



CONTINUED SUCCESS AND GROWTH IN THE MISSION

Whirlwind Month

This month has gone by in a whirl as I was involved in several different projects. Two are of special note. First of all, together with Dave Lucas, I have been working to develop an online Bible College and preacher/missionary training ministry. This has been motivated by several factors. First of all, we have lost many of our Bible Colleges. Most of the remaining ones have become Christian Universities and the Bible Colleges element has shrunk to a very minor part of their existence as they focus on other programs. At the same time, the accreditation and government involvement have caused them to reduce the Bible content and also become very expensive to the point where it is very difficult for someone to attend and then come out without massive debt. Large debt means they simply cannot serve a small church as the salary would not allow them to cover living expenses and pay their school bill.

Bible College Announced

So we are returning to the purely Bible College model where we will teach the Bible and ministry skills for ministry and missions preparation and nothing else. We will not seek accreditation as they raises the cost in a very significant way and yet serves no purpose for someone going into ministry. In this way we can avoid government interference and offer basic training for free to anyone in any church. We will offer a certificate level training for a very modest fee. This will serve someone who will be a bi-vocational minister and serve a small church in the local area where they live and work. Finally, we will have a degree program but even here costs will be only a tiny fraction of what is being charged by our current system. We plan on keeping costs down by using retired professors, local ministers, and active missionaries, such as myself, who can teach but do not need a salary to do so. I will be serving as the vice president and as the professor of missions. At the end of this newsletter you will find the QR code to take you to our facebook page and web page where you can learn more about this exciting new ministry.



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Lake James School of Missions

The second big event this month was the Lake James School of Missions. I was invited to be the keynote speaker this year and so delivered the morning Bible study and missions teaching. I delivered seven messages in the course of the week. I chose as my theme: Missions, Missionaries and the Covenant Relationship with the Sending Church. I presented the Biblical teaching on the covenant and how God always established a covenant relationship and how He wants us to be in a covenant relationship with Him and with others. Marriage is obviously the first and most basic. On a Spiritual level there is the covenant of our salvation relationship with him. Then as Christian churches the congregation should establish a covenant relationship with the missionary they send out. I demonstrated where the sending church did just that with Paul and how that is our Biblical model today as well. It was a enjoyable week and I always find myself being recharged and inspired by all of the other missionaries who are present. If you have never attended a week of the Lake James School of Missions I would strongly encourage you to do so. It is a family camp so you can take the little ones as well. They always have an excellent program for teens also.





CHRISTIAN INDEPENDENCE AND FREEDOM

Turning the Corner

One note for which we can all give thanks is that Colombia elected a new president and the right person got chosen. The communist candidate was soundly defeated and the new president is a family man who supports the Christianity and family values. We praise the Lord for saving our beloved Colombia from the clutches of what would likely have become a leftist dictatorship that could well have turned Colombia into another Venezuela or Cuba.

Hasten Reaches into Hearts

One other regular ministry activity was our Hasten International Medical and Evangelism brigades. We normally do two each month and this month was no exception. We hold one brigade in an underprivileged section of our city and then another one in some outlying village. This month our team traveled to Granada, about three hours distance from Villavicencio. As always we offer dental and basic medical care as well as sharing the Gospel with everyone who comes. We always work with the local church and hand the contact information over to the local preacher for follow up.



CHRISTIAN INDEPENDENCE AND FREEDOM

We Need You, Urgently!

Finally, let me share an urgent need. Over the last two years of our past, leftist president, the Colombian economy has languished and foreign investment ceased. This caused the value of the dollar to collapse. We went from receiving \$4,600 pesos to the dollar where today we are getting only \$3,200 pesos to the dollar. At the same time, inflation has been roaring along at 20% and higher. That means in two years we have lost 60 to 70% of our purchasing power yet our expenses have been skyrocketing. This has placed us in a significant financial bind. If you currently do not partner with us in this exciting ministry we would ask you to consider doing so. And if you have been generously sharing with us in love and generosity, if you could find the means to increase that support it would help us out tremendously. We place our trust in the Lord and in you to be able to continue this amazing work the Lord is doing in Colombia!



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We Need You, Urgently!

Urgent Update: Shortly after I completed the first draft of this newsletter, a major earthquake hit Colombia's western coastal region. This was a major seismic event, registering 7.4 magnitude.

"A 7.4-magnitude earthquake is a major, highly destructive event capable of causing widespread structural collapse, severe infrastructure damage, landslides, and significant loss of life over a large regional area."



Damage. We Must Help

And there has been significant damage reported and somewhere around 130 deaths confirmed. But thankfully, for an earthquake of this magnitude, this is less than what would normally be expected. While we mourn all loss of life, even there the numbers are significantly less than would be expected. That is because in 1999 Colombia suffered a similar earthquake and there was extensive damage and many more deaths. As a result, Colombia did an extensive review and upgrade to their building codes and all new buildings were built to much more stringent standards. Many of the older buildings were reinforced and strengthened. In yesterday's event, from what I am hearing, it was the older buildings that collapsed that had not been reinforced or upgraded that came down.



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Some Damage to Our Compound

We had only a few cracked walls in our buildings and no injuries or deaths in our area. In the earthquake zone we have reports of one church building that suffered some significant degree of damage, but no injuries or deaths among our people.

Death and Damage for Many Others!

Still, there was significant damage and many deaths and injuries near the epicenter. There will be a major effort required to replace and repair damaged buildings, replace damaged bridges and repair road surfaces. Undoubtedly the death toll will climb higher. But thankfully, an effective response some 26 years ago meant Colombia did not suffer anyways near the damage or deaths that we saw in Venezuela during their most recent earthquake. Still, we ask for your prayers as Colombia works to recover from this tragic event.

Pray for us? Encourage others to support us? Stand with us as we reach out to Colombia with the Gospel!



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Colombian Christian Mission
PO Box 95, Rittman, OH 44270, USA

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