

Go Preach the Gospel



To the Whole World

# “How Shall They Hear?”

Training Men to Preach in Their Native Lands  
A Work of the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver

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ITL Master's Students with instructor, Gary Fallis

## A BUSY WEEK IN GUATEMALA

I left DFW Saturday, Oct. 20, to **teach the Master's Class in Guatemala**. Typically the classes are taught at the school in Guatemala City. However, in order to accommodate the students, I agreed to travel four hours from the capital to the city of San Cristobal and teach there.

Hawatthia and Byron met me at the airport at noon Saturday with plans to meet my translator, Conrad Pinder, from Costa Rico, an hour later. **Whatever can happen on a foreign trip often does.** Conrad's plane, which was scheduled to arrive at 1:00 PM, finally arrived at 5:30 PM. This was the time we should have gotten to San Cristobal. We finally arrived at 10:30 PM, tired, but thankful. The Park Hotel was secure, comfortable, and inexpensive, and we were ready for worship the next day, Sunday.

**Hawatthia preached, and I taught the class.** I give a lot of credit to Conrad, my translator, who may have to work twice as hard as I do. I present the sermon in one language, but he has to hear it, understand it in two languages and present it in the language of the people. I had first met Conrad in Panama in 2008, and he later translated for me in Guatemala City in 2011. I have learned to read the Scripture in Spanish, so Conrad permitted me to try my hand at reading the text.

I taught **World Religions** Monday-Friday to graduates and teachers of ITL (Institute of Theology of Latin America) This was the first time I had taught this course as it is new in the Master's curriculum. Special emphasis was given to the religions of **Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism** in contrast to the Christian faith revealed in the Bible. One of these religions claims to worship one God, Allah; others worship a multiplicity of gods, yet only the religion of Jehovah God and Christ bears the witness of fulfilled prophecy and miraculous events (2 Peter 1:16-21). Although these religions are not common and certainly not dominant in Central and South America now, each student knew someone of one of these religions. The atmosphere in class was active as the students probed the subjective and philosophical background of these religions in contrast to historical Christian evidences.

Four of the students were from the immediate area. **Darvin Alvarez**, a teacher at ITL, lives and preaches in **Coban**, about twenty minutes from San Cristobal. Coban is the primary city in that district of Guatemala. Other students included **Francisco Ramos, his son, Abner and Wilder Ordonez**, graduates of ITL. These

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men, along with their families form the evangelistic team at San Cristobal. The remaining student, **Anabil Ramirez**, an ITL instructor, lives in Guatemala City. Anabil has served as the preacher for the Linda Vista congregation since its beginning.

We met class in a rented facility where Francisco and his family first lived. I had taught all these men before and already knew them to be serious students and good men. It is great when you can enjoy studying the Bible, and that is really the way it should be. Even with lecture, discussion, tests and assignments seven hours a day, we found time for lunch, and for me, a brief siesta. Francisco's wife, Herminia, was our cook. I had remembered her "tasty" cooking while Francisco was in school.

Wednesday night Darvin drove Conrad and me to Coban to teach at the congregation there. I had first taught Darvin in Panama in 2008 and ate with his wife and family. In 2010 Darvin began to teach with the Latin America Theological Institute. I preached from the second chapter of Philippians with the emphasis on "**Have the Mind of Christ.**" The congregation meets in a building just adjacent to Darvin's house. We found time on the way to Coban to go by a tea plantation so that I could treat Sarah with some Guatemalan tea when I returned home.

Friday afternoon, Conrad and I returned with Anabil, Abner and others to Guatemala City. In addition to their studies during the week, these men will complete a vigorous research paper as part of the requirements of the course. As many of you know, **the purpose of the Master's Program** is to give students broader and deeper knowledge of God's Word, its application, and practical ways to communicate those lessons in a multi-cultural society and an ever-changing world. Upon completing their studies, the ITL graduates can assist in teaching other men who desire to become gospel preachers.

—Gary Fallis

## **MULTIPLE MINISTRIES OF ITL**

**The linchpin of ITL (Latin America Theological Institute) is the School of Preaching located in Guatemala City.** Men, in many cases their wives, study God's Word for two years to pre-

pare for teaching the Word of God and Christian service. ITL's full-time program works in tandem with the Bear Valley Bible Institute's Extension Program.

The school works with the **Linda Vista** congregation in the municipal area. Three of the ITL teachers, **Anabil, Hawatthia and Byron**, preach in a rotation with two of the brethren in the congregation. **Students** frequently teach classes for all ages. A prayer meeting on Tuesday night binds the brethren together and addresses mutual needs. Periodically, members of the congregation along with ITL students and teachers offer gospel literature and home Bible studies to those in the neighborhood. These weekly activities of worship, prayer, study and fellowship enrich the two-years of the ITL students, helping develop spiritual maturity and awareness of the needs of others.

ITL also conducts **a three-year Saturday Program** for those who like to seriously study the Bible but are employed Monday-Friday. The first class met in a rented elementary school, but was later moved to the location where the School of Preaching meets. Saturday students now can meet in a safer environment and benefit from the modern technology (power-point, etc) which enhances their Bible learning. The regular teachers of ITL teach in the Saturday Program. Eight students are currently studying courses such as Language and Research, the Gospel and the Life of Christ and Hermeneutics.

**An Annual Lectureship** is an additional part of this ministry. ITL's third lectureship on March 16-17, 2012 featured the theme: "Adequately Searching the Scriptures." Bob Turner, BVBID Extension Director and Donnie Bates, Coordinator of Central/South American Extensions, were among the speakers. Abner Ramos, ITL graduate, taught a special teenage class. Attendance was excellent, about **300** on Saturday, and **500** on Sunday. Christians were present from **18 congregations** and **4 countries**.

