

Guatemala 2010 First Quarter Newsletter

Byron E. Benitez & Hawatthia "Hi" Jones"

We pray that you and your loved ones are enjoying God's blessings and feeling the joy and peace that come through our Lord Jesus. As we continue in this new year that is not so new anymore, we wanted to take this opportunity to bring you up to date with the work here in Guatemala. If good intentions counted you would have received this newsletter about 3 or 4 weeks ago.

OUR END-OF-YEAR VISITS

There are certainly many joys and satisfactions that come when traveling to different places and visiting with many of you about our work. From November 2009 until January 2010, we traveled to 20 states and 2 other countries. We spent almost as much time in the air as we did on the ground. You know you've flown a lot when you begin to recognize the flight attendants. It is even more obvious when the flight attendants start to recognize you. 😊 However, in all of the traveling, we are glad every time we are able to see many of you face to face and to share moments of fellowship.

We will give you a brief summary of our travels. Are you ready? We both started in Indianapolis printing and preparing our information literature. Our overseeing congregation, the **Kingsley Terrace Church of Christ**, gives us the blessing for making it possible to present good, quality material about the work. For this we are grateful. We continued from there to our usual stops in Wyoming, Colorado (2 times), New Mexico, California (2 times), Texas, Oklahoma, Tennessee (2 times for Hi) and Alabama. This year we made additional trips to Kentucky and Connecticut. In each place, we had the opportunity to preach, teach and/or give our presentation on the Guatemala work for 2009 and on some future goals and plans, Lord willing, for 2010. Although a little tiring, it was a joy to get to visit many places.

In the midst of these visits, we made our annual trip to Germany. We continue our work with the European Churches of Christ Retreat, with which we have been involved for more than 20 years. We both continue to have the responsibility of coordinating the classes and activities for the teens. Once again, we had the opportunity to work with missionaries and good friends, **Jeremy and Rebecca Korodaj**. They both live and work with the church in Padova, Italy. And, after the retreat, the four of us drove back to Italy to spend a few days with the Korodajs and their co-laborers Jeff and Tia Brauer and their children. We had a good relaxing time in Italy. In addition, we were able to teach class and preach at Padova with Jeff translating our lessons into Italian.

LINDA VISTA

We returned from the U.S. on January 11. There was a good number from the congregation at the airport to meet us. They were dressed in large coats, with ear muffs, scarves and gloves. Even though the temperature was okay for us, for them it was very cold. It was probably 60 degrees. 😊

Restorations and Baptisms

We are happy to report that several people have gotten their lives right with the Lord this year. However, in this report we would like to make special note of three individuals because of

their relationship with one another. Maria Luisa, Paola and Lecem Piril.

Paola is a young Christian lady who began her walk with the Lord after attending a series of studies we offered using the Visualized Bible Study (by Jule Miller) several years ago. She was instrumental in bringing several family members to the Lord, her mother and father included. Sadly, in time Paola fell away. It was during this period of her life that she had a baby out of wedlock and experienced several trying moments in her life, according to her own words. When she began searching for the Lord again, she began attending a Pentecostal church. It was during this time of reflection that she began to visit the services of the church at Linda Vista once again. Taking advantage of these opportunities, we encouraged her to return to her first love and to her commitment to the Lord and His body. After some reflection, Paola decided that she needed to publicly make known her restoration to the Lord and His church. She was very open about her life, her struggles and her desire to get right with the Lord. She expressed how she always knew that she had found the truth and in her search in other places found herself rebutting many of the false doctrines she was being taught.

As we mentioned earlier, Maria Luisa, came to the Lord because of her daughter, Paola. Maria Luisa, too, persevered for a time, but also fell away. She and her husband, Miguel Angel, who had also become a Christian, separated. Maria Luisa lived in the world for some time. Finally, after many prayers and efforts to restore her, Maria Luisa came back to the fold of the Lord. Although she and our brother Miguel Angel have not completely restored their marriage yet, we are grateful for her decision to serve the Lord. She has come back and seems very eager in her walk with Christ.

Because Maria Luisa and Paola returned to Linda Vista, the youngest of the siblings, Lecem, began attending with her mother and sister. Not too long afterwards, she decided she wanted to become a Christian. We have sent a message about this wonderful event. We were so happy to see this because that brought one more member of this family into a right relationship with Christ. Now, Miguel Angel, who has been persevering in his faith the whole time, Maria Luisa, Paola, Lecem, and Maria Luisa's mother, Maria del Rosario, are faithfully serving the Lord. Please keep this whole family in your prayers. The goal is to reach the other two siblings, Maria and Jose Miguel.

