can we still do God's work? Can we still fulfill his purpose for our lives? Jan and I are facing the reality of aging. We face new challenges. We cannot do what we used to do. Everything takes longer. The reality of slowing down after decades of full-time kingdom service can be frustrating. It is time to develop a different view of life—a fresh understanding of God's calling and how we glorify Him!

Brother Lawrence, in his book, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, shares centuries-old wisdom. Pleasing God does not depend on us choosing and doing exactly the right things. Pleasing God comes from doing everything in our lives for the glory of God. Col. 3:17, "whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord." Across the years, when God opened a door, we walked through it. We may not be as talented as others. What we do may remain unknown or less visible. No matter! May we do the job in front of us as well as we can for as long as we can, to bring glory to God. Serve the Lord by working hard at what he has for you to do and be drawn ever closer to him.

The time is soon coming when God will give us a new set of activities—fresh opportunities to bring glory to him. When caring for those we love, being present for a spouse, aging with calm and joy in His service becomes our lot—that also will be enough.



Here's How You Can Partner. Thank You!

God is at work to accomplish his eternal purpose. That mission, while it is often beyond our dreams and imaginations, excites and energizes us, sending us forth with the Good News of the Kingdom. Thank you for your prayers, partnership, and encouragement.

As the works being supported are passed on to local churches, donors supporting those specific works will be notified. Funds are still needed for the travel-work fund, digital and online mission opportunities, and publishing resource materials.

Through our host congregation (Main and Oklahoma, McAlester, OK) you can make tax-deductible gifts payable to "Church of Christ," memo line "Latin American Leadership Development" [LALD]. **ALL CONTRIBUTIONS SHOULD BE MAILED TO THE TULSA ADDRESS** (10704 S 89th East Ave, Tulsa, OK 74133).

Dios le bendiga (God bless you),
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The picture on the right shows what God is doing through the new building and renewed efforts at La Descubierta, Dominican Republic. Your generosity coupled with the faithful work of Dominican and Haitian brothers and sisters is reaping the harvest in difficult places.



Latin America Leadership Development works within an international 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.