

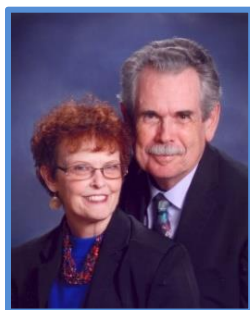
LATIN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Developing Healthy Churches and Church Leaders in Latin America and Beyond

Mission and Ministry Newsletter

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Early Summer Update: God Continues His Marvelous Saving Work!

The last month and a half have been a blur! Mission meetings, planning and conversations with my publisher, mentoring sessions, Bible studies, teaching my Sunday morning Bible class at church—and then the last half of May arrived! I made an eight-day flying trip (pun intended!) to Ecuador and Colombia, returning to the US just before Memorial Day weekend. Eight days packed full and overflowing! After a few days at home, I left for the Dominican Republic the week after Memorial Day. As I write, Father's Day is approaching and Jan and I are anticipating some time with family. It has been an incredibly full but rewarding 45 days.

As I report on my recent mission trips, I want one great truth to shine forth! God is actively working through his dedicated disciples to seek and to save the lost, to bring multitudes to Jesus. The churches are growing, new churches are being planted. How blessed we are to have a small part of God's great big eternal purpose. Never forget: God's Work, Our Hands!

I currently have three more mission trips planned in 2024 plus several stateside visits to encourage churches and renew friendships with mission partners.



Return to Ecuador

The trip to Ecuador and Colombia had multiple purposes. I was able to get a firsthand update of the state and progress of the churches. I gave counsel and advice, and encouraged the churches. Plus—I was able to teach several Bible studies, one of my favorite things to do. I traveled with a brother from Bella Vista, AR who has had a long-term interest in mission work in Ecuador and Colombia. Since he had not visited the churches since before the pandemic, he asked me to arrange a trip and include him (possibly his last visit—he turns 80 later this year!)

Last year, my visit to Ecuador was cut short when I could not shake a respiratory infection, even with prescription medication! As a result, I only visited the region around Ibarra. (My early return to the US was providential.)



Ecuador has increasing problems with security. We used to arrive in Quito shortly after midnight and then drive a couple of hours to overnight in Ibarra. No more! It is now necessary to overnight at a hotel near the airport. We were settled in the room by 2:00 AM, which made for a short night. The payoff came with the excellent breakfast buffet.

In **Pílanquí, Ibarra**, a special Thursday night gathering was scheduled (picture left). Between 60 and 70 were present. I spoke about "Knowing Christ."

The Pílanquí church is about 13 years old, biblically organized with elders, deacons, and evangelists. The workers are largely volunteers. In May the church had an attendance of 235 on Mother's Day. The church has built their own building with a minimum of outside help and is continuing to grow while planting new churches in the region.

One task on my agenda was brainstorming with the leaders about possible steps forward—go to two services, use the fellowship area as overflow with livestream of the worship, begin another congregation. The church now has an



excellent location—an advantage which should not be easily discarded (above, group picture of the church).

I am always glad to be asked to teach home Bible studies as I travel (picture



right). The trip also allowed me to renew my relationship with Germán's family (picture left). Germán is our driver; we refer to his pickup as the "Germán Express." Their daughter, Brenda (on the right side of the picture at left) has grown up over the past five years!



Friday was our last day in Ecuador. We drove to the border and got our documents in order by late afternoon – with enough time for a cup of coffee before the 6:00 PM Friday meeting with the church in **Tulcán, Ecuador** (picture right). The Friday night attendance of 38 was about the same as Sunday morning attendance! That would not happen very often in the US!



After Five Years: Back to Colombia

After the Friday night meeting in Tulcán, Ecuador, we crossed the border and drove a couple of hours to Tuquerres—home base until Sunday afternoon.



On Saturday, we visited the church in **Cumbal** and were delighted to see that they had completed the work of putting a second story on the building. The story of the Cumbal building begins a few years ago with their purchase of a lot (after many years of meeting in the home of one of the members). They agreed to purchase half of the needed materials, I agreed to purchase the



other half, and they agreed to either hire or do all the construction. When Jan and I were there in 2019, the result was the first floor—with some plastic protection in place on the upper level (picture above left). Now they have completed the second story with their own resources (picture above right).

After lunch, about 28 assembled for the afternoon conference—pretty much the entire church for a Saturday afternoon event (picture right).



