

**What do you do?
By Bob Young
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A work of churches of Christ

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What do you do while you are in Honduras?

This was the question that several asked me last Sunday while expressing their appreciation for my safe return. It is a good question.

Overview

I serve as chairman of the board of directors of Association Amicus, a non-profit Honduran corporation. We have a parallel non-profit organization in the U.S. to receive funds, but our primary work is through the Honduran corporation. As a result, our meetings and much of the legal work must be done in Honduras. We oversee two primary works: **Baxter Institute** and the **James Moody Adams (JMA) Clinic**. As part of my responsibilities on the board, I also serve as chairman of the Baxter committee and as chairman of the strategic planning committee.



Baxter Institute

Baxter is a preacher/ministry training school which trains Latin American preachers in Latin America for Latin American churches. This avoids the necessity of students traveling to the U.S. for ministry studies and makes it more likely that they will eventually minister in their home countries or in other parts of Latin America. Baxter was established in Mexico in 1964 and moved to Honduras in 1978. We celebrated 30 years in Honduras at the 2008 graduation this past December. We now have almost 500 graduates working across South, Central, and North America. The training program is a four-year, university-level program—one of the best, if not the best in Latin America. Entry requires a high school diploma. Many of our graduates have gone forth to establish preacher training schools in their own countries where they can train preachers who have not had the opportunity to pursue advanced training. (Many of those in Latin America who lack formal academic training and high school diplomas do not lack the ability to do the work but have lacked opportunity.) We also have a women's program for the wives of our married students, a correspondence course program which reaches into virtually every Spanish-speaking country in the world, and a weekend Christian leadership training program. Future plans include expanding these offerings to include more Internet availability and video-conferencing classes.

Our students are required to work with churches each weekend, are involved in several annual campaigns, and cap their training with a Missionary Apprentice Program which prepares them for evangelistic ministry. Some of our graduates form church-planting teams to go forth and establish new churches. Others work with already established churches to help find renewal and a fresh evangelistic thrust. Hundreds are baptized each year through the work of our students and the churches they work with. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, more are baptized as a result of the work done by our graduates and those they have helped train. Some of our graduates go out to serve as faculty members at other schools, such as the Sunset branch in Quito, Ecuador.



James Moody Adams Clinic

JMA Clinic provides medical and dental services to some of the poorest in Honduras. The clinic has a partnership with Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) and provides a base for training medical students in their medical missions program. We have a Honduran trained doctor who directs the clinic, supported by U.S. medical doctors from VCOM who assist with the training program. The clinic sees thousands of patients each year, both in its daily services, and in mobile clinics that go into the more remote and mountainous regions to provide medical care to the most underprivileged. We also have a dental clinic that provides services to hundreds of patients each year. The dentist on staff is assisted by dental students from Honduras who are required to do public service as part of their dental training. Through the clinic, we dispense about 2000 prescriptions per month. We also host medical and dental brigades who supplement the work of the clinic. During my recent visit we had a group of dental hygienists from North Carolina who came to provide instruction in dental hygiene to the Honduran staff. A Christian optometrist brings a brigade every year and provides optical services.

In addition to the medical and dental services, the JMA Clinic provides a nutrition program for the poorest families, providing a basic food basket through regular food distributions. Participating families receive nutritional training. The cost to support a family in the nutrition program is \$30/month. In addition to the nutritional training, participants (many are single mothers) can receive vocational training in such areas as hair styling, sewing, and cooking. Vocational training is designed to help them find employment in the marketplace and exit the nutritional program. As part of the continuing support of such families, the Clinic oversees a child care program which provides nutritious meals and a safe, Christian environment where working mothers can leave their children during their work hours.



A Mission Base

A third area in which we serve is providing a base and funnel for Latin American mission efforts. Baxter hosts 20-25 groups each summer, providing housing and meals as Christians go forth into various places in Honduras to support and encourage local churches and provide benevolent support for the work of the churches. Groups vary in size, from 5 or 6 up to 30 or 40. In summer 2008, Baxter provided over 7000 nights of lodging for these work groups. The groups go forth to help the area churches and the poor, Baxter provides students who work with these same churches every weekend in spiritual development. In the context of the local churches, the work at Baxter and the Clinic and the work of the visiting groups meet and support one another.

Baxter also has agreements with various U.S. Christian universities to provide a location for foreign study programs focused in Latin America. Students from U.S. universities come to Baxter for cultural and language studies.

Many of the workers in various mission works across Honduras had their some of their initial Honduran experiences as visitors at Baxter. Baxter has provided a foundation and training for the development of dozens of churches, hundreds of preachers, and literally thousands of Christians from the U.S. who have worked to share the gospel of Christ in Honduras and in other Latin American countries.



My Most Recent Trips

In mid-May, I went to Honduras to teach a class on the annual seminar (lectureship). During the seminar I taught four hours each day (2 hours in the morning and 2 hours in the afternoon). I was able to connect with many acquaintances from Honduras and Central America—I especially enjoyed some quality time with **David and Suyapa Chacon** from Catacamas, and also enjoyed

some time with **Dwight Tomkins** who is working with *Mission Point Resource Network* in Catacamas. I met with a brother who was visiting on campus so that we could discuss teleconferencing possibilities for future courses. I also worked with several aspects of the strategic planning project, including a meeting with graduates who were on campus for the seminar. I had the privilege of introducing **Dr. Howard W. Norton** as the next president of Baxter to the graduates, to the seminar guests, and at the combined worship on Sunday, attended by almost 800 Christians.

At the end of May I returned to continue the strategic planning work, both in meetings at the Clinic and also in a planning session with the faculty members from Baxter. One of the first steps in the strategic planning process involves interviews and input from the employees and faculty, and much of that work was completed during this visit. Among the most important activities were the time spent with **Dr. Xiomara** in understanding and evaluating the needs at the clinic, and the time shared with **Dr. Don Drew** and the faculty in outlining the needs, possibilities, and plans for Baxter. I spoke in student devotional on the theme, “El Desafio del Ministerio Eficaz” (The Challenge of Effective Ministry).

I also use these trips to provide support for area churches. On Sunday morning I visited the **Kennedy church**. This church has grown marvelously over the past several years and is involved in two additional church plants. They are using small groups in their ministry and evangelism efforts. While I was there, I visited with some of the leaders about their elder-deacon training program in which 16 couples are enrolled. We had one baptism on Sunday. On Sunday evening and Wednesday I visited the **La Vega church** and had the opportunity to encourage them and to reestablish friendships from past trips. Baxter graduates are working at both of these local churches which are approaching 300 in attendance.

Who Pays for This?

After I explain this to folks, almost always the next question is, “Who pays for all of this?” The answer is that U.S. churches and individual Christians contribute to make this work possible. At a time when funding is decreasing because of the U.S. economy, we have more challenges than ever in the mission field. It would be especially helpful at this time if you could help with the work financially. Of course, we always need your prayers, but this time of transition provides some unique financial challenges. **If you can assist, you can make your check out to the Main and Oklahoma church (see below) and simply mark it for Baxter.**

As I conclude this longer than usual report, I want to thank the local church and the elders for allowing me time and some mission funding for this good work and the other things we do in Latin America. To work with a church with a heart for missions is a special blessing for a minister who loves missions. The gospel is going forth into our world in the places where God has placed receptive people. Pray that we might continue on faithfully in meeting the challenges he places before us. Thank you also for helping with this great work.

Bob Young

My overseeing church: Main and Oklahoma Church of Christ

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