



# Thinking It Through

KEITH KEYSER

## Sleeping Witnesses?

***“So the captain came to him, and said to him, ‘What do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God; perhaps your God will consider us, so that we may not perish’” Jonah 1:6.***

Jonah assuredly was the poster-child for reluctant missionaries. When God told him to go to Nineveh, he fled in the opposite direction towards Tarshish. Humanly speaking, his antipathy towards the exceedingly wicked Assyrians is somewhat understandable when one considers their historic brutality towards Israel and many other nations. Nevertheless, in mercy the Lord extends His gospel to even the vilest people, who are enmeshed in depravity; He is able to save them from His wrath and from their own corruption.<sup>1</sup> The Lord fills the hearts of those He has already saved with love for those who are still lost, and so the former go forth with the precious seed of God’s Word.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, believers can still struggle with pride and prejudice – even acting unloving towards the ones that they are seeking to evangelize. As believers, we must beware not to exhibit a careless attitude regarding the perishing souls all around us; to do so is to court disaster for our life of service for God.

### **Not Exactly “The Love Boat”**

Jonah’s indifference to his divinely ordained mission was marked by the fact that he slept in the ship while peril threatened to overwhelm the tempest-tossed vessel. Religious pluralism was on full display as the terrified mariners supplicated their respective gods for deliverance from the violent storm. Meanwhile, the man who served the true God – and had the answer for their calamity – slept in the hold of the ship. Doubtless thinking that there is strength in numbers even in divine things, in a remarkable turn of events the pagan captain calls on the missionary to get up and pray! Some of the Lord’s servants have acquired nicknames in their labors for God: Spurgeon was “the Prince of preachers;” his contemporary countryman Alexander McLaren was dubbed “the Prince of expositors;” Robert Cleaver Chapman was “the apostle of love” and “the patriarch of Barnstable;” while the missionary to India, John Nelson Hyde was known simply as “Praying Hyde.” One also thinks of “Gypsy” Smith and “Watchman” Nee in this

regard. In contrast to these encouraging designations, Jonah ignominiously is referred to as “Sleeper” by the captain.<sup>3</sup> This truly is a shameful moniker for a believer, for we are called to watch, be sober and give an answer regarding the hope within us.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Wayward Servant Takes the Plunge**

The awakened preacher did not own up to his identity or rebellious condition until the casting of a lot revealed him to be the source of the ship’s danger. The sailors interrogated him closely: “Please tell us! For whose cause is this trouble upon us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?”<sup>5</sup> In astonishment they listened to his answer: “I am a Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.”<sup>6</sup> This roundabout testimony filled the hearts of the seamen with fear, as they realized they were coming up against the Creator of the Universe’s sovereign power. Despite Jonah’s instruction for them to cast him into the sea, these men still tried to act morally and row the vessel to safety – but it was to no avail. Seeing there was no alternative, they threw the prophet overboard, and then offered sacrifices to Jonah’s God, the Lord.<sup>7</sup> The preacher’s disobedience notwithstanding, in grace the Almighty saved these mariners from the storm to live new lives of devotion to the true and living God.

It was the inauspicious beginning to a ministry that subsequently resulted in a massive revival in the improbable location of Assyria’s capital Nineveh. Before this could take place, however, God needed to instruct His spokesman on the nature of His grace. This leads us to ask regarding ourselves, “Am I a sleeper?” That is, am I indifferent to the plight of lost men and women all around me? Or around the world, for that matter? We are earthen vessels that contain the treasure of God’s light.<sup>8</sup> We must tell others about the Lord Jesus that they might be saved from judgment and receive eternal life. ■

<sup>1</sup> 1 Timothy 1:13-16; <sup>2</sup> Psalm 126:6; 2 Cor. 5:14-21; <sup>3</sup> Jonah 1:6;

<sup>4</sup> Ezekial 3:17, Proverbs 6:10-11, 1 Thess. 5:6, 1 Peter 3:15, 4:7;

<sup>5</sup> Jonah 1:8; <sup>6</sup> Jonah 1:9; <sup>7</sup> Jonah 1:12-16; <sup>8</sup> 2 Cor. 4:7



# From Mexico.....to Spain

## Challenges Ahead!

by Craig Landrum

We have been frequently asked: "What has been the biggest challenge in your move from Mexico to Spain?" One challenge for us in moving from Mexico to Spain is changing our Spanish vocabulary. The change in vocabulary has not only been challenging, but also humorous, perhaps more for our listeners, than for us just laughing at ourselves. Brenda was speaking to someone and said, "Well, I'll see you at the Sunday service." In Mexico the word is "servicio," but in Spain, "servicio" means "bathroom." "I'll see you in the bathroom on Sunday." What? We have faced many challenges in language throughout our transition, but another area of challenge we experienced was studying and practicing to get my driver's license. The process is much different than we are used to in the States.

