

LATIN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Developing Healthy Churches and Church Leaders in Latin America and Beyond

Mission and Ministry Newsletter

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A Personal Note: Gratitude, Appreciation, God's Work, Our Prayers

Thank you for your responses and kind words about my list of annual words and phrases. These have served as both guiding stars and meaningful summaries across the last twenty years! I recommend using a word or phrase of the year to guide your spiritual journey.

Thank you also to those who responded with appreciation to the overview of mission goals. Goals are essential. Effective planning involves targets and guardrails. ***"If you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time!"***

I receive regular reports of how God is at work in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and elsewhere. Several works were summarized in the previous newsletter. **This newsletter focuses on my recent trip to the Dominican Republic.** Pray always for the advance of the gospel around the world.

Success Does Not Demand Perpetuity!

A church consultant described his meeting with the church leaders. He asked them what they wanted. Their reply was, "We want to make sure our church doesn't die." The consultant pointed out that every church the apostle Paul planted no longer exists.

The point is important. Success does not demand perpetuity. When a season of ministry closes, that does not mean that God has not accomplished his purpose. The present always gives way to the newness of future possibilities that God opens before us. Nostalgia and sadness are part of the process. Rejoicing and celebrating are also part of the process.

I will begin my sixtieth year of involvement in ministry and mission work in a few months. Lord willing, 2026 will be for Jan and me a year of finalizing and celebrating those sixty years of preaching, teaching, ministry, and mission. We hope to share several special events in coordination with our national and international travels.

Seven Decades

I like to say that I have been involved in ministry and missions—teaching and preaching—for seven decades! That is – in the 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, 00s, 10s, and 20s. Regardless of how you count them, the months and years have flown by!

In the previous newsletter, I mentioned our plan to step back from the intensity of the past 20+ years of mission involvement. By the target date of fall 2026, mission works supported through Latin American Leadership Development will be transferred to local churches, corresponding to the typical church budget year.

From serving as a campus ministry intern, to helping with local church ministry and missions, to my first preaching appointment, to involvement in inner city mission work, to a second preaching position—those early years passed quickly as I earned my bachelor's degree. After 30 years in campus and local church ministry, I was then blessed to serve in Christian higher education for 12 years—usually doing double duty in guest and interim preaching, local ministry, Hispanic ministry, church planting, and missions. Since retiring from the university in 2007, the last 18 years have been devoted almost exclusively to mission work.

Jan and I have shared this ministry journey for over 56 years. Our 80th birthdays are on the horizon, capped by our 60th wedding anniversary. We have been blessed! We pray that we have been a blessing to others!



Dominican Republic Trip—March 2025



Two church buildings were completed by the **Liberté Ministries** build team in October 2024, fulfilling our commitment to help the churches do what they cannot do for themselves (picture left, **Postrer Rio**; picture right, **Los Cocos**). The build team is ready to return in 2025!



The primary purpose of the March trip was to identify future building projects. Three brothers from the Liberté Ministries group traveled with me. The first day was devoted to visiting church sites in **Villa Jaragua**, **Las Clavellinas**, **Guayabal**, **Postrer Rio**, and **Los Cocos**. The first three are all likely future building projects.

The housing at **Las Clavellinas** is pitiful (picture left). A likely plan will be to use the current building (picture right) for housing and to build a new church building.

At **Guayabal**, the church has an attendance of 80-100 and continues to grow. I shared a Bible study from 1 Corinthians 3 concerning the importance of planting and building so that God can give the increase (picture below left). A good number were present to greet us on a Friday (picture below right).



The next day was devoted to visiting **Angel Felix** where the church has outgrown its building. Getting to Angel Felix is no easy task! We were met by a civil engineer from Santo Domingo, a Christian brother who donates his time and expertise to churches to assist with building safe and lasting structures. Approximately 150 – about half the church – were present to greet us on Saturday (picture left).

Dominican Republic Trip—March 2025 (continued)



On Sunday morning I preached at Vista al Lago (picture left) before we made the return journey to Santo Domingo to be ready to catch our Monday flight.

This trip was relatively short with fewer opportunities than usual for teaching and preaching. One of my primary roles was to serve as translator—English to Spanish, often so that another person could translate Spanish to Creole.

The trip was extremely successful in that it appears the build teams now have projects lined up for at least another 2-3 years!

Here's How You Can Partner. Thank You!

I love to share what God is doing. His power is beyond our dreams and imaginations, exciting and energizing us, sending us forth with the Good News of the Kingdom. Thank you for your prayers, partnership, and 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 OFFICE ADDRESS** (10704 S 89th East Ave, Tulsa, OK 74133).



Dios le bendiga (God bless you),
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Pictured at right is part of the attendance at a congregation in the Dominican Republic. Often there are more people outside the building than there are inside!

Multitudes are receptive to the gospel. People hunger and thirst for the word of God. God's people need training in evangelism, discipleship, and effective church leadership. When the gospel is preached and received, a new day dawns 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!



Latin America Leadership Development works within an international 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 to carry the gospel to their own nations.