

The HEART of Teacher Training

We celebrated a significant milestone in March this year: 40 years in the ministry. In March 1977, the day after our last final during winter quarter at Northwest College, we packed up the U-Haul truck and moved from Kirkland, WA across state to Pasco to serve as Ministers of Christian Education at Faith Assembly Christian Center. Now, after 16 years of pastoral ministry and 24 years as missionaries, we look back at how faithful God has been and at what we've learned along the way.

From the very beginning, both of us have felt called to the teaching ministry. Whether in a pastoral or missions context, teaching – or using the biblical word “discipling” – is an essential part of fulfilling the Great Commission, “Go and make disciples of all nations...” (Matthew 28:19). As missionaries, our ministry goes beyond making disciples. We are making disciple makers! In missionary task terms, we call this training. Concisely, missionary work involves **reaching** people for Christ, **TRAINING** them for **planting** new churches while **servng** a needy world.

Our guiding verse has been 2 Timothy 2:2: “You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others” (NLT). We are at our best when we are teaching teachers to teach! The core of our ministry is teacher training. When we teach others to teach we are multiplying our ministry, paying it forward to the lives of those children, youth and adults through teachers that will be teaching them.

We've discovered five principles that are at the HEART of teacher training.

HEART. The “H” is for heart. A normal acrostic may not allow it, but it fits, because this is the most important principle, where we'll spend more time. In his heart, a teacher must know that God has called him or her to teach. The three main passages that teach about spiritual gifts each include teaching. In the Romans 12:3-8 list, sometimes referred to as motivational gifts, verse 7 states, “If you are a teacher, teach well.” In the 1 Corinthians 12 list, sometimes referred to as operational gifts, verse 28 states, “Here are some of the parts God has appoint for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then...” Finally, in the brief Ephesians 4:11-13 list, sometimes referred to as office gifts, verse 11 states, “Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.” Many biblical scholars believe that the Greek structure would combine pastors and teachers with a hyphen, thus pastor-teacher.

In all of these, teaching is a gift of the Holy Spirit, given to the body of Christ to build up, equip and prepare God's people. Therefore, as teacher trainers, we are building up, equipping and preparing those that God has called to do the same! A large part of teacher training is affirming God's call as teachers. In any given year, we will conduct one or two international events and either conduct or participate in six, eight or even ten national teacher-training events around Latin America. The single most important message we share is, “Keep going. Don't stop. God is using you to shape a new generation of harvest workers!”

In May, we had the privilege of participating in two National PROCEPA Seminars in Honduras, one in Tegucigalpa and the other in San Pedro Sula. A total of 164 Bible school teachers attended one of the two teacher certification seminars. At the end of the second seminar, Teodulo, one of the older pastors present, came to us to thank us for the seminar. He has a remarkable story that goes back to the beginning of his ministry. He told us that when he started, he didn't know how to read and write, but that he had a call to teach. A teacher took the time to encourage and teach him. He was thanking us in the same way.

EXPERTISE. The “E” is for expertise. We've discovered that teacher training must occur on two levels. First, achieving expertise requires adequate orientation and training for basic competency. When we were designing the PROCEPA program twelve years ago, we designed it with two levels, Basic and Renovation. For the Basic level, we had to define the basic knowledge and skills our professors needed to be teachers. This specialized training focuses on the essential skill sets. The great majority of our Bible School teachers are pastors and leaders who volunteer to teach one class each

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week. They've graduated from Bible school. They may have some additional education. But most of them do not have the specialized training needed to be a teacher. The Basic level requires each teacher to take 10 two-hour workshops for certification.

The Renovation level requires that teachers take a minimum of six workshops every two years to maintain their certification. Continuing education is one of the pillars of the education profession. If we want to teach others, we ourselves have to continue learning. Thank you for helping us make a difference!

APPLICATION. The "A" is for application. Another secret of teacher training is to keep it as practical as possible. Building on their current knowledge and experience, we help teachers to hone their teaching skills. A few workshops cover larger issues and tend to be more theoretical. Most of the workshops breakdown teaching into practical areas like course and lesson planning, literary investigation, student evaluation and testing, teaching techniques, etc. Our goal is for them to be able to immediately apply what they've learned in their next class.

RECOGNITION. The "R" is for Recognition. Training needs to be good, but it also needs to matter. Even though personal enrichment is the noblest motivation, we've learned that organizational recognition is very important. When beginning PROCEPA, we reached out to our theological association that oversees the certification of teachers and schools to collaborate with them in a training program that would lead to certification with the association.

We created a blank certificate with 10 oval outlines in the shape of bowling pins. Upon completing a workshop or series of workshops, participants were rewarded with "golden stickers" to place on their certificate. Once they had 10 unique workshop stickers, they completed their basic level certification. The response was overwhelming. In the Latin American culture, certificates are very important and proudly displayed on office walls. We've since changed our system, but the gold-foil stickers are a fond memory.