By God's grace we started three churches in Mexico: two in León, Guanajuato and one in Lagos de Moreno, Jalisco. Because of this, we were highly esteemed such that many would ask our opinion and counsel, whereas here in Spain we are the new kids on the block. One missionary friend wisely counseled us not to come to Spain with the idea that we have lots of wisdom and experience, but rather knowing we lack wisdom and experience in Spain. He told me of some missionaries who had a difficult adjustment moving from one country to another, as they expected their wisdom and cultural experience to be just like that of their previous field, and expecting the same respect. Perhaps just like someone who had a wonderful experience in one church, and now in another city, wants the new church to be just like the old one in every way, and causes problems for the leadership, with his frequent words, "Well, the way we did it in my church..." and of course, the response is, "This isn't your church, but the Lord's church." Consequently with this challenge, we are asking others for their wisdom and counsel in carrying out the church plant, and in how to live for Christ in Spain. In other words, we want to be humble.

### The Work in Calatayud, Spain

The church plant was begun by a Swiss woman from 1960 to 1990, and then continued the last 16 years by a Spanish couple from Barcelona. It has had its ups and downs in numbers, but after 51 years, there are now two couples and 11 women, five of which are widows, along with some children and a few unbelieving adults. We saw that in our time as missionaries in Mexico it could be a bit discouraging to have a meeting with just four other folks on a Sunday. In spite of this, we focus on the Lord with thankful hearts to serve Him, as that helped us preserve through the dry years.

Our ministry has mainly consisted of me pulpit teaching on Sunday mornings, while Brenda teaches the children in Sunday school class and leads a mid-week women's Bible study/prayer meeting. The Lord's Supper meeting is always a delight in the remembrance of the Lord, since it really doesn't matter how many are gathered, since our focus is on our Savior. Sometimes there are just four people, as I said, in addition to us, and sometimes maybe 25. I meet with two men weekly to encourage their walk with the Lord and leadership, not only in their homes but also for the church meetings and evangelism. It seems a number of folks are not prepared to tell others the gospel, so each Sunday we memorize one verse of key Scriptures (Romans 3:23; 5:8; 6:23; John 3:16; 14:6; Ephesians 2:8-9). I am also encouraging them to memorize the order of the books of the Bible. I have begun a panorama of the Old Testament to give them a good foundation for their faith.

Two of the widows in the church regularly attend meetings, but the other three attend only sporadically at best, due to health issues. Brenda and others in the church visit them regularly. Brenda has a time of Scripture reading and prayer as well as conversation with them. These visits sometimes




turn into evangelistic opportunities since there may be unbelievers present as well.

Regarding evangelism, I was informed that pretty much everything has been tried (door-to-door, public preaching, music, puppets, mime, sketches and literature distribution) in the last 51 years. I have been encouraged to do friendship evangelism, and that also was what was the best evangelistic method in Mexico. Of course, it's not the method, but God who changes people. I thank God that I have had a number of opportunities to give the gospel to people just in the normal course of conversation. Well I have an advantage, in that when they ask me why I am in Spain, why we moved to Spain, or what is my work—I can give them the gospel. I have met a number of acquaintances from the swimming pool, which I pray will develop into friendships for Christ. I have also placed an ad in the city map, inviting people to study the Bible with me. It says (English translation) Jesus said, "I thank God that He hid wisdom from the wise and revealed it to children." Do you dare to be a child? Then it gives my contact information: e-mail, cell phone and post office box. The Spanish missionary who preceded me gave me the ad (his ad), which he had used in an evangelistic campaign in Barcelona. We are praying that the Lord would open the door for the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ here in Calatayud.

Though Spain predominantly would be considered "post-modern" (another way of saying "everyone does what is right in his own eyes," or perhaps better said, "everyone does what he pleases") since the idea of right and wrong doesn't matter to them. Contrary to that, Calatayud is very Roman Catholic, so I feel like it is very much like the challenge we had in Mexico. The goal of my evangelistic effort is to get them to read the Word of God. Once they start seeing what God says, they discover that the Catholic church does not teach the truth—since they are taught by the Catholic church that one's sin can only be forgiven by the Catholic priest (but

consider Acts 10:29), that acceptance by God is not just by faith in Christ but by our good works (but consider Titus 3:5), that Mary and the saints will help our prayers get answered better than our prayers directly through Jesus Christ (but consider 1 Timothy 2:5-6), that images are not condemned, since they skip the second commandment (but consider Exodus 20:4-6) and make two out of the tenth commandment—not coveting your neighbor's wife and your neighbor's things (Exodus 20:17), and of course, it gets really weird, when the "bread" is worshiped, since supposedly it literally changes to the body of the Lord. Well, once folks begin trusting God's Word rather than what someone else (including the Pope) says, it's smooth sailing to explain the gospel, that we are condemned sinners (Romans 3:23; 6:23), and God has every right to send us to the lake of fire



