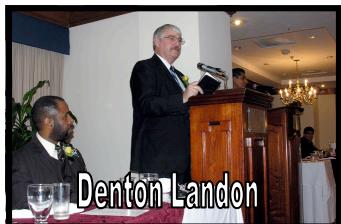


Saturday, April 16, 2011

Life has a way of teaching you important lessons as you go along, does it not? One lesson we have learned is that everything does not always go according to plans, even though you may have tried really hard to think ahead. This seems to be especially true when the event is larger in scale and involves more people. That is exactly what happened last year when we planned our first ITL Lectureship here in Guatemala. For those of you who may remember, last year the event began with a **bang**, literally! The event began with the **ITL President's Dinner**. Many events begin their ceremonies with fireworks. Our event began with a volcanic eruption! If that were not enough, the weekend provided more excitement as rain from Hurricane Agatha began to pound the country that same night and did not stop until our event was over on Sunday!

Well, we are very thankful that this year we had no such major events to report. Of course, there were some things this year that did not go according to plans, but nothing on the same level as last year's. Thankfully, we can say that our 2nd Annual Lectureship and 1st ITL Graduation overall went very, very well!



This year, we began the events again with the **ITL President's Dinner** on **Thursday, March 31**. It was held at the Holiday Inn, where many of our visitors also lodged. It was great to see our **7 full-time graduates** and **3 Saturday program graduates** present with their families and friends to celebrate their accomplishment. In addition, we had people present from the United States, Germany, Costa Rica, Peru, and El Salvador. We are very grateful to all those who travelled from different places to be a part of this special celebration and historic moment for ITL. **Denton Landon** served as the after-dinner speaker and did great at encouraging the students to consider this time as simply the beginning of a life of study of God's word. The night closed out wonderfully as the students expressed how their lives had been affected by their experience at ITL.

Friday, April 1, the students and many guests took an excursion through Guatemala City. Our first stop was at the central plaza, where we first went to the **National Palace**. This beautiful building, completed in 1943, is a great place to visit for those who want to get a better appreciation of Guatemala's history. In addition, while at the central plaza, most of the group went inside the **cathedral**, not to pray, but to learn more of Guatemala's religious history. It was then time for lunch. We stopped at Wendy's, not very Guatemalan, we know, but it was quick and hygienic, which is what we needed at the time. After lunch, the group walked about a block and a half to the **underground market** (Don't worry; we did not take the group to anything illegal. The market is literally located under the ground!) This market is great for purchasing souvenirs at a good price. It is fairly large and the people are very friendly and eager to haggle with their potential customers. Originally, we had also planned a visit to Antigua Guatemala, but time did not permit us to do this. We decided rather to go directly to our home, where we had scheduled dinner. There was plenty of food and fellowship was abundant.



Saturday, April 2, was a full day of spiritual nourishment. Our **2nd Annual ITL Lectureship** began at 9:00 am. We anticipated low crowds for the morning, but we were pleasantly surprised to have a great crowd from the very beginning. In fact, there was a whole bus-full of brethren who came from the area of Guatemala called **La Campesina**. The theme for our lectureship was "**What**



Does the Bible Say?" We followed the same format we used last year, more or less, by scheduling keynote lessons at different times during the day. In addition to the keynote lessons (where everyone, except the children was together), we also had several classes offered in a workshop style, allowing the attendees to choose their topic. Another great benefit was that delicious food was prepared by our sisters from Linda Vista and served to all those who attended. These ladies did a great job!

Our speakers this year for our keynote lessons were **Bob Turner** and **Francisco Rada**. Our workshop classes were taught by brothers from the States (**Denton Landon** and **Donnie Bates**) and from Guatemala (**Nicolas Chiquival**, **Raul Duran**, and **Guillermo Poz**). **Conrad Pinder** from Costa Rica and **Abraham Alata** from Peru helped translate many of the lessons and activities. We heard nothing but good comments about all the lessons, as we expected.



This year, we had the blessing of having **Alexander and Silvia Castellanos** from El Salvador, who taught special divided classes on the role of men and women in the home; Alexander taught the men's class and Silvia taught the ladies' class. Silvia had an additional ladies' class on Sunday that addressed the role of women in the church. They both did an excellent job.



On **Sunday, April 3**, our lectureship continued and concluded. We had more great lessons and a wonderful time together in worship to our God. Immediately after our worship time, everyone was dismissed so that we could make our way over to the facility where the **1st ITL Graduation** was to take place. Surprisingly, the "migration" from one facility to the other went very smoothly. This final event was a great way to finish all the activities together. The house was full and the students were nervous (and so were we), but everything went very well.



We began the graduation with the traditional "Pomp and Circumstances" song. We then listened while the Guatemala national anthem played—it is very beautiful. After these initial ceremonies, we proceeded to the conferring of degrees and diplomas. Because of the hard work and quality of teaching that we have stressed from the very beginning of our program, most of our full-time students

were able to receive a Bachelor's in Biblical Studies from **Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver** (BVBID), and a Bachelor's in Theology from ITL. Others received certificates of completion.

Darvin Alvarez served as the Master of Ceremonies. **Anibal Ramirez** presented the students to the President of ITL. **Hawatthia**, ITL's President, presented the degrees and certificates from ITL and **Bob Turner** the degrees and a certificate of completion from BVBID. **Byron** hooded those students that completed their Bachelor's Degree. **Nicolas Chiquival** led two songs. Brother **Stephen Warren**, one of the elders of the Kingsley Terrace Church of Christ, gave the elder's charge to our graduates, expressing in fine words the commission God has given each one of them. **Rogelio Calderon** had a Scripture reading and **Maclovio Calderon** a prayer. It was exciting to see the graduates walk across the stage after having worked so diligently to accomplish this goal. As the ceremony closed, the students, the staff and the families of the students marched out to the tune of "Four Seasons" by Vivaldi.

Two of the graduates, the **Valedictorians** for each program, had an opportunity to address the audience. **Edras Tista** had the highest grade point average for the full-time program, and **Alejandro Marin** had it for the Saturday program. As you will notice from the pictures, the full-time students wore a burgundy gown, while the Saturday students used a gray one. We want to express a special thank you to **Mark and Teri Stevens** for their generous contribution of the caps and gowns, certificate holders, and class rings for the full-time graduates. You made these students very happy and their graduation very memorable.

After the graduation, everyone enjoyed a great lunch. We also served cake to celebrate with the students and their families. We had a few more people than we expected at the event, but it all worked out fine. We estimate over **400** people in attendance for this momentous occasion.



Top Row: Benjamin Montejano, Wilder Ordoñez, Marleny Ordoñez, Abner Ramos and Francisco Ramos
Bottom Row: Aries Tista, Enny Mixteco and Isabel Irias

Please continue to pray for the work at ITL. We believe it is a good ministry that will benefit the Lord's church here in Guatemala and throughout Latin America. We are currently preparing for our next school year. Please keep us in your prayers as we finalize some details and determine who will be our students for our next full-time program. Also, be looking for another report soon on the future plans of our graduates.

For the Master,

*Byron
Hawatthia*

"Teaching the CENTRAL MESSAGE in CENTRAL AMERICA!"