Local Programs and Work

Please pray for several areas of work at Linda Vista.

First, we ask that you please keep Linda Vista's giving in your prayers. The church has come a long way since we have been here, but there is much more we can do. Because this past year was hit and miss with the monthly offerings, it was decided to keep the budget the same for this next fiscal year. This is the first year since the church has been on a budget that the monthly goal was not increased. We believe the economy is affecting the membership, if not in reality, at least in their ability to believe they can give more.

Second, we ask that you keep our teaching program in your prayers. This year, the church hopes to systematize its educational program better. We will begin by using two series of stud-

ies: "Biblical Foundations for the Christian" and the "Visualized Bible Study" by Jule Miller. Both studies are designed to ground the members in the foundations of our faith, preparing them for deeper studies. We plan to work with the teachers to develop a program to teach through the whole Bible in a certain period of time.

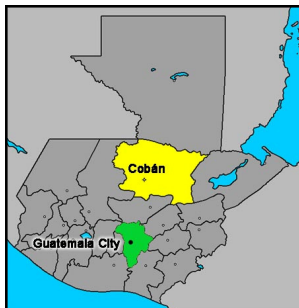
Third, pray for **Rogelio Calderon**. Below, we explain why he is back in Guatemala City. The church would like for him to work with them in Linda Vista. He is a good personal worker and we believe it will add a great deal to our visitation and evangelism program, which needs a boost.

Fourth, keep the leadership and the body of men in your prayers. This year, it has been decided to begin to have general monthly men's meetings. We did this last year for a while, but because of various reasons, they were not continued. We are hoping to involve more of the men in the work of the church and keeping them informed and giving them opportunities to serve in a good place to begin.

COBÁN

The work in Cobán continues to move forward, though at a much slower pace now. Since our last newsletter, several changes have occurred.

For those of you who may remember, Rogelio Calderon was serving as the evangelist in this city since February of 2008. Because of health reasons, he was forced to move back to Guatemala City, which he did in September of 2009.



Wualter Osorio, a young man who had worked a few months with Rogelio before graduating from preaching school, came for a short while, then returned to Honduras, his native country, at the beginning of 2009. We maintained contact with Wualter, and after several months, it was decided that he would come to continue the work that Rogelio had begun. So, in September of 2009, Wualter moved to Cobán the same week that Rogelio and Cristobalina, his wife, moved back to Guatemala City.

Originally, we were hoping that Wualter would be there a few weeks while Rogelio was still there, so that there could be a smooth transition, but this did not work out. This has made it more challenging for Wualter because he had to try to become familiar with the ins and outs of the work on his own. Thankfully, there are several brethren there who have been a great support to Wualter during the time he has been there.

Mission Teams

This year, there are three teams scheduled to come to Guatemala to work with us. The first team is still wide open if you or anyone you know would like to become a part of it. The dates for this team are **July 8 – 17**, a Thursday to a Saturday. This team is typically composed of Christians from various congregations who come to serve in a variety of ways, from construction to medical campaigns. The contact person is **Leshia Colglazier**, who can be reached at lrc_16@yahoo.com.

The second team is the first of two teams that are bringing **World English Institute (WEI)** for the second year in a row to

Guatemala. The first of the two teams has six individuals already committed and will be here from **July 17 to July 31**. They will be offering English improvement courses using the Bible and the series of studies developed by Brother **Richard Ady**. The teachers study one on one with students, presenting God's scheme of redemption from Genesis to the cross, and beyond. This team is led by **Anna Pride** and **Jason Rich**.

The third team, which is the second WEI team, will be in Guatemala from **July 31 to August 14**. They will be here to continue the studies with the students from the previous team. The last we heard, they did not quite have the six individuals they need, so if you are interested in participating in this type of work, please contact us or this team's coordinator, **Greg Weston**, at greggweston@yahoo.com.

Earthquake

Several weeks ago we had an earthquake here in Guatemala. We received calls and e-mail notes concerning our well-being. Thankfully, we or anyone we know did not suffer any damage. We have had another one since then, but we did know about it until someone called from the States to check on us. We are thankful for your love and concern for us.

Thank You

As we close this newsletter, we thank you for your generous support, for your encouragement and for your prayers. Look for more newsletters and updates as the work develops.



Hawatthia "Hi" Jones
Missionary



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