Te alabo, Padre, porque escondiste estas cosas de los entendidos, y las revelaste a los niños. (Jesús)

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and suffer eternally separate from Him (Revelation 19), but praise God, He showed us His love by Christ dying for our sins (Romans 5:8), so that He could forgive us (Acts 10:43) and give us eternal life, such that we can know without a doubt we have eternal life (1 John 5:13) by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16). It's all about a relationship with God and Jesus Christ (John 17:3). Then it's just wonderful to see how God changes their lives through the power of His word (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

How to get to that goal of reading the Word of God? Friendship. Just always showing the love of Christ, since it's not



**From left:** Several families during Sunday announcements; Two men with whom Craig gets together every other Saturday to do an inductive Bible study and message preparation of Ephesians. **Last two photos:** Widows who don't make the meetings due to their health—Brenda visits them weekly to read the Word and pray with them.



City of Calatayud (21,000 people)

me, but rather Him. While opening a bank account, I met Tomas. He enjoyed my friendship and has introduced me to his friends, as a "pastor, not of sheep, but of people." At the swimming pool, I have met a number of men, and we greet one another. From that regular greeting, I have gotten to have friendly conversations with a number of men in other places like the park, a restaurant or store. At one restaurant I showed some friendliness, and I have had several conversations about the Lord with some Pakistanis, enjoyed some home-cooked food and invited them to our house for a meal. At a Chinese restaurant, the manager in response to a tract I left with him, said, "So you give wisdom to people that they may know God." We have shown each other family photos. I'm looking forward to following up on these contacts with wisdom, Lord willing, "making the most of the time" (Colossians 4:3-6). I thank God that He wants to use us, in fact, Scripture says, "He is the One who works in us the desire to do His will" (Philippians 2:13). What an amazing God we have!

We are very thankful to the Lord to be in Spain. The larger cities have many churches, but the smaller ones might only have a few. So there is a real need to reach the smaller cities for Christ. We are also told that most American missionaries leave after two years. I was asked how long we were going to stay in Spain. I replied, "I'll give it a try for 20 years!" (I'm 58-years-old now.) Calatayud has 21,000 people. Where we live there is one Pentecostal church, which is for gypsies, and another

Pentecostal church for recovering alcoholics and drug addicts. Apart from that there are the Roman Catholic churches and the Kingdom Hall of the Jehovah's Witnesses. We would like to see one or two missionary couples join us in the work. We really need prayer, given that 51 years has been invested, and this church has not been established with elders and deacons. But what better place to be than where only God can do the work for the glory of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose name we preach for eternal life. My prayer is that God will do abundantly much beyond all that we ask or think in this church for the eternal glory of Jesus Christ. So the challenge is great, but our God is greater!

We would really appreciate your prayers, even a few minutes a day would be great! Of course, I am reminded I should be praying for others perhaps at least an hour a day by the Lord's words to Peter, "Couldn't you stay awake with me for one hour? Stay awake and pray..." ■



*Craig and Brenda Landrum were commended by Centerpoint, Mesquite, Texas in 1991 to Mexico and in 2011 to Spain. They have two daughters who are missionaries in Turkey: Sarah Mattix, wife of Jerry Mattix in Diyarbakir, and Ruth Sonoda, wife of Jonathan Sonoda, in Antioch.*

*Their daughter Hannah and their son Joshua and his wife Laurie are serving the Lord in Houston, Texas.*



# NICARAGUA:

## *Darkness* Discipleship & DESIRES

by Kyle Wilson

In 2007 Mark Bachert and I, alongside a group of three young men from North America, began preaching the gospel in an area known as El Valle de la Laguna. We preached the gospel for eight continuous weeks, with a good number of people receiving Christ as their Savior. Within five months, on the 24th of February, we sat down and broke bread with a little group of believers from that area. It was evident from the very beginning that God was in this work, and it was our joy to see another assembly planted alongside the 10 that already existed in the country. Let's fast-forward four years ahead to today and we can look back at the many highs and the many lows we have experienced since the work here began.

Our experience working in El Valle de la Laguna over the past few years could be described in three words: darkness, discipleship and desires. These three words seem fitting when trying to describe the many challenges and difficulties we face, our focus as we work with the believers, and the longing we have to see more souls saved and the work of the Lord continue to grow. Being involved in church planting here has made us increasingly aware of an enemy that will use any tactic to keep those who have no peace from ever finding it. *"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them"* (2 Cor. 4: 3-4). Yet it has revealed to us in an even greater way, the power the Lord has to change the lives of those who trust in His work of salvation. *"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed"* (John 8:36).