PRAYER NEEDS & PRAISE REPORTS

- Praise the Lord for all who prayed and gave to finish and furnish the 10 guestrooms in the LARTC Phase 2 Building!
- Please pray for provision (offerings and teams) for continued work on the second floor of the housing building.
- Praise the Lord! The Action Bibles arrived in Panama in May. We're in the process of distributing them and will have updates this fall.
- Please pray for preparations and ministry of the Little Davey Team that will be providing 75 computers to Panama schools in September.
- Praise the Lord for continued growth in the Good Shepherd Schools in Panama... 36 schools with nearly 9,800 children and youth!
- Please pray for the more than 250 children who need a Childhope sponsor. If you can one of these, please visit: www.ChildHopeOnline.org.
- Please pray preparations for the CIECAD Christian School Congress in Managua, Nicaragua, Sept. 21-23. 500 have registered!

Recognition also includes categorizing teachers in the association according to their education and PROCEPA achievements. This recognition indicates to the teacher what they need to do to achieve the next level of membership.

TEAM BUILDING. The "T" is for Team Building. Good training helps teachers understand that they are a part of a larger whole. In our international events, we always remind teachers, directors and pastors that they are part of a family of like-minded teachers and leaders who together are making a difference throughout Latin America.

In September, we are expecting more than 500 teachers, directors and pastors to attend the 2017 CIECAD Congress in Managua, Nicaragua, an event directed to our Christian schools in Central America. Thanks to the steady interest earned on a large annuity left to Latin America ChildCare/ ChildHope by a generous person many years ago, most of the registration cost for those coming is paid. However, they still have to pay their travel and hotel during the Congress.

Eighteen months ago, we started working with the Central America leadership team to organize the event. Our subsidy and goal was for 400. The number of schools, students and teachers in each country determined the number of paid registrations. We challenged each country to try to bring one teacher, the director and the pastor from each of the 154 schools. Each country rose to the challenge. Panama went far beyond!

HEART RESULTS. God has blessed our teacher training efforts. In 2008, we conducted the first PROCEPA workshops as part of our Educator Summits that year with 485 enrolling in the PROCEPA program. At that time, we believed there were about 5,000 Bible school teachers in our schools in Spanish-speaking Latin America / Caribbean. What a daunting task! How could we possibly provide a program to 5,000 teachers in 20 countries? The Lord directed us to offer the PROCEPA workshops at national seminars or congresses. We've increase both our team and travel in the last five years, but with great results!

In the first half of this year alone, we have conducted national seminars in the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Guatemala, Argentina and Panama, providing training to more than 900 teachers, enrolling over 500 new teachers in PROCEPA! The photos included in this article are from these seminars. Our 5,000 estimate was wrong. There are actually more than 6,000 teachers in our Bible schools. How many more? We're not quite sure. Amazingly, we now have over 6,000 teachers enrolled in the PROCEPA program!

LARTC WILL HELP US DO MORE. And now, with the new LARTC facilities, we will be able to serve our key leaders and do so much more economically. We'll be able to train more teachers and provide more in-depth teaching by hosting the Latin America Advance School of Theology (BA fulfillment level) and the Latin America Theological Seminary (Masters level). Finally, we'll be able to develop and produce needed resources, putting tools in the hands of our teachers on the front lines.

THANK YOU! We're so grateful to the churches and individuals who have stood with us down through the years to raise up Christian leaders in Panama and throughout Latin America. What you do helps us to pass along training and skill to those who invest in the current and future generations of harvest workers. Thank you!



LARTC Construction Update

JUST COMPLETED. 10 spacious hotel-style guestrooms on the first floor of the Phase Two Housing Building!

STILL PENDING. Finish work and furnishing commercial kitchen/pantry, laundry and storage rooms.

WHAT'S NEXT. Back stairwell and roof must be finished before September 30th. Two teams - Grove Church (Marysville, WA) in October and Eastridge Christian Assembly (Issaquah, WA) in November - will be laying second floor block for an additional 12 guestrooms!

PHASE THREE ATRIUM CONSTRUCTION BEGINS IN 2018. So far, two teams confirmed for 2018 to work on the Phase Three Atrium construction, a 5,000 sq ft connector building between the 1st and 2nd buildings, to include reception, lobby and open area for meetings/meals, and features a mezzanine bridge that will connect the buildings 1 and 2 on the second floor.

BY THE END OF 2018, LARTC WILL BE FUNCTIONALLY COMPLETE! With the Phase Three Atrium complete, the LARTC will be able to fulfill its missions to equip leaders, train teachers and produce resources. Two future phases are planned that will increase the training and administration areas and provide staff housing.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS AND GIVING!