**Student Campaigns** punctuate the end of the year, prior to the holiday break. **In 2011** ITL students went to three different places for their three weeks of teaching and evangelism. Churches that host the students provide food and lodging. **Walter and Nohelis Dardon** worked with the Linda Vista

congregation in Guatemala City. **David Avila and Alejandro Tot** served in Coban, with Darvin Alvarez. Panamanian students, **Eliezer Perez and Gabriel Gonzales**, traveled to La Esperanza, Quetzaltenango, and assisted the brethren there. Local congregations were very encouraged and have requested the students to return.

You get the idea! There is little “dead time” in the ministry of the Latin America Theological Institute. I have been there now on four occasions and can attest to the quality of leadership, teaching and evangelism that comes from ITL.

—Gary Fallis



ITL Faculty: **Byran Benitez, Darvin Alvarez, Anabil Ramirez, Hiwaththaia Jones** (left to right)

## NEW MISSION WORK IN SAN CRISTOBAL

The **San Cristobal team** is a pilot project of ITL. We provide moral, educational, evangelistic and financial help. All the help is indefinite, except the financial commitment. The financial support is not indefinite because a goal from the beginning is for these brethren to raise a work that will eventually be self-sustaining. These well trained graduates have the opportunity to work closely with **Darvin Alvarez**, the evangelist who works with the **Coban** congregation only about 30 minutes away. Coban is a church plant of the **Linda Vista** congregation. This proximity gives our students easy access to a reliable and faithful resource.

The team is composed of **Abner Ramos**,

**Francisco and Erminia Ramos (and Jonathan), and Wilder and Marley Ordoñez (and Julissa and Jose David)**. After a couple of weeks to recuperate from graduation, they began working in San Cristobal. Felix Cahuece, his wife, Erlinda and their four children were the first additions. They had previously worshipped in Coban, but had to travel one to two hours by foot to attend worship.

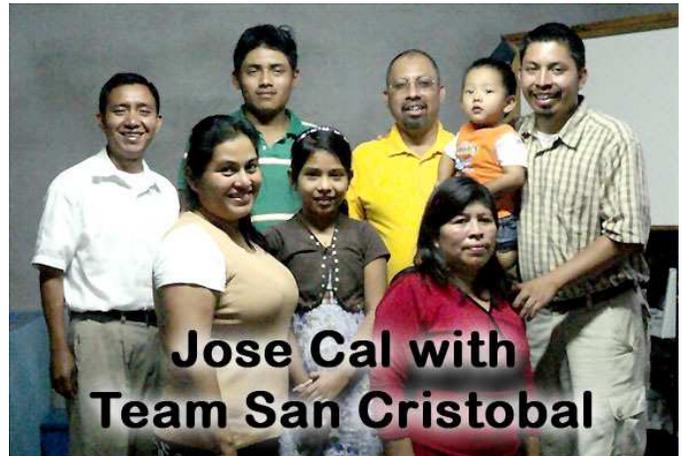
After several more weeks of studying with various people, **God gave the increase** through two new spiritual births. Jose Armando Cal Caal was baptized August 27, 2011, in Coban. The team met him when they were doing visitation in the local hospital. After having a couple studies with him, Jose decided that he wanted to give his life to the Lord. Since then, two others have been baptized, several have been restored, and **20 – 25** children from the community have been coming consistently after the church hosted a Vacation Bible School this past December.

**The new church in San Cristobal has already planted their first new work in Las Pacayas!** This small village is about 30 minutes north of San Cristobal. Allow us to share the beautiful story of how this took place. **In 1979**, Victoriano Max was baptized by Joe E. Lee, a missionary well known to the brethren in Guatemala. Victoriano became very involved in helping in the work and in translating into the local language of Pocom. **In the 80s**, because of the conflict between Mexico and the guerillas, Brother Lee was not able to return to study further. Sadly, the church eventually dissipated. Many of the Christians that did not flee or stop attending completely, began to attend the denominations. Around 30 years later, while Victoriano was in San Cristobal recently, he saw the sign for the church, took down the number, and began to investigate if it was a New Testament congregation. To his great joy, after talking with the preachers, he discovered he had found his family in Christ! The very next Sunday, he attended the worship service and was restored that same day. Soon, he brought another brother, who also was restored. Then, his wife was restored. Now, there have been 8 restorations, including a 96 year-old woman, Marcela Moran, who also was baptized by Brother Lee

many decades ago. Because of this wonderful response, it was decided to make the extra effort to begin the church again in Las Pacayas. On Sunday, March 15, the San Cristobal team assembled with the Las Pacavasa brethren for their first worship service after decades of having seen the church disappear. The assembly was held in the home of Brother Victoriano. Please rejoice with us and pray for this new work.

Since then, the San Cristobal team has celebrated its first year anniversary in beginning the work. We are encouraged by the faithfulness these graduates are showing and their perseverance in a tough field. We are confident that these brethren will have further good news to report in the future.

—**Hawatthia Jones and Byron Benitez**



*If you would like to help financially with Training Preachers In Their Native Land, please send your gift to:*  
**Bridgewood Church of Christ, P.O. Box 8524, Fort Worth, Texas 76124**

*Please make a notation on the envelope or a note with the check "Gary Fallis Mission Fund." A gift of \$20.00, \$50.00, \$100.00 or more will help us in the training of gospel preachers.*