Allison and I were married on the 15th of February 2010, in Vancouver, Canada. We moved down shortly after our wedding day to work alongside Mark & Brenda Bachert (*Missionary Prayer Handbook Day 19*) in the small community of El Valle, which is nestled between the two larger cities of Masaya and Granada. Our time working in El Valle has been characterized by many ups and downs, as the spiritual battle surrounding us is apparent to us on a daily basis. There have been times of great blessing, and times of discouragement, times of rejoicing

and times of sorrow. We have seen many profess to be saved and go on to live their lives for the Lord, but we as well have seen many choose the world and its darkness over Christ. Despite the many sorrows and discouragements we face however, we can testify without a doubt that God is continuing to do a great work in this area where we live, and in us as well. *"And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ"* (Philippians 1:6).

### Darkness

El Valle is a small town where fewer than 2,000 people live. Immorality seems to reign supreme in the lives of many. There is alcoholism, sexual addiction, abuse, lies, mistrust, thievery...the list could go on and on. The vice that sin has on people is tremendous and one that only God can ever lift. Although there seems to be so much immorality in the lives of many, we give thanks that we have seen the power of God work in the hearts and lives of many Nicaraguans, freeing them from the power of the prince of this world, yet we still feel overwhelmed by the great numbers of those who are still without a Savior. We are particularly challenged by the power that religious darkness holds over the majority of the population. It is not uncommon to see a group of hundreds of Catholics walking down the street paying homage to an idol, or parties on every corner sponsored by their churches. Different popular cults as well have been making an impression here for over 30 years with constant visitations and literature being handed out. We are also constantly confronted with the popular "evangelical movement" that preaches tithing as law, fasting as a way to twist God's arm to get him to listen, and the doctrine of salvation by works and not by grace (Eph. 2:8,9). Often a lot of the persecution we face in the community is from these evangelical churches that see us as their competition. It is heartbreaking for us to sit in people's homes as we try to present the truth from the Word of God and they openly reject it, preferring to follow the teachings of men instead. We give thanks however, that God can open the eyes of those who are so spiritually blind.





Gospel Hall in El Valle de la Laguna under construction.



Hospital visitation (Brenda Bachert and Allison Wilson with two sisters).



Completed Gospel Hall in El Valle de la Laguna.

## Discipleship

The little assembly here in El Valle will celebrate its fourth anniversary in the month of February. As we approach four years, we feel the ever-increasing need for continued discipleship with those that, as of now, have not committed themselves to the local church. There seems to be so many distractions and struggles for people as they develop their walk with the Lord. It is common to be taken aside and told of recent struggles or problems the believers are facing. We sit with those who shed tears as they face financial meltdowns, or sit fighting for something to say while listening to the heart breaking stories of young girls who have been abused. There are single mothers struggling to make ends meet, and marriages that are slowly disintegrating. There are many spouses who long to see their loved ones reached and saved, and many young people struggling to make the right choices when everyone, and everything surrounding them is pointing them in the wrong direction. These are real difficulties and real burdens that so many of the believers face on a daily basis. In an effort to encourage growth and help the believers the best we can, we spend a lot of time on a weekly basis giving personal studies, visiting them, and sharing encouragement and advice. We give praise to the Lord who has worked in many of the believer's lives, as many are showing evidence of conviction and growth. We praise Him for every believer who lives a consecrated life, for every spiritual victory, and for every day of preservation. Through it all we have come to acknowledge

and appreciate that any growth, any dealings, any victory is ultimately done by the work of God in their lives.

## Desires

A new work is demanding on many different levels. Our time and efforts are mostly thrown into this single work, yet we have a desire to reach other areas as well. We often times would feel the days flying by with not enough time in the day to get everything done. We long to see this little assembly stand on its own, with men capable of leading and guiding it. We desire to see believers go on well and bring glory to God. Perhaps our biggest burden and desire of all is to continue sharing the message of the gospel and see more souls won for Christ. We hope to be able to move on one day from El Valle in order to bring the gospel to other cities, towns, and villages. As we stare at a large map of Nicaragua in our house, we long to see more assemblies planted for the honor and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord sees the desires of our heart and hears our prayers and as we move forward we give thanks for that fact that God has not changed. *"The LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer"* ( Psalm 6:9). ■



*Kyle Wilson was commended to the work of the Lord in Nicaragua in 2007 by Carleton Gospel Hall in Vancouver, British Columbia. His wife Allison was also commended to the work by the same assembly in 2010 when they were married.*



Nicaraguan Believers.