On Sunday I preached in **Túquerres**, where the local church was joined by 12 Christians who came from **Samaniego**. There were 38 in attendance for worship and the shared fellowship meal (picture below).



I share also an excellent picture of **Jairo and Andrea** (picture right). I am grateful for their heart for the Lord's work, at great sacrifice, serving unselfishly in southern Colombia among a group of eight churches.

Late Sunday evening, we transferred to **Pasto** in preparation for the Monday special event with the church.



With 84 in attendance, we again witnessed the commitment of our brothers and sisters and their desire to participate in the work. Monday night attendance was higher than the Sunday average (picture left).

An early Tuesday flight to Bogota required being at the airport about 6:15 AM (the airport is about an hour outside the city). Another early morning!

In **Bogota**, we spent considerably time reconstructing the story of the churches of Christ in Bogota over the past 30+ years. On Wednesday we visited several possible locations available for purchase. (The community center the Los Angeles church has been renting is planned for demolition as part of a street-widening project.) Wednesday evening, we met with church leaders for a final debriefing before catching a midnight flight to the US. Eight days, five different beds, not counting overnight flights. The body grows weary but the spirit is strengthened!



Dominican Republic—My Third Visit in the Past Eight Months

This trip was designed to introduce two brothers, **Arvy Dupuy** and **Jay Gregory**, to "all things Dominican." These brothers have been working in Haiti (**Liberté Ministries**) for several years but at present Haiti is closed. The trip served to explore partnership possibilities in God's mission to take the gospel to the entire island of Hispaniola (picture, a visit to Los Cocos to evaluate needs, Manuel's recently purchased pickup is visible in the picture).





Pictures, clockwise from upper left: (1) our host, **Manuel Aquino**, with Jay and Arvy; (2) building project at **Postrer Rio** needs to be restarted and completed; (3) singing “with the Spirit;” (4) Neyba elders and other area leaders after Sunday evening worship.

Cajamarca, Peru—Seeking a Fresh Foothold

Please pray for the work in Cajamarca. The church planter is on site, but reactivating the dozen or so previous members has been more challenging than expected. LALD provides support for the evangelist, with the help of a



generous family in Oklahoma. God gives the increase. An organized plan to make personal contacts in the city is underway. Pray that more of the dozen members who were attending previously will become active again, providing a good nucleus for continued growth (picture left, a Sunday morning worship in May; picture right, the children singing, sharing what they learned in their class). *Note: Many Latin*



American churches have class and worship in parallel – class for the children, worship for the adults.



Update on the “Who Is Jesus?” Video Series

The development of the YouTube channel and Facebook page are in the final stages—both should “go live” in the next 2-3 weeks.

An introductory video will be released in July. The Study Guide and the Leaders Guide will be completed in the next few weeks.

Announcements, promotional articles, video segments, and a complete release calendar will be posted on the Facebook page.

I have several times thought that this project could well be my *magnus opus*. Sharing my heart, touching lives with truth, pointing to Jesus, focusing the story through fresh eyes. May many learn who

Jesus is! Thank you for your continued prayers for this project (picture, Larry Bowles and I during a recording session).

Thank You!

I am grateful for the opportunity to share what God is doing. God continually gives the increase! His goodness excites my spirit and sends me forth with the Good News of the Kingdom. I never tire of saying it: God is faithfully at work through his faithful people. Thank you for your prayers, your partnership, and your encouragement.

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

Dios les bendiga (God bless you),

Bob and Jan Young

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The masthead and the closing for this newsletter do not change frequently. I trust you do not tire of the same reminder as we close!

My title for this picture is “Urgent!” I took the picture in La Serena, Chile. Is it a sunrise or a sunset?

In our world, many are seeking the Son. When will their sunrise come? Multitudes are receptive to the gospel. People hunger and thirst for the word of God. God’s people are seeking encouragement and training in evangelism, discipleship, and effective church leadership. When the gospel is preached and received, a new day is made possible in the lives of believers. Thank you for helping make that happen as we fulfill God’s purpose in this world – to save as many as possible!

Urgent! Because in our world, sunset comes to thousands every day. The gospel springs forth as an eternal sunrise, even as the sun sets every day in the lives of countless souls without Jesus. (The picture is a sunset.)



Latin America Leadership Development works within a 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.