

Guatemala Mission Trip, March 2013

Bob Young

The primary purpose of the trip to Guatemala (Feb 28-Mar 11) was to provide leadership training and consulting for indigenous churches, primarily in the western part of Guatemala in the departments of Sololá and Quiché.

A very early morning departure put me in Guatemala City by early afternoon. A 3½ hour bus ride took me to Sololá where Adán Benavente, a graduate of Baxter Institute, preaches. Adán served as my guide during the first week of the trip.

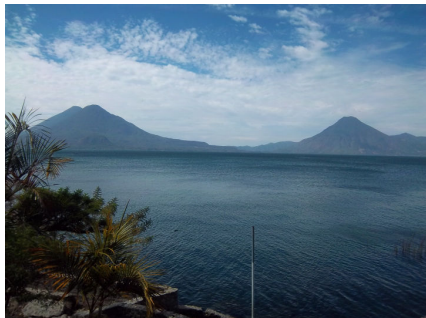
On Friday we went to Godínez (1½ hours by bus, south and east) where there is a small congregation in need of encouragement. **We met with the young man who serves as the primary leader** for much of the morning, and then studied with a group of the sisters during the early afternoon. The church has 15-20 in attendance. The fathers of two of the leading families are in the US sending financial support to their families; the absence of these men from the church makes the challenges even greater. We prayed together and also provided some additional contact information for the brothers who are in the US.



I got back to Sololá just in time for a late afternoon meeting with three men who are elder candidates. We studied the Bible and answered questions for two hours before the regular Friday night Bible study with the church. I spoke about the model church from 1 Thessalonians.

On Saturday we left at 6 AM to travel to Chimaltenango (2 hours by bus, to the east) where we went with a group of area church leaders. The purpose of the meeting was to plan the upcoming national conference of the churches of Christ in Guatemala. My purpose was to provide counsel and encouragement toward the maturing of the Guatemalan churches. Thankfully, one of the classes in this year's conference will focus on the need for biblical organization and leadership. A side benefit of sharing in such meetings is that there are always additional congregations wanting to be strengthened and encouraged by the seminars I present. My schedule for the next trip is already almost full.

The church in Sololá usually meets at 3:30 PM on Sunday, but this Sunday began early in the morning because a young couple whom I had met on Friday evening wanted to be baptized. About a dozen of us met at the square to take the bus to Lake Atitlán. **The Sololá church has**



one of the most magnificent baptisteries in the world!

After a time of singing, prayer, Bible reading, and a brief study on the shore of the lake, we were ready for the baptisms. The young couple has been married 20 months. They have been attending church services. They were obviously pleased to be establishing a strong foundation for their lives and their family. After the baptisms, we shared coffee, soft drinks, and snacks in a lakeside restaurant, returning to Sololá about 1 PM.



At the afternoon assembly, I preached on the importance of the church and God's purpose for the church from Ephesians. Afterward, I walked about a kilometer to Adán and Miriam's house for coffee and bread. The evening temperatures in



Sololá were near freezing or slightly below, and the wind was extremely strong. As I started the walk back to the hotel (slightly more than a kilometer), I encountered a taxi that had just dropped off passengers near Adán's. Was I glad to avoid the walk in the cold!

Monday we took a bus to Santa Cruz de Quiché (1 ½ hours to the north) where I spoke to a **group of 18 leaders from four area congregations**. We met from 9 AM to about 4 PM. Most of these congregations worship in the Quiche language, but a few have bilingual (Quiche and Spanish) services. One of the churches has elders and deacons and is biblically organized. The interest and questions were excellent. I arrived at the hotel at 6 PM—another 12 hour day!



Tuesday and Wednesday I gave a leadership seminar in Chichicastenango (about an hour by bus). **There were 20 present for the seminar from seven churches**. We met from 9 AM to 4 PM both days. When Adán and I got back to Sololá on Wednesday, it was almost time for Wednesday night Bible study. I taught from Ephesians, focusing on our new life in Christ. Wednesday was a long day, beginning at 6:30 AM and ending about 9 PM. All of the days were long, but spending time with the churches and with church leaders was rewarding and refreshing.

Thursday I went by bus to Antigua where I met Esteban in the market so that we could go together to **San Juan del Obispo** where he and his family are working to establish a new congregation. The congregation is only 3 months old, but **there were 13 present for the Thursday night Bible study**. We ate supper after the Bible study and visited until almost 11 PM. I had met Esteban and Faustina on previous trips to Guatemala and enjoyed my stay in their home.



The next morning (Friday), I was able to check emails with a Tigo mobile satellite connection and I also Skyped with Jan. Esteban, Faustina and I spent the morning visiting about the needs of the churches in Guatemala before I had to leave. The short trip to Milpas Altas got me to the home of Marvin Tercero by around 2 PM. I ate some fruit (mango, banana, and apple) before going to the home of Hilario and Teresita, Marvin's parents, which would be my home base for the next three days.

On Friday evening I spoke at the Milpas Altas congregation. I was asked to speak about the nature of the church, which I did beginning in the Old Testament and concluding in



Revelation. The study lasted almost 2 hours. On Saturday, I made several visits and Bible studies with Marvin and Hilario and we also discussed the needs of the churches in Guatemala. On Sunday I preached the morning service at Milpas Altas. After lunch we went to Guatemala City (about 45 minutes by car) where **I preached during the evening service at Centro Histórico**. This church began in January 2012 and had about 100 baptisms in the first year. The attendance on Sunday night was 86.

It was late when we arrived home. Thankfully, my Monday flight was not until noon. Monday, however, turned out to be an eventful day. Marvin called shortly after 8 AM and said that we needed to head for the city as soon as possible because demonstrations were blocking the major roads into the city. The 40 minute trip to the airport took slightly over 2 hours as we traveled over back roads and through small towns. I saw a part of Guatemala that I had never seen before! I arrived at the airport about an hour before scheduled departure—really tight for an international flight. It turned out that the departing flight was delayed, so there was no problem—until I got to Houston. Long lines in immigration and delays in security—I got to the gate to catch the plane to Tulsa just 15 minutes before departure, again barely under the deadline.

During the trip, I preached and taught in seven different congregations, plus I presented seminars in two locations, spending about 40 hours in formal teaching and preaching during the 10 days. About 60 church leaders from 20 different congregations were present for the seminars and Saturday session. The church in Sololá will hopefully be able to appoint elders during this calendar year or very early next year. There were two baptisms during the trip.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve and appreciate those who help make it possible. I would be pleased to visit your congregation and share firsthand what God is doing through this ministry. Please contact me at bro.bobyoun@gmail.com or by phone at 918.470.0421.