# Applying a Biblical Concept in an Ecuador



Institute body



From top: Institute class; Devotions

by Dan & Nikki Rogers

***“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” (2 Timothy 2:1–2)***

Paul’s exhortation to Timothy and example to us is clear — (a) Be strong in Christ’s grace, (b) Keep what you have learned faithfully, (c) Teach what you have learned to others who are faithful, in a faithful way, and (d) Encourage them to faithfully continue on teaching others to continue the process until Christ returns.

So profound, yet so simple. Work so hard that you work yourself out of a job, and have to start over doing it again.

## The challenge:

Upon seeing the real needs in Ecuador and wanting to apply this biblical concept to real life, the Instituto Bíblico Misionero Ecuatoriano (IBME, roughly translated Ecuadorian Missionary Bible Institute) was born. The Bible Institute is a three-year intensive “on campus” program with an additional concentrated “ministry” year as an optional fourth year.

The focus of the Institute is threefold: academics, life and ministry. The area of “academics” aims to give biblically focused training. The area of “life” has the goal of nurturing and encouraging Godly life habits and decisions. And the area of “ministry” gives the students an opportunity to practice what they are learning in one of the local assemblies during their time at the Institute.

To achieve this aim every student is graded according to their performance in each of these three areas. One must pass in all three before moving on to the next level.

The Bible Institute has been able to train many young people from the jungle and from other areas around Ecuador to minister where God has placed them. Many of our students have returned to their native villages and are serving there; others are involved in different ministries.

The following are some examples of IBME students’ experiences.

**Igor** was born in the province of Esmeraldas on the Ecuadorian coast. He came to know the Lord through a friend who then encouraged him to attend the Bible Institute. He’d had a difficult background and needed to get away from his surroundings to focus on his new life. He graduated from his fourth year of studies in May 2010.

Igor



When asked what was the biggest thing he learned while at the Institute, Igor responds that it was trusting in God at all times as a lifestyle. He explains that before he knew Christ, he had trusted in his own self and abilities. Through his time at the Bible Institute and studying God’s Word, Igor came to the conclusion that this lifestyle is idolatrous and empty. He describes how God had to show him his own pride and how his own pride was what was keeping him from growing in his faith. He adds that learning to live in close quarters with a group of other guys and learning to love them as Christ does was also a challenge.

When Igor was asked what he most appreciates about his time at the Bible Institute, he mentioned how he was prepared to teach others about who God is and what He can do in someone’s life. He loves to share Jesus with others and is passionate about seeing lives changed by the gospel.

Today Igor works for a Christian child sponsorship program in the jungle areas of Ecuador, traveling through many villages in the jungle, sharing the gospel with children and speaking with their parents about Christ. “My goal is to see people changed by His Word, I speak with the children and that’s fulfilling but I most enjoy encouraging the parents and other

believers in the village to stand firm in their faith." His passion is to teach and preach the truth wherever God takes him.

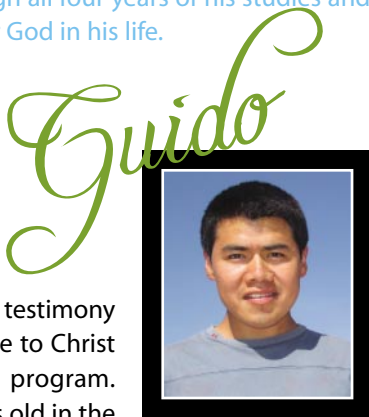
**My observations.** For Igor, the Bible Institute was a challenging experience. He was stretched far beyond what he thought possible in learning to build and maintain godly habits in his life while excelling in his studies. It has been quite a privilege to see him through all four years of his studies and to now see him going on for God in his life.

**Guido** grew up in the province of Cotopaxi, which is about two hours south of the Bible Institute. He comes from a mostly unsaved family. Guido found the Lord through the testimony of his brother who had come to Christ through a Christian radio program. After Guido was two months old in the faith, he called the same radio program that his brother listened to and asked that they guide him to a local assembly. The radio station manager directed him to an assembly in Quito where two Bible Institute students were doing their weekend ministry. As a result of what he saw in these two students' lives and the love they had for the Word and for other people, he decided to study at the Bible Institute too.

Today, after a year and a half of studies, he looks back and says that one of the hardest things for him to learn was how to submit to authorities and see in them God's guidance for his life. He appreciates the ministry aspect of his studies where every weekend he goes to an assembly and works with children and is becoming familiar with other aspects of New Testament church life. Being able to get off campus and really put into practice what he has learned is very important to Guido.

As he looks toward the future and what God desires for Him, his heart returns to his home province and town. He would love to be involved in starting a work there as the Lord leads. He has a burden for his parents and sisters who don't know Christ.

