

# SUNSET INTERNATIONAL BIBLE INSTITUTE



## ARTHUR PUENTE REPORT



VOLUME I, ISSUE 4

3723 34TH STREET, LUBBOCK, TX. 79410

PHONE: (806) 788-3271 FAX: (806) 788-3217

EMAIL: [APUENTE@SUNSET.CC](mailto:APUENTE@SUNSET.CC)

## MINISTRY TRAINING IN NICARAGUA, CENTRAL AMERICA



will help them to be more effective within their churches.

Brother Pedro Morales is the current director of the school and is himself a graduate of the program from the 1970s. He is helped by a group of about seven teachers who are both energetic and knowledgeable in the Scriptures. They are also products of the school's efforts. In the picture below, I am standing (second from right) with the directorship of the school, including brother Pedro (middle). Brother Jorge Norioi

needs well over the years, the structure needs repairs and upgrades that will allow for better teaching and learning conditions overall. It will also permit them to have additional classrooms, a larger library and office space. The brethren are currently involved in a fund-raising effort that will help secure the funds necessary to reach this goal. Please pray for this effort.

On the Sunday that I was in Managua, I attended the worship services of the local church, a 450 member congregation full of vigor and very active in the community. I preached the morning service in a warm 90 degree morning. There were two baptisms and several visitors. The Bible classes were well attended and included classes for teens, new converts, and those wanting more information about the church.

On April 17-25th I traveled to the wonderful country of Nicaragua in Central America to visit two of the schools in the Sunset family. The first is located in the capital city of Managua where the Nicaraguan Bible Institute is located.

This school has been involved in ministry training since 1976. It is a weekend school, holding classes on Saturdays from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. This is a constant schedule and it does not stop during the summer. It is a three year program of training that focuses on intense biblical instruction and complemented by practical ministry courses.

On the Saturday that I was present, there were over 80 students taking classes. Some of them are preparing for full-time ministry while others just want to increase their knowledge in the Bible and gain skills that



(second from left) has also served as the school's director in the past and is one of the current teachers.

This past December, the school graduated twelve students and they are scheduled to graduate another class this coming December for which I plan to be present. This school, thanks to the Lord, is marching right along.

The only real need they have is to remodel their current facility, a four bedroom home that has been converted into classrooms. Although it has suited their



It was encouraging to see a congregation with all age groups, elders, deacons and two full-time evangelists. Several of these brethren also work with the school in addition to their responsibilities in the church. What a group of Christians!

## MINISTRY TRAINING IN HAVANA, CUBA



Surely the highlight of my recent travels to the schools in Latin America was the trip to Havana, Cuba on May 1-10th. This trip was in conjunction with our branch school in Miami, FL., the Atlantic International Bible Institute (AIBI). Kirk McAfee is our resident Dean of that branch school and travels to Cuba twice a year to teach one week long seminars and has been doing so for a number of years. I must admit, I was a little nervous about this trip since it was my first time to go to Cuba, although I was traveling with an old pro, brother Rudy Wray. He has been going to Cuba for ten years and this helped calm my nerves somewhat. But still, Cuba is not like other countries in Latin America, for it is still under a repressive regime and a communist state. And there are still no official relations between the U.S. and Cuba. In short, the rules are different in Cuba.

Through a very special and very limited Cuban government approval visa, the AIBI has permission to enter Cuba specifically to train and teach religious courses. It is a delicate permission given by the Cuban government, and to our knowledge, the only permission of its kind authorized to the churches of Christ. Simply put, we have official government clearance to go in and teach about Christ! Without this specific permission our mere presence in Cuba as American would be illegal and we surely could not go in to teach about Christ. God has given us a special blessing to be able to minister to the Cuban brethren in this way.



I am happy to report that the church is doing well in Cuba and growing. During the week, about 32 students were present for the two courses that we were teaching. Kirk taught the Minor Prophets while Rudy and I taught a seminar on the Leadership of the Church. These students, many of them full time ministers in the churches throughout the country, undergo regular Bible courses year round, similar in many ways to the intensive program at Sunset. The teachers of the school maintain the training program and some of us as teachers from the States come in and supplement what they are already doing. It is exciting to see how the Lord has been blessing the local brethren and their efforts since the 1970s.

The Cuban school is an extension of the AIBI, which in turn, of course, is a branch school of Sunset in Lubbock.

One of the things that is so impressive about the brethren in Cuba is the amount of good

work they have done with limited resources. The Lord has blessed their efforts even though they have had to endure much in the years under Castro.

One of the things that also impressed me as a first-time visitor was the lack of any and all American products. Not even Coca-Cola was to be seen. There are no American made vehicles in the country other than the 1950s models that Castro's government allowed to stay after the 1959 "Revolution" that brought



Communism to Cuba. There are newer Russian and Chinese vehicles driving around. This anti-American sentiment, however, is not something shared by the brethren of the church. They welcomed us with open arms and were glad we had come to teach them more about Christ.

Please continue to pray for the work in Cuba and for our continued blessings to be able to work in that country in the ways God has provided. The additional work done by brother Kirk McAfee in Miami continues to be a key aspect of the overall work in Cuba. Praise be to God!

