

Friday, June 15, 2012

Dear Family and Friends,

Our hope and prayer is that you are well, enjoying God's bountiful blessings.

We are writing to you so that you can rejoice with us and thank our God for His loving kindness toward us here in Guatemala. Specifically, we are thankful because a year ago in May four of our ITL graduates moved with their families to San Cristobal in the department of Alta Verapaz. Their purpose was to plant a church in this city.

Our graduates that took this worthwhile challenge were Abner Ramos, Francisco Ramos, Wilder and Marleny Ordoñez. They began to meet in the living room of the home that the Ordoñez rent for their living quarters. Originally, it was only they who assembled each Lord's Day. Shortly after they began meeting, the Cahuec family moved their membership from Coban to San Cristobal and began to work with this new church. This was a move that Darvin Alvarez, the preacher in Coban, encouraged because the new church in San Cristobal cut the Cahuec's 2-hour travel time by more than half.

The San Cristobal team immediately began to evangelize. They made several contacts and soon had several Bible studies taking place. However, the people were not quick to obey the Gospel. As we received reports from them, we also sensed that the team was getting discouraged because they were not seeing results. We simply reminded them that their main objective was to sow the seed and to allow God to accomplish His work of giving the increase (1 Corinthians 4: ).

It was not until August that the team witnessed their first baptism. About a week later, God blessed them with their second. Since then, there have been two others who have obeyed the Lord and have been added to their number.

Another significant development that has taken place, which the team or we never expected, was that during the evangelism efforts erring members of the Lord's church were found. It was discovered that missionaries had been in this area many decades ago, but because of the conflict in Guatemala were not able to stay. After their departure the churches in this area ceased to exist for one reason or another. Now, several decades later, our brethren have come in contact with several of these Christians. Eight of them have now been restored! Because of this, the San Cristobal team saw a great need to begin a new work in the village called Las Pacayas.

Now let us return to our original intent for sending this message. On May 27, the San Cristobal Church of Christ celebrated their first anniversary. The purpose of this event was to thank God for one year of many blessings in the new church. It was great to see our graduates put together an event such as this. They rented a facility, had a great program, gave bookmarks as a memoir of the event, fed lunch to the entire assembly and even gave plaques to those who participated publically. We must admit that we were a bit proud to see them at work.

Added to the church in San Cristobal, there were brethren from Linda Vista, Coban and Las Pacayas, and several visitors, totaling about 200 people that came together and united their hearts

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and minds in praise to God for this event. The Linda Vista church contracted a bus for the occasion. About 60 individuals filled this old school bus and rode the five hours from Linda Vista to San Cristobal. In addition, our ITL van took the students and their families. We went up the day before with Lindell Mitchell, the preacher at the Livingston Church of Christ in Livingston, Texas, who was here to teach a short course the following week.

Considering that a year ago there was no church of Christ in this city, it was so good to see that now there are about 15 Christians and about 20 to 25 children who assemble here to worship God in spirit and truth each first day of the week.

Please keep this work and the other congregations in this area in your prayers. There are now four congregations in this department where there were none before the work in Coban was started in 2008. Also, keep us in your prayers as we continue to do what we can to see that the Lord's kingdom expands its borders and continue to teach others to "teach the CENTRAL MESSAGE in CENTRAL AMERICA!"

Serving Jesus fervently,

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Byron



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