**My observations:** As I have watched Guido grow and struggle, I am amazed how someone who arrived so "foot-loose and fancy free" has been able to submit to guidelines, schedules and obligations of the Bible Institute and truly grow to love and appreciate them. His desire to minister to others and to see people saved has been a joy to watch develop. Pray for Guido and his heart to see his family saved.



**Anita** grew up in a Roman Catholic family. She chose to be a nun and studied in a convent for many years. She thought she was right with God but a persistent store keeper patiently gave her the gospel every time she came in contact with him. The Holy Spirit did His work and Anita came to know Christ as her Savior. She left the convent in 2008 and through contact with some Christians was directed to study at the Bible Institute. The one thing she appreciates most about her studies was the realization that grace was actually free, not something to be attained through human merit. Presently she is finishing up her fourth year of ministry at the Bible Institute.

Anita recently returned from a trip into the jungle as part of her assignments. She had the opportunity to put into practice what she has been taught in reaching out to befriend and evangelize some of the ladies in the village. "When I talk about Jesus, many of them seem disinterested," she said. "But I am just content to do what I know I must do and let the Lord take care of the rest." When asked about her time at the Bible Institute and what was hardest to learn, she states that it was getting used to submitting to rules after being on her own for such a long time.

When she finishes the Bible Institute her desire is to serve the Lord doing whatever He wants her to do, "even if that means cleaning tables, as long as I am serving my Lord."

**My observations:** It was amazing to watch Anita mature through her time at the Bible Institute. To see someone who was so steeped and versed in tradition truly find freedom in Christ was refreshing. Her heart for evangelism and desire to share what she has lived is exemplary.

## Conclusion:

God has given us an incredible opportunity to impact these young people's lives through serving and teaching them at the Bible Institute. They are the future of the Lord's church here in Ecuador and we look forward to seeing God use them in so many ways... reaching people we never could... going places we cannot... faithfully continuing to teach others what they have been taught—2 Timothy 2:2 in action. What a blessing to be involved in it. ■



Dan & Nikki Rogers were commended to the Lord's work in Ecuador in 1998 from Arbor Oaks Bible Chapel in Dubuque, Iowa. Dan & Nikki, along with their two children Andy and Carolyn, serve the Lord in discipling and teaching.





# The Lord at Work in the Republic of Panamá

by Byrnell & Lois Foreshow



Children's outreach in Parques del Oeste



Sunday school picnic in Valle Hermoso



Valle Hermoso

December 7, 2011 marked four years for us living and working in the Republic of Panama. Looking back over the time, so much has happened, but we can truly say with confidence that the Lord has been faithful to His Word and His people. A 74-year-old man, who is in fellowship in the assembly in Valle Hermoso, recently commented that he was so thankful he got saved! He has been married to the same women for over 50 years and wasted his living on alcohol, but was saved three years ago. He had a statue in his house that he and his wife prayed to and offered gifts, but when it fell over and broke one day he realized that his "god" (the statue) was powerless to help itself, let alone someone else. It was around this time that he received an invitation to come and hear the preaching of the gospel, the message of God's salvation. He came and by amazing grace God saved him. He is living proof of what God's salvation can do with one invaluable soul.

This is just one of a number of stories that could be told of how God, by his matchless grace, is reaching lost souls one at a time in this country of 3.4 million people. The work here is not a large work as far as numbers go, nor is it a fast growing work, as far as the number of believers being added to the fellowship of a local assembly, but we do rejoice that there is evidence of spiritual fruit in the believers and a desire to study, learn and obey the Word of God. We try to teach and encourage the believers that they need to find the reason why they

do what they do, from the Word of God. The words of the missionary are only as valuable as the foundation they have in God's Word. So we emphasize the importance of Scriptural teaching and biblical practices. This country is full of people living lives the way "their pastor or priest tells them to" and have very little idea of what the Bible teaches or even what's in this wonderful book. We value the Word of God over the teachings of men and desire that the believers become disciples and imitators of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are a number of outreaches that we are involved in or in fellowship with and we would like to briefly mention each one and trust that you would be encouraged to include His work in this country in your prayers.



Children in Talamanca



## Province of Panamá (Central Panama)

**Valle Hermoso:** The work that we are in fellowship with started in this area in 2005. We were able to visit in January 2006, then we moved permanently to Panama in December 2007. The assembly was planted in Valle Hermoso in April 2009. In the past year we have been encouraged with a number of baptisms, the wedding of a sister saved a few years ago, and a young sister who has come into the fellowship of the assembly. Recently we have also been encouraged that two sisters who were in fellowship in the assembly but left a number of months ago, have started to come back and are showing signs of restoration. Please pray that they will be brought back into fellowship with the Lord and the local assembly. Also a young man, saved and baptized in the past year, is asking about the fellowship of the assembly and has expressed a real desire to be part of it. We look forward to receiving him in the near future.