## JINOTEGA, NICARAGUA—INSTITUTE FOR THE PREPARATION OF WORKERS



Also on this trip to Nicaragua, April 17-25th, I visited the second school in the Sunset family in this great nation: The Institute for the Preparation of Workers. In contrast to the Nicaraguan Bible Institute in Managua, this school is just beginning. It is located in the northern and more mountainous part of the country in the town of Jinotega, some three hours from the capital of Managua. Jinotega is known for its rich coffee, having won numerous awards and recognition. (I brought a few bags home). It is part of a larger ministry based in Jinotega called “Mision Para Cristo” (Mission for Christ) headed by brother Benny Baker, now in his 12th year. His commitment to the work has helped this ministry flourish and impact so many.

This impressive ministry has really made an impact on the community of Jinotega. It has a fully staffed medical clinic which is open to the public each day and a system of private schools for children of all ages and grades. These two works alone have benefited many people in the Jinotega region, showing the compassion and care of Christ. In addition, Mision Para Cristo established the local congregation which consists of about 50 members and then this year it saw the need to begin a ministry training program to train able workers. Their specific goal is to train ministers to reach the northern most parts of the country where there already exist several congregations and where they want to begin new works. All in all, Mision Para Cristo has formed a great work through these four programs.

Since the school aspect of this ministry is just in the beginning phase, there is much work to do. One need of the school is to develop a strong base of Bible materials for the teaching and learning of the students. Another need is to provide teachers who can come in to teach the courses the students are taking every two months. These are one week seminar courses, similar to a one week intensive course taught in universities here in the States. These one week seminars take place once every two months and students come to the building from the different northern churches to gain the skills to enable them to be better workers. While they are studying, they sleep in a dormitory and eat on campus. In this way, the school covers their expenses to get to the courses, while they study, and their expenses to get back home. This helps them be able to study in the program.

I taught the seminar to the students seen in the picture to the left. We had class Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm. Friday was a half day that lasted until 1:00 pm. I taught the course: “The Four Gospels” which focused on the relationship of the gospels

and of course, the differences to be found within each one as to the specific “picture” of Christ that each is trying to present. This past February, they had seen an Introduction to the Old Testament. Under this system, the students will see six courses per year. Their next seminar will be in June (later this month).

There are currently four teachers who work with the school (three are pictured below). They work with local congregations full time



and volunteer their time to teach in the school and serve as its directors. Some of my work will be to further equip these men to be better instructors and ministers.

Please pray for this young school as it goes through its first year of studies and for these men who serve in these capacities. They love the Lord and want to do a great job in their training of ministers for the Kingdom.

## QUITO SCHOOL OF BIBLICAL STUDIES



The last trip I took recently was to our former mission point of Quito, Ecuador. It has been seven years since we left and this was the first chance I have had to visit. I was there May 19-27th. So much has changed in that time; some things have remained the same. The people we grew close to while there are still so special to us. Carmen was not able to go with me on this trip although we wanted this to happen. It just wasn't possible at this time. Everyone missed seeing her. In fact, the words so many asked me right after they saw me was, "How's sister Carmen?" She is greatly loved by so many.

The main purpose of my trip was to take brother Liberato Ovalle pictured with me here to the right (We are standing at the Middle of the World, the traditional site

of the actual equator). Brother Liberato is going to be serving as the resident Dean of our school in Mexicali, Mexico. That school is scheduled to start up this coming August. I invited him to travel with me to Quito so he could see what the school there had done over the past ten years. Since we are wanting to basically reproduce in Mexicali what Quito has done, it seemed like an appropriate trip to make.

While there we had the chance to see so much of the school's operation. We had time to meet with students, with the resident Dean of the school, Kent Marcum, and we also got to see the graduation ceremonies on May 24th of the thirteen graduates this year. It was a good learning experience for him and a good reminder for me of everything that is good about the work in Ecuador. We plan on imple-



menting a lot of what we learned to the school in Mexicali.

Of particular personal gratitude for me was seeing some of my former students now serving as teachers in the school. Three in particular are now able teachers. What a joy to see their growth and wonderful ministry in ways that I didn't imagine at the time.

I also got to meet with other former students who now serve in mission teams spread throughout the country. These students show that the training going on in Quito at the QSOBS is fruitful and good. It serves as the hub for so much work going on in the country. During my visit, I taught a short seminar on Eschatology and it was a wonderful reminder of my teaching days there.

The thirteen students who graduated, some as far as Argentina, are now a part of the rich tradition of the school in Quito. I plan on returning next year, Lord willing, to see the continued progress of this wonderful work. This time, though, with Carmen at my side.

## FAMILY NEWS AND NOTES

The Puente family is doing well, thanks to the Lord. Although we had one sad note during these past couple of months. Our dog Mac, who has been with our family the past 15 years, died. Although many people do not understand how someone could mourn a dog, those who have had these pets live with them for a long period of time

know how they come to be so close. Mac will be missed but we are grateful for the time he formed part of our family.

On a different note, our daughter-in-law, Megan, continues to have a good pregnancy and all looks to be on schedule for an October birth. We don't know what it is and look forward to the

surprise on B-day. Please continue to pray for her and that all will continue to go well.

Finally, the girls finished up another year of school. Yea! And Carmen is now off from work for the summer too. They are ready for some rest and summer fun. I must admit, after these three good but also tiring trips to Latin America, I am ready to get a little rest as well. Maybe I'll go and fire up the grill.

Once again we thank you all for your love, encouragement, prayers and financial support. May God's richest blessings be yours this summer!