

LATIN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT*Developing Healthy Churches and Church Leaders in Latin America and Beyond***Mission and Ministry Newsletter**Bob and Jan Young, 10704 S 89th East Ave, Tulsa, OK 74133www.bobyoungrsources.com**A Personal Note: Reflecting on 2018**

[These reflections repeat a few details from previous reports. They are included here to provide a summary of the year in a single report.]

I give thanks to God for the great blessings he gives every day to his children and for the opportunity and ability to serve him and do his work.

I began the year by intentionally planning some time at home. I knew I was going to need cataract surgery on both eyes. I knew also that changes in my medications would require time for adjustment. My two medications manage my minimal health concerns but both cause disorientation and the possibility of falling. I have learned to live with this by being more cautious (and using a cane at times). Being at home during the early part the year (with the possibility of inclement weather) also made it possible for me to be available to travel with Jan on her ever more frequent visits to spend time with her mother.

I traveled to Chile in late February and early March. When I returned to the US and visited my eye surgeon again, I learned that a second eye surgery (lens exchange) would be necessary on my left eye. The left eye had flattened so that the lens implanted during the cataract surgery gave me a maximum focal distance of about 8 inches. This complication was the result of my eye surgery (radial keratotomy) about 25 years ago.

Immediately after the lens exchange surgery, I spent two weeks in Ecuador and Colombia working with various churches, giving seminars, teaching at a men's retreat, and preaching. I thought I was ready to resume my normal schedule and I was excited to be able to teach a Wednesday night adult Bible class at church in March, April, and May.

A planned trip to Peru in early June was postponed due to scheduling problems. It turned out that the postponement was a blessing from God. When we visited Jan's mother at Mother's Day, the hospice nurse told us that death was probably near. Within two weeks, Jan's mother deceased and I was grateful to be available in late-May and early-June to assist with the funeral and to support Jan and her family. The postponement of the Peru trip also made it possible for me to accept the invitation to kick off the Park Plaza 2018 Summer Series. Jan and I were blessed with a weeklong visit from our grands in June, and we all attended a family reunion together the weekend before July 4th.

At the next follow-up visit to my eye doctor, I learned that due to excessive scar tissue, I would need to have another eye surgery on my left eye to remove the scar tissue (laser). I scheduled that as soon as possible—in mid-August.

The second weekend and third week of July Jan and I spent time with dear friends in Arkansas (he is struggling with cancer) and I spoke at a retreat in Tennessee. (At the same time, I came down with shingles.) When we got home from the retreat, I only had a short weekend at home before leaving for two weeks in Colombia.

I arrived home from the Colombia trip on August 6 in time to enjoy another week with the grandchildren visiting. As soon as the grandchildren left, I had the laser eye surgery. During the post-surgery "down days" I finished proofing the fifth book in the series of Bible Study Guides, *Prison Letters*. I spent a weekend with the iglesia de Cristo in Madill, including a meeting with the church leaders as we analyzed how to move the work forward toward additional numerical growth. My surgery follow-up visit revealed a macular edema in the left eye, but I left the next day (with my new prescription for eye drops) for the rescheduled trip to Peru, teaching two days in the Interamericano Bible Institute (IBI) and spending four days with the church planting team in Trujillo. [Thankfully, my macular edema has been managed.]

September and October were planned as personal time — on August 15 Jan and I celebrated our 49th wedding anniversary, beginning our 50th year of marriage. About a year ago, I had promised Jan that I would set aside some time without international travels so that she and I could travel together in the US and begin celebrating and anticipating our Golden Anniversary in 2019. We made several trips, traveling in Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Colorado, with a brief trip to revisit the locations we visited on our honeymoon.

Jan and I traveled together in November-December to Baxter graduation and the annual board meeting. It was a delight for her to travel with me now that she does not have the responsibility of her mother. Four days after returning from Baxter, I went to Guatemala for a week to preach and present a seminar for church leaders at Ezell Clinic.

In 2018, I made six international mission trips along with several US ministry-mission trips (a little over three months of travel). In retrospect, it was a blessing that I had to work through health and eye issues; I spent more time with family and more time in relaxation without the pressure of continuing travels and preparations. Having fewer projects on my “to do” list was also a blessing — several brothers have recommended stress reduction and more relaxation for several years. The decision to slow down was not entirely of my own making, even though I had often recognized that stress and weariness were sapping my energy. The time required to recover energy and health seems to be a little longer with each trip. Thankfully, God is the source of our energy as he fortifies us and gives us rest.

