

# INSTITUTO TEOLÓGICO LATINOAMERICANO

(LATIN AMERICAN THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE)

September 2011

## Introduction: The Need

What all began in April 2008 as a Saturday program and in March 2009 as a full-time institute for training men and women to work in God's Kingdom continues to be blessed by God Almighty.

As we have graduated our first class and have moved into our 2<sup>nd</sup> promotion (**BETA Class**), the work seems to get greater and greater. Someone told us that it would get easier after the 1<sup>st</sup> year. ☺ However, we are enjoying the opportunities that God has given us.

Our goal from the beginning has not been to impress our supporters with numbers. Rather, we have sought to establish a quality program that emphasizes character, discipline and fidelity to the Word of God, as well as a passion for reaching the lost in this world. We are partnered with **Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver (BVBID)** to continue with the goal of giving the best Bible training possible.

The **NEED TO TRAIN WORKERS IS GREAT** and we are thankful to have, to help with this need, four fulltime instructors, **Anibal Ramirez, Byron Benitez, Darwin Alvarez** and **Hawatthia Jones**. We are also grateful for our supporters. Congregations like the **Morristown church of Christ** make it possible for Darwin to work full time with both the church in Coban and with ITL. **BVBID** provides the opportunity for our students to receive some of the best possible instruction from good, faithful brothers from the United States. We believe that **Instituto Teológico Latinoamericano (ITL)** is a good example of what God says in Psalm 133:1, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!"



ITL is moving forward with many exciting things to report. Since ITL has two programs of study, let us begin with the Saturday program first, then we will update you on the full-time program.

## Saturday Program

After graduating our first class, of which 3 individuals were from the Saturday program, it was decided to move this portion of the work from a rented elementary school facility in Zone 7 of Guatemala City to the present site where the full-time program is located. Keeping the students' needs in mind was the main reason that kept us in that previous location. One of our students would not have been able to finish her studies had we moved before we did. And, we are glad we stayed because this allowed her to be a part of our first graduating class.



This move of the Saturday program has many benefits both for the teachers and

for the students. A few of these benefits are: we save Q500 per month (about \$65) on rent; we are able to use more modern means of teaching (PowerPoint, etc.); and the area is much safer. No one regrets staying in the other area for the need of a student, but also no one regrets making this move for the Saturday program.

It is hard to believe how time is passing by as we have already entered into our 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of this three-year program. In the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter the classes were **Language and Research** taught by **Anibal Ramirez** and **Christian Ethics** taught by **Darwin Alvarez**. Presently, we are teaching **The Gospels/The Life of Christ (Hi)** and **Hermeneutics (Byron)**. We currently have **8 students**. Since enrollment for this program is open each quarter, the number of students can vary each quarter.

## Full-Time Program

ITL's full-time program, which works along with **BVBID's** extension program, has now also entered into its 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of its 2<sup>nd</sup> promotion. As most of you are aware, this program offers two years of intensive biblical studies, basic living and food expenses, a computer lab, and a limited amount of funds for personal expenses for each student attending. Since the students live on campus, we tried to make their accommodations as comfortable as possible—not luxurious by any means, but comfortable. There are also the additional expenses (housing, schooling, clothing, etc.) for any children with whom the students enter ITL.

*Teaching the "CENTRAL MESSAGE in CENTRAL AMERICA!"*

There were several changes to make after our first class graduated. One change was that we needed a driver for the new ITL van. **Francisco Ramos**, our van driver, graduated and none of our new students have a license to drive. The dilemma was taken care of pretty easily in that the staff quickly divided the driving times amongst ourselves to make sure that someone was available to transport the students when needed. But the second



change, the need for a full-time cook, presented a little greater of a challenge. The distance from Linda Vista presented a problem in hiring a member of the congregation. So, we

contacted a lady in our area in whom we have confidence to see if she would be available to work as our cook; sadly, she was not available. Thankfully, she knew someone who was and highly recommended that we consider her. Her name is **Elena Solorzano** and she is working out very well as the ITL full-time cook. Elena is not a Christian at the present although she is a very religious lady. Please pray for everyone at ITL as we strive to share the saving grace of God with Elena through both words and actions.

The full-time ITL facility is something we are proud of and something that we try to take care of. We rent it from a lady who lives most of the year in the United States. We also have sturdy desks and nice chairs that we make efforts at taking care of. We were able to have them custom made for our students when the full-time program first began—a result of a gracious donation from **Wesley and Amanda Walker**. Wesley was recently hired as the pulpit minister for the **Woodson Chapel church of Christ**, where he formerly served as the associate minister. Wesley has also been on the ITL campus where he taught one of our short courses. We hope that Amanda will visit soon!

