

# ***ESPERANZA ETERNA***

***Bringing Hope for Eternity to Latin America and Beyond***

## **Mission-Ministry Newsletter**

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### **Ecuador and Colombia—Exciting and Encouraging**

August and September were very important and very productive months in this ministry. I originally planned to combine all fall activities into one report, but I cannot wait to share my excitement and the encouragement I received on my recent trip to Ecuador and Colombia. The itinerary for this trip was different than before. I flew into Guayaquil, Ecuador and then spent three weeks traveling thru Ecuador and Colombia before flying home from Bogota, Colombia. This schedule allows contact with many more churches—a total of about 20 different churches on this trip. On this trip, I worked with Brother Roberto Miranda and the Education for Vocational Workers (EVO) seminar.

In Guayaquil, the seminar was presented at the Guayaquil South congregation, but as is almost always the case, other churches attended the seminar. I taught Titus and 2 Timothy. One of the congregations that attended was Babahoyo, and on Sunday afternoon we traveled an hour and a half to Babahoyo to accept the invitation to preach in that church. I preached “God’s Plan for the Church” from Ephesians 1-3. We have added the Babahoyo church to our list of receiving congregations and are encouraged by their desire to appoint elders by the end of this year.



In Ibarra (Ecuador), I taught from Titus in two congregations. We spent much of the time in conflict management work. I was not able to visit the church in Tulcán (Ecuador) on this trip, but we left Pedro to work with the church there for a few days while we traveled on to Pasto, Colombia. In Pasto we shared a regional seminar for preachers and church leaders (picture, left).

I spent the weekend with the church in Tuquerres where activities included evangelistic Bible studies, a meeting with the leaders of the congregation, and multiple opportunities for preaching and teaching (picture, right).

In Cali, we shared a productive meeting with the leaders, including potential elders, of the Metropolitan church. The church plans to appoint elders in 2013. I visited this church and met with these leaders in September 2012. While in Cali, we also had conversations about the need for a new work in Popoyán, a proposal that was well received by the church. The church will assist with weekly visits to the new church.



After the meeting in Cali, I had just enough time to for the 3+ hour trip by car to Pereira where I was scheduled to preach that evening. The week was spent working in Pereira, and with churches in Armenia and Tuluá. In Tuluá members from several congregations were present for the seminar. We were thrilled to learn of a new church plant in Buga. The Pereira church has also established a new preaching point in La Unión, with someone going every two weeks in the hope of establishing a church in the near future. I was able to visit with some church members in Cartago, but did not get to go La Virginia. Both of these are church plants by Pereira church.

In Bogota, we met with members from about six different churches; I preached and taught in four different congregations in presenting seminar lessons.



There were five baptisms on this trip, the churches were strengthened, and we worked to encourage others recently baptized. I am constantly amazed by the commitment of the brothers and sisters who seem to think it nothing to travel four hours to attend the seminar, then four hours home. When Bible study opportunities are available, they go out of their way to take advantage of the opportunities.

I am reminded of a brother in Christ who made a business trip to Colombia and set up a late afternoon meeting with church leaders in the location where he was going, thinking to spend the last part of his travel day to encourage the church. His flight was delayed, and he did not arrive until 10:30 PM, but they were all waiting for him and they studied until about 2:30 AM. Last fall, we started a Bible study one morning at 6:30 AM and studied until almost 1 PM. We would have studied longer but we had to leave because we had a noon appointment in another church about two hours away. The visits are usually short, and it is often hard to get away when we leave. The multiple kisses and hugs remind me of Paul's departure in Acts 20.

This work is much like what Paul did in the New Testament with newly established churches, training teachers and leaders so that local churches can establish leaders and send forth teachers and evangelists to plant more churches. We work with new churches and also with some older, more established churches. What we see again and again is that developing leaders and teachers helps move the local church toward self-support and almost always increases evangelistic efforts so that new churches are planted with minimal or no U.S. dollars.

While our involvement in this effort is without remuneration, we are always seeking travel funds so we can continue and expand this work. The average cost of each trip is about \$2000—generally 2-3 weeks, about half of the cost is airfare and transportation. Let us know if we could visit your congregation and report firsthand about what God is doing across Latin America. [The church in McAlester continues to be our funneling congregation (PO Box 1004, McAlester, OK 74502), but we have moved. Please note our change of mailing address.]

*Que Dios le bendiga (may God bless you),*  
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