

I hope that everyone is doing well this holiday season. We have been very blessed but quite busy over the last few months, hence the reason for October and November newsletter being joined. Here are some of the highlights of the last few months.

- Obviously during the month of September our school and city were rocked by Hurricane Ike. Thankfully, both the school building and our house came through the storm with only minor damage. Unfortunately many others here were not so fortunate. If you are interested in helping in some way let me know so that I can put you in contact with the appropriate people here. Even though Ike did not do much physical damage to the school, it really interrupted the semester and broke the rhythm for the students and teachers. It was quite difficult to get everyone back on the same page after being displaced for 10 days. Thankfully, the teachers and students in other countries who were involved in our courses were patient with our teachers and students. In the end, everyone put in some extra hours and got the work done! I think God taught us all a good lesson on patience and endurance through the whole experience. Hopefully we don't have to learn the same lesson next year!
- The number of Bible institutes and individuals connected with us continues to grow each semester. During the fall we added Lima, Peru; Abilene, Texas; and La Palma, El Salvador taking our total number of sites to 28, located in 10 different countries. We already have plans to add Taluca, Mexico; Cochambamba, Bolivia and Ascención, Paraguay in January, Lord willing. Thus, by the beginning of 2009 we will be up to 31 different sites and will have added 12 sites over the past 12 months! If you are aware of any other possible locations that might benefit from our classes, please have them get in touch with me.
- I am currently teaching a course on "Religious Groups" in which we examine major religious movements found in Latin America. We begin each section by informing the students about the nature and beliefs of these groups. Next we give them good practical direction for meaningful dialogue and suggestions for gaining them to Christ. It has required a lot of preparation and study but it has been encouraging for everyone involved, I believe. Specifically we've seen the supremacy of the Christ, his love, and his plans for the church. We serve a great God!
- As some of you are aware, during the first two weeks of November, I spent time away from Houston. During the first week I participated in the Pan American Lectureships being held in Quito, Ecuador. The primary purpose was to get to know other major works and workers in the Spanish-speaking world in order to find ways that we might benefit one another. We had a great week filled with encouraging speakers and useful interaction. I am excited to see what the Lord will do with the seeds planted during that week. Another reason for attending was to visit the Quito School of Biblical Studies. We connect with them through video-conference just about every day. We give classes to their students and receive classes from their teachers. Because we have such direct contact, it was felt that I should get to know their system, teachers, students and location better to keep everything running smoothly between the two schools. While there I got a chance to preach to the students during their devotional time and spend some quality time with several of the teachers. I spent the second week visiting several places in Nicaragua. While there I looked for ways to begin offering our courses through video-conference. I also got the chance to preach at a couple of churches. The main reason for going, however, was to visit several Nicaraguan ministers who are supported by the church in Duncan. The church in Duncan felt that I might help communication between the ministers and the missions' committee since the ministers don't speak English and the missions committee members do not speak Spanish. The two weeks were extremely enjoyable, but extremely tiring. I believe God used the time to His glory and to the benefit of his kingdom.

- Part of my work here is focused on recruiting students for the full-time program and helping them get settled here in Houston. Over the last couple of months the director and I have been on the hunt for students and supporting congregations. We have contacted several promising students through the process. We have also visited with a number of local churches where the students could serve and grow while receiving support. We've had some good possibilities but nothing is firm at this point. With the Lord's help we will have things in place by August when the next school year begins. Please be praying that God will bring all the necessary pieces together soon.

Lord willing we will be celebrating the institute's 2nd graduation on December 13. We are excited to have three students graduating this year- Renzo Mayorga, Julio & Fior Beitia.

- Renzo Mayorga came to us from Chile, via College Station, Texas. He met his wife, Audrey, while she was in Chile on a mission's trip. They are a delightful and very bright young couple who really love the Lord. Renzo has been very helpful to me and the students at school with his technological knowledge on many occasions. Renzo has been working in the Clear Lake area and leading two cell groups that we hope will form a Spanish-speaking church there. Upon graduation he will be continuing as the full-time minister there at the Clear Lake Church of Christ where we believe we'll see great gains in the Kingdom!
- Julio and Fior Beitia moved to Florida from Venezuela some time ago. Julio worked as a chef in restaurants in Orlando before the Lord got his attention. He has used these same skills to give cooking classes here in Houston as a door for reaching people with the gospel. Fior is a sweet, godly woman who came to know the Lord while in Venezuela. They have worked with the church in Baytown and have brought several to the Lord during their time there. Like many of our students, they have sacrificed a lot to be with us the last two years. They have persevered through a number of difficulties and trials, so we are excited that they have "remained faithful to the end," so to speak. Lord willing, they will be working with a congregation in the Orlando area upon completion of their studies!

We love and appreciate you all. May you all have a wonderful holiday season. We look forward to what our King will do in 2009!

God bless and keep you all,

Kevin, Alicia and Bethany