**Cerro Cama:** This is a country village located about 50 minutes away from where we live. We are able to go Monday evenings and have a gospel meeting in the open air in the village square. The attendance varies, but ranges from 15 to 35 people. Also, the people in the surrounding homes will often just sit outside their houses and listen. We have made a number of contacts and there is one family in particular that has shown interest.

**Talamanca:** This community is mostly Kuna Indians and is located about 20 minutes from our home. Each Thursday we have a children's meeting and teen Bible class. Presently, a young sister from the assembly, a university student, is helping out by teaching the children's class. It is a good opportunity for her to learn to teach children and we do appreciate her exercise to help. One young man is saved and baptized and we

have the meeting in the patio of his family's house. His mother, father and sister are not saved, but his sister and mother usually attend the meetings and his sister shows good interest in the gospel.

**Orphanage:** "Ciudad del Niño" ("City of Children") is located in the area of La Chorrera, about 15 minutes away and presently has about 200 children in residence. We have tried for some time to gain entrance into this home, but because of its Catholic influence it hasn't been easy. Recently, since Lois is a medical doctor, she has been able to provide volunteer medical services in their clinics. The assistant director has welcomed us with open arms as they have very little in the way of medicine and medical help. We are able to meet many needs with medicine and baby supplies, and it also has given opportunities to share the gospel with the children's relatives. We are praying that with this entrance we will be able to gain the confidence of the administrator and have opportunity to share the gospel weekly with the children. We would appreciate your prayers.

**Parques del Oeste:** This is the community where we live. In the past year, between semesters, the children have had weeks off so we have had children's Bible classes on the patio of our home. This has been an encouraging work with good interest and attendance and we plan to have another week of classes at the end of this school year. These classes have given us more contact with the community and we pray that it will lead to further opportunities with the gospel.

We continue individual Bible studies with a number of believers and unbelievers on a weekly basis along with the ongoing distribution of gospel literature and visiting with contacts.



Clockwise from top: Cerro Cama; Orphanage – "City of Children"; Dr. Lois in clinic.

## Province of Colón (On Caribbean coast)

**City of Colón:** This city is located about 55 miles north of Valle Hermoso. There are two couples who live and work in Colón that are in fellowship in the assembly in Valle Hermoso. Due to the large volume of daily traffic to and from Colón, a one-hour trip quickly turns into two hours and makes getting to the weekly meetings of the assembly next to impossible for these couples. It was therefore suggested that a work of some kind be started in Colón that they could be involved with during the week. What has developed are two very well attended meetings in their home, one on Tuesday evenings for a Bible study and the other on Thursday evenings for the preaching of the gospel. We have been encouraged with this outreach and by the number of people that attend regularly and are showing a real interest in the Bible and God's way of salvation.



# Province of Chiriquí

(West end of country near Costa Rican border)

Marcos and Sara Sequera (they have three young boys) were commended from Venezuela to the work of the Lord in Panama in March of 2009. After a few months in Valle Hermoso they moved to the province of Chiriquí to start a new work.

**La Acequia:** This is the area where the assembly started in December 2010 meets. The believers have been encouraged with some baptisms in the past year as well as a couple of believers added to the fellowship.

**Dolega:** This is the area where Marcos and Sara initially lived when arriving in Chiriquí, but later moved to Boquete. Recently they have had meetings again in Dolega and have seen some blessing in salvation.

**Alto Quiel:** Coffee is a large part of the agriculture in this area and once a week there is a gospel meeting and a children's Bible class in the village where the laborers who work in the coffee plantations live. The majority of the workers are indigenous people of the Ngobe Buglé tribe. There is a Ngobe brother in the assembly, so he is able to share the gospel with these people in their native tongue. The gospel would also be presented in Spanish.

**Orphanage:** Trisker House is an orphanage located in Boquete and each Saturday morning Bible classes are held for the children who are eager to listen to the Bible stories. Recently it has been difficult to hold the classes because of the heavy rains. Large parts of the province of Chiriquí have been affected by the flooding and a number of roads, bridges and homes have been destroyed. Thankfully the believers have not suffered any losses.



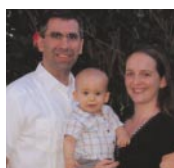
New assembly in La Acequia where Marcos and Sara labor

We would value your prayers for the work here in Panama, that the Lord will bless the sowing of the gospel seed with the fruit of salvation. Also, that those who have professed salvation will continue to grow spiritually and be preserved from the very immoral society that exists here. Also, please pray for our personal safety; as the drug trade continues to grow in Panama, the violence increases with it. Furthermore, with recent splits in the governing political party, there is much concern over instability and freedom of democracy within the country and what the future holds.

