



INSTITUTO DE ESTUDIOS BÍBLICOS INTERNACIONALES

EN LINEA • ON LINE

NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER 2023

Welcome to our November 2023 Newsletter, here are some of our latest developments. It continues to amaze me how the Lord puts things into our path that we both need and that need us. It is awe inspiring for me to watch the Lord's hand at work.

PLANTING OF THE CHURCH Ok, there is a story here that started in back in 2015. As many of you may know, EBI was a small seed of thought and hope that was discussed at the local Denney's here in Costa Rica back in 2015 (getting close to 9 years ago!!!!). Although our intentions were good, nothing seemed to gel.

Then COVID hit, I was looking for an exit from the secular world and through God's guidance, EBI was born. We live in Escazú, but there aren't any congregations near here. It had always been in the back of my mind that maybe somehow, someday, the opportunity may open up to plant a church in this area. That thought never left.

Flash back to July of this year. I flew to Honduras and held the seminar on the Organization of the Church. It was successful, I returned home and didn't give it much thought after that.

Then late October we started our final course of this year, "**Plantación de Iglesias**" or **HOW TO PLANT CHURCHES** (in English). I received a call from a man named Marvin just out of the blue. He said he had heard about us from the brothers in Honduras where I gave the seminar. It turns out that Marvin is a man on fire for the Lord. For awhile he has been desperately searching for some help and guidance to plant a church. He just didn't have the knowledge and resources to go it alone.

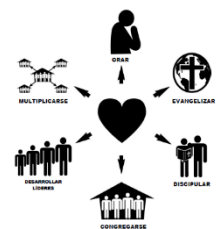
I met with Marvin. Guess what... He wanted to plant a church 1.5 miles from my house on the edge of Pavas, Rohrmesor and Escazú. EBI is all in. We had our first church service 2 weeks ago with 24 in attendance. Last week there were 23 (but would have been 25 if Alice and I hadn't already been obligated to an event where we have been attending). I was given the honor of delivering the first sermon, and I do feel extremely honored that I was asked for that privilege.

Right now, we have started meeting in Marvin's home which is a couple of miles from where we want to end up. But yesterday, Alice and I prayed and then drove through the area looking for a place to meet. We found a *very nice* banquet room



Primeros Pasos

Movilice su iglesia a los campos de cosecha de Dios



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at a hotel for ½ of what I expected to pay and we will start meeting there Nov. 26th. Get this. The owner of the hotel asked if he could join us. God never fails. He gave us a meeting place plus more people to attend. HE always gives above and beyond if you have faith.

EBI has many resources that we can use to help Marvin and the congregation's campaign. They have asked me to preach every other week. I have agreed and will continue to do so as long as I can stay on top of my EBI responsibilities.

SPEAKING OF CHURCH GROWTH As you know, EBI has continually grown in it's efforts within Cuba through both our EBI classes and our sister program, *Cuba Predica* (Preach Cuba).

EBI first started ministering in Cuba when Luis reached out and enrolled a few old friends there less than 2 years ago. We have been working primarily with 3 congregations, one in Dos Palmas, one in Palmas Soriano & one in Jicoteca. When we started, Dos Palmas had about 12 members, Palmas Soriano had about 60 members and Jicoteca had about 10 members. Now Dos Palmas has a regular attendance of over 60 (5x), Palmas Soriano has an attendance of over 120 (2x) and Jicoteca is seeing attendance over 30 (3x). All of this has happened since their involvement in EBI.

It didn't really hit me about the impact EBI has been making until a couple of months ago. I was speaking with our church secretary in Cuba, Yamirelis, and she made the comment how she was feeling overwhelmed. She told me before EBI arrived that there hadn't been a baptism for so long, that she couldn't even remember when it had happened. And now they are bursting at the seams!

The Glory goes to God, but I do want to give some credit to the members of these 3 congregations. Not only do we have preachers working with/through EBI, but the members themselves go out into the neighborhoods every week, preaching and teaching the Gospel.



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HERE'S THE GOOD PART – MISSION WORK WITHIN THE MISSION WORK

Ok, I told you about the growth in Dos Palmas, Palmas Soriano & Jicoteca to introduce this section of the newsletter. The members of these congregations have gotten together and **THEY** have decided that if it can be done at their church, then **THEY** can do it at other churches!!! So, they met with 2 other congregations to see if they would be interested, and they were ecstatic!

We are going to “invade” Las Tunas and Jarahueca.

First off, Jarahueca is what we would call “out in the sticks”, Las Tunas is a sizeable city. When a group first met with Jarahueca, they were telling them about what they were doing, things that EBI was helping with and how useful the projectors were in teaching and preaching in the communities. The preacher asked what was a projector that could be connected to a cell phone or a computer? He had never heard of such a thing.

Luis is taking two more projectors with him on his next trip to Cuba this coming January.

I'm proud to report that our students are taking one of their own first mission trips this weekend to preach, teach and administer to those brothers and sisters in these two areas. Just imagine if we see the same results in those 2 communities that we have been experiencing in Dos Palmas, Palmas Soriano & Jicoteca! I will keep you posted.



NEW BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST!

It wouldn't be a good newsletter if I didn't tell you about our new brothers and sisters. Our students baptized 8 more people in September. I believe that brings this year's total up to 99 baptisms (that we are aware of) this year as of the end of last month (October).

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WHERE WE WANT TO GO

Right now, we are supporting 7 full-time preachers in Cuba. We think we have a commitment for 3 more, to complete our team goal of 10 starting in 2024. We also want to assist Rolando, Yamirelis and others in creating a formal preacher training program in Cuba. I will expand on that a little later as the details start to develop, but please look inside your own heart, pray that this can become a reality and pray that God guides us every step of the way. Also, please consider being a part of this project. I can guarantee you that many souls will be saved.

Also, because of your continued support, souls are being added monthly. Thank you so much for giving and praying.

If you want to join in, below is how you can help.

How You Can Help Estudios Bíblicos Internacionales & Cuba Predica/Preach Cuba

First: Remember, we are a privately funded program. Here is how you can help: The First Street Church of Christ has graciously agreed to handle our donations in the U.S.

TO GIVE, simply go to www.givelify.com, search First Street Church of Christ, enter

the amount and then choose either “EBI - Estudios Bíblicos Internacionales” or “Cuban Preacher Program” or you can mail a check to:

First Street Church of Christ, 201 W 1st Street, Lampasas, TX 76550 – be sure and put “EBI - Estudios Bíblicos Internacionales” or “Cuban Preacher Program” in the memo.

Secondly: You can help with Prayers, Prayers, Prayers!!!

Please keep this program in your prayers and pray that God can effectively use our students, teachers and everyone involved to carry the Good News throughout Latin America and the world.

May God bless each and every one of you for your support of this program,
Rocky Castleberry

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