In 2018, I have continued to read extensively, I completed my annual Bible reading, and spent increased time in writing projects and in producing video studies. Next year (2019) will mark 10 years since my official retirement and the beginning of my full-time involvement in this mission work. My 2019 calendar is filled and I have several commitments in 2020. As Jan and I get older, I would like to curtail my travels in favor of spending more time in writing, recording, and producing materials, but frankly, it very hard to say “no” when the needs are so great!



1994 My first trip to Latin America

2019 marks 25 years of travel and work in Latin America

2006 First mission report written, the beginning of the dream

2019 marks 13 years of travel, involvement, teaching, and kingdom expansion

2010 Retirement, began full time involvement in this dream

2019 marks the tenth year of my full-time involvement in this work

Mission Projects that were funded in 2018

In addition to my mission travel (in which costs are kept to a minimum), the following projects were funded in 2018. Evangelism and church planting in Puerto Gaitan, Colombia. This work is overseen by the Los Angeles church in Bogota. The Colombian church provides about 50% of the funding. A Venezuelan couple is now working with this new church. The church is about two years old with attendance around 15-20. LALD supplies funds for a meeting place and approximately half of the salary. Funds were also supplied for a Vacation Bible School

Evangelism and church planting in the Dominican Republic. This effort is overseen by the elders in Neyba, Dominican Republic. Funds were provided for work with five new congregations and one new church plant. Plans are to increase support to fund work with eight churches in 2019. A mid-year special donation in 2018 allowed funding for another congregation.

Evangelism and church planting in Peru. This work is under the oversight of the US board of IBI, but the work is done by Peruvians to establish new churches in Peru. The funding that is being provided assists with the church planting work in four locations.

Venezuela. Funds for relief efforts and gospel preaching were provided in several locations, working through Bob Brown as the primary contact.

Colombia. Funding for an evangelist. (The salary is funded by a deacon in Arkansas and an elder in Texas.) Funds were also provided for a portable baptistry for prison work, for a local men’s leadership seminar, and for conference travel funds. Additional funding provided travel to a national preachers’ retreat. In 2019, additional funding is planned for a mission evaluation trip to visit a group of new churches, and for monthly travel to a church that recently began meeting.

Chile. Partial funding for a local evangelist; work with “Mision Chile;” partial funding for an international evangelist.

Nicaragua. Toward the end of 2018, funding began for a half-salary of an evangelist in Nicaragua. The local church provides the other half of the support. This is a one-year commitment, in the hope that the local church will be able to pick up the entire support package toward the end of 2019.

Spanish Literature Ministry. Funds were provided to increase printing and distribution of evangelism lessons.

God Multiplies It!

Has the Lord ever taken one of your dreams for sharing the Gospel and empowered it beyond all that you expected? Have you ever been amazed at how your efforts have helped others share the Gospel, make new disciples, and expand the church?

In my ministry, the hope has always been that others will buy into the dream and take it to new levels, expanding it many times over. What begins small can become much bigger than we ever dreamed! One of the reasons I keep going in this ministry is because of the little boy who offered the five loaves and two fish to Jesus.

This ministry may not amount to much more than five loaves and two fish, but by faith I continue to believe that God is multiplying meager efforts in incredible ways as others catch the dream and see the vision. The Gospel is going forth, hundreds are coming to faith in Christ, and the kingdom is expanding! Praise God!



Words of encouragement from elders in participating churches....

Just finished your October Newsletter! We sincerely appreciate your commitment to sharing the gospel in Latin America! You have been doing a good work since we met—many years ago—in Fort Gibson! You've shared the gospel with countless folks. You've changed lives for the King! May He bless you, keep you and continue to give you the will and strength to continue HIS good work until THAT day! Love to Jan!
Grace and Peace, Budo (elder at Fort Gibson, Oklahoma)

At Main and Oklahoma, we are passionate about the spread of the gospel throughout the world, including Latin America. We are thankful for the work which Bob Young has done and is doing in this area, especially as he works with training and mentoring church ministers and leaders in this region. We are grateful to serve as Host Congregation for this vital mission work in Latin America....

In Christian love, Tim Maxcey (elder at Main and Oklahoma, McAlester, Oklahoma)

Honor where honor is due...