Our hearts desire is that in all that is done in a personal and a public way in our service for our Lord, that He might be presented as the only Savior of sinners, the only Lord to be followed and the only God to be worshipped. Please remember to pray for the Republic of Panama. ■



Dolega Gospel outreach



*Byrnell & Lois Foreshew were commended to the work of the Lord in Panama in 2005 by several assemblies in Canada: Arnstein, ON, Bolton ON, Brampton ON and in Scotland – Lossiemouth and Tayport.*

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# Reaching Out TO College Students IN France

by Jean-Luc Tabailoux



Since 1973, thanks to the collaboration of various missionaries with an open brethren assembly in Grenoble, France, hundreds of college students have come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Grenoble and its suburbs is a high-tech city composed of 400,000 inhabitants. With a college of 70,000 students coming from all over the world, there are many opportunities to reach out to the elite of tomorrow. The Foyer Evangélique Universitaire de Grenoble - St Martin d'Hères (FEU) is an open house where scores of students pass through weekly. Some come for the high speed Internet room they can use free of charge. Others come to play fuss-ball, while others come to have lunch with friends or their small group, and yes, believe it or not, some even come to do their homework. Meals, concerts and topical debates are organized on questions such as: "If God exists, then why is there so much suffering and injustice?" It is very easy in this kind of setting to bring friends who are asking such questions.

From the start this open house was conceived as a "decompression chamber" between a highly secular environment in which college students live, and the local church which is like "planet mars" for most. It is a fantastic place with a great team with one heart for evangelism and discipleship.

This open house is now run by a team of college students and missionaries who are accountable to a board composed of leaders from various open brethren assemblies in town. Currently, three girls live upstairs and give a soul to the house. Some are students, others work part-time and dedicate the rest of their free time to serve in this highly intensive hospitality ministry.

Fortunately, they are part of a team made up of various college students and one missionary who help run the outreach and discipleship programs. The Christian college students come from

many different churches, a good deal of them from brethren churches in town. The ministry was designed to fully integrate the local churches in the process in order to keep this ministry centered. Every leader at FEU is coached and disciplined by someone mature in the faith from their home church in town.

There are many and varied opportunities to serve, whatever your gifts are. Whether it is in leading small groups, growth groups, outreach Bible studies for skeptics, going out surveying in the dorms, music, or cooking—it is being done in French, English and even Chinese these past few years.

**LONG-TERM HELP NEEDED:** We are looking for a full-time couple willing to serve on the premises by living upstairs in a missionary position. Their role would be to help coordinate the work in fellowship with the college team and assembly board of directors. If apologetics in a post modern world, discipleship, evangelism and hospitality run in your blood, and if teamwork is your cup of tea, why not consider applying for this position with your spouse? If you are a couple, (children welcome), the commitment would preferably be two to four years. Some French speaking or at least a will to learn would be helpful.

**SHORT-TERM HELP NEEDED:** If you are interested in short-term missions, or if you are single and only have a couple of semesters to dedicate to this task, you could also be a full-timer on the team, living either on the premises or in a fraternity of Christian college students. It is also possible to help in this work by coming as a college student and give some of your free time to help out in the ministry. Positions are still open for the fall of 2012. If you want to know more, drop us an e-mail: [contact@lefeu.org](mailto:contact@lefeu.org), and we'll organize an interview by Skype. You can also visit our Web site: [www.lefeu.org](http://www.lefeu.org).

This ministry has been such a blessing throughout the years that FEU is in full branch off mode in various college towns across the country. A number of staff or leaders are former col-





lege students who were saved or disciplined at FEU in Grenoble.

The "FEU de France" will officially be constituted in a few months. It will serve as a link in the emerging network. It will help in conjunction with local churches represented on the board, to safeguard the vision, provide training to the new staff, ideas, some resources and common projects to the six different branches of this growing ministry in France.

#### WHAT IS OUR VISION?

The vision can be summed up in one sentence and three key ideas: FEU exists to reach out and disciple college students in France, in partnership with the local churches that request its services.



Its features are:

**Staff:** Full-time, single or married, to help in the coordination and training.

**Churches:** FEU is not a church, but an environment that serves as a doorway to the local churches who request a partnership with this ministry in order to serve their college population.

**Premises:** In order for the students to have a place they can call their own, preferably a house with people or a family living on the spot to welcome them.

The more the workers, the faster we'll reach out to this most open sector of the French population for the gospel. Could it be for you? Why don't you check us out? ■



*Jean-Luc Tabailoux and his wife Jeanne were commended to the work of the Lord in France by several assemblies in the U.S., beginning in 1985.*

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