Each quarter the students receive five to six weeks of instruction from the local ITL teachers. In addition, they receive instruction from at least three instructors who come to teach in the short course portion of our studies. These instructors, coordinated through BVVID's extension program, come and teach an assigned course for one week. There are more than 30 hours of instruction time in each of these short courses. The students are given a full research week at the end of the short course periods to complete any assignments

left by the visiting instructor. Some instructors cannot actually come to Guatemala so they teach by means of videoconferencing. We are eternally grateful to a brother at the **Broadway church of Christ** in Paducah, Kentucky, who generously purchased our VC equipment. This has allowed good, qualified instructors from the U.S.A., such as **Dan Owen**, the evangelist at Broadway, to teach our students here in Guatemala.

We have enrolled six full-time students and they are adjusting to their new living quarters and new daily schedule. This is the first time that some of these students have studied at this educational level, so it has been a little trying for both the students and for the teachers, with the work load being as strenuous as it is. But everyone is surviving. ☺ This new student body has made ITL an **international institute**. We have two students, **Angel Gabriel Gonzales Morales** and **Eliezer Nieves Perez Gonzales**, who are from **Panama**. Our other students are from **Guatemala**. We have **Arnoldo Alejandro Tot Pelaez** from the city of Coban and **Manuel David Avila Chuc** from Samayac. We also have **Walter** and **Nohelis Dardon** (and their two year old daughter, **Keira**) who came to ITL from the Linda Vista congregation. In a near future report we will send a short biographical sketch of each of our new students.



Due to a delayed start of the full-time program, the first quarter had to be revised from how we normally start our quarter. Instead of a three course load, we started with two courses from our local instructors on May 16<sup>th</sup>. These courses were **Christian Ethics** taught by Byron and **Techniques of Research** taught by Anibal. This was followed by two short courses, which were **Leadership**, taught by **Lindell Mitchell** and **Introduction to the Old Testament**, taught by **Denton Landon**. **Conrad Pinder**, from **Costa Rica**, came once again to translate for the short courses. We are now towards the end of our 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. From our full-time instructors the students have received **Homiletics**, taught by Hawatthia; **Hermeneutics**, taught by Darwin;

and **Introduction to the New Testament**, taught by Anibal. We then had a full three weeks of short courses, followed by one week of research to complete all assignments for these courses. The short course classes were **Job**, taught by **Donnie Bates**; **Intertestamental History**, taught by **Gary Fallis**; and **How to Study the Bible**, taught by **Dan Owen**, using our VC system. Presently, the students are working on campaign with the new church in San Cristobal, Alta Verapaz. Their break week will follow to allow them time to recharge to start their 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter on Monday, September 19.



### Property for ITL

Thank you for your prayers as we went through our ordeal with our first property purchase. We are thankful to God that we received all of our money back, even the lawyer’s fees. The money is safely stored away in a reliable bank here in Guatemala. Over the past few months we have not had a lot of time to look for property. Earlier this year we did quite a bit of searching. We found what we thought would be the **PERFECT** property for ITL and the price given by the realtor made it even more attractive; it sounded too good to be true. And, after further investigation, we found that it was too good to be true. ☺ So, we hope to begin our search again very soon. Please continue to keep this project in your prayers.

### ITL Lectureship 2012

We are happy to announce information about **ITL’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Lectureship**. The theme that has been selected is **“Adequately Searching the Scriptures.”** The main goal of this lectureship is to help equip Christians on *how* to study the Bible personally. There will be an emphasis on the methods, the principles and the processes of interpreting the Scriptures, as well as some attention to errors like the New Hermeneutic.

We have two keynote speakers already confirmed and

will be finalizing other details very soon. We are confident that this will be a quality program for the serious Bible student. We hope to record the sessions and have them available for distribution.

We were pleased with the attendance made up of brethren from various parts of the world for our 2011 lectureship. We plan to put together a package like we did for this past lectureship, which will include the lectureship events and some sightseeing tours. If you would like to attend, the lectureship dates are **March 15-18, 2012**. You may want to schedule your arrival for the early afternoon of the 15th and your departure for the 19th, unless you want to stay extra time for more sightseeing or relaxation.

### The Work of ITL Moves Forward

We hope that as a result of this newsletter you will be able to see some of the great things taking place with ITL. We have had to face great challenges and Satan is still busy trying to stop our work. But we believe that preparing men and women effectively and biblically is a work worth our effort and worth enduring persecution if that is what is needed.

There is so much more to share with you, but we will bring this newsletter to an end. We will include more details in future correspondence. We love you and appreciate very much your taking time to keep up with how God is working in Guatemala through a small Bible institute called ITL.

Please continue to pray for ITL, for the new students and for us.

Porque Él vive (Because He lives),

Hawatthia “Hi” Jones

Byron E. Benitez



Please send all funds to our overseeing congregation, marked “Mission: Guatemala” to the following address:

**Kingsley Terrace Church of Christ**  
**Attn: Dwaine Himes/Mission: Guatemala**  
**2031 E. 30th Street**  
**Indianapolis, IN 46218**