As I begin a tenth year of this work, I want to acknowledge and thank the three churches that have been part of this ministry from the beginning. For the past decade, **Main and Oklahoma in McAlester, Fort Gibson, and Northside—Mena** have included this work in their budget. Main and Oklahoma also serves as the host congregation, providing funding for four trips each year. The Fort Gibson church is involved in the Special Projects aspect of the work and also funds two annual trips. The Mena church has been involved in the work for over 12 years and funds at least one annual trip.

I also want to thank those **donors who give monthly** so that my work and the special projects that are being funded can continue to God's glory. Other individuals have given sizeable **one-time gifts!** Also, during the past 10 years, a few **major funding gifts** have been received. These gifts have provided seed money and initial support for much of what today has become a reality.

"Thank you" is not sufficient, but on behalf of countless growing churches and hundreds of new Christians, I thank you.



Activities Since October Report

US Travel. I am blessed to have the opportunity to teach, preach, and emphasize mission work in various US churches. During the past two months, I was with churches in Arkansas and Oklahoma. Out of my home office, about 500 packets of evangelism lessons (4000 lessons) were sent to Hispanic churches across the US.

Baxter. Jan and I spent a wonderful week on campus at Baxter. We arrived a couple of days before the graduation guests, giving us time with 3rd and 4th year students to talk about evangelism, deliver materials, and give them copies of the book I wrote in Spanish about evangelism (picture left). We were encouraged by our meetings and conversations about mission work.



Graduation at Baxter is always a special time on campus. A highlight of this year's trip was the dedication of the clinic renovation (picture above left). The reception area at Baxter provides a constant reminder that our purpose is "to go into all the world" with the gospel (picture center, photo credit, Pete Shaw). It is a pleasure to serve on the board of directors (picture upper right). I have no doubt that giving time, talents and resources to Baxter makes a difference in our world. Attendance at the Sunday combined worship was near 1200 (picture lower right).



Guatemala. My final international trip of 2018 found me in Guatemala for a week. I preached at the Centro Historico congregation in Guatemala City (picture left), then spent four days presenting a biblical studies seminar in Ezell Clinic (picture below left). The seminar was hosted by Health Talents International and was designed for church leaders and evangelists to advance effective Bible study, ministry, evangelism, discipleship, and healthy church development. Over 40 preachers and church leaders were present from various parts of Guatemala (picture right).



The possibility of potential weather problems (ice and snow) in Tulsa led to a change in flight plans, but an extra evening in Houston gave me time to enjoy the hospitality of Bob and Jane Miranda and to talk about and plan 2019 mission partnerships.

Planning for a Strong 2019

The 2019 calendar is virtually complete. In addition to my international trips, several mission and ministry trips in the US.

- January, Costa Rica. This trip will provide opportunity to share in the work of several churches, plus conversations and the study of church planting dynamics. (This is a new location that is ready to be touched by the mission work done through Latin American Leadership Development.)
- March, Dominican Republic. The trip will visit the northern coast to work with a group of churches where I have not previously visited.

- May, El Salvador and Honduras. I have been invited to speak on the Baxter Seminar, and I will use the travel opportunity to visit other locations in Central America.
- July and August, southern Colombia and northern Ecuador. This is an annual trip to work with a group of churches on the frontier.
- July and August, Ibarra, Ecuador. I will present a seminar over Hebrews and visit new and growing churches in the region.
- August and September, Colombia. Current plans call for visits with several new churches that are part of the work of Great Cities.
- September, Colombia. Plans include a visit to a congregation where elders were recently established, time with various local churches for teaching and leadership training, and a seminar about Bible study and interpretation with training for church leaders.
- December, Baxter board meeting and graduation

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Thank you for your interest in this mission ministry – whether through prayer or financial support. I am always looking for those who want to be part of the team — financially, traveling with me, helping in various other ways. Through my host congregation (Main and Oklahoma, McAlester, OK), we accept tax-deductible gifts (checks payable to “Church of Christ,” memo line “Latin American Missions” or the specific project being funded). **ALL CONTRIBUTIONS SHOULD BE MAILED TO MY ADDRESS** (10704 S 89th East Ave, Tulsa, OK 74133), since I handle deposits, acknowledgements, and accounting.

Dios lo bendiga (God bless you),
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One of the places in Latin America where the light shines brightly in the midst of darkness is Baxter Institute in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. The world is in darkness without the gospel! Who will take the light of the gospel to the world that lies in darkness? All across Latin America, people are receptive to the gospel of Jesus Christ and Christians hunger and thirst for the word of God and encouragement and training in evangelism, discipleship, healthy church development and effective church leadership.
 [photo credit, Steve Teel]

