



February 2016



This newsletter is dedicated to the El Salvador and Costa Rica Bible Schools that were recently held in December and January.

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El Salvador: Fellowship in the Cool Hills of the North

The end-of-year Bible School is always a joyous and spiritual weekend event for the Salvadoran ecclesias. This year we had a new venue: a rustic hotel in the cool hills of the northern part of the country. Creature comforts were excellent: small rooms with private bathrooms, and a restaurant with table service, enjoyable improvements over the dormitories and cafeterias of past years. The only downside was that the lodge is spread over a terraced hillside, meaning long climbs between the different facilities, a bit of a challenge for some of the seniors.



The 105 attendees included 13 visitors from the US, Mexico, Guatemala and Ecuador. Bro. Ed Binch spoke on "Life Lessons from Bible Characters." His presence was particularly appreciated because he lived many years in El Salvador and is much loved by everyone here. The young people had three sessions with Sis. Jean Hunter on "The birth of Jesus-the real story" and another on the ever-relevant topic of seeking a Godly life companion. There were 22 energetic participants in the class.



Singing in Hebrew, Sheep & Goats

For the children there were classes and crafts; and in the afternoons, organized games and sports for all, including swimming and Bible bingo (for the less sports minded). And lots of good fellowship. One of most highly-anticipated items on the agenda, the annual Bible quiz, was led by Bre. Manuel Fernandez and Jaime Mate. The audience, comprising all ages, is divided into "sheep" and "goats"; the competition is intense and emotions run high. It is

lovely to see the enthusiasm for Bible knowledge.



On Saturday evening the children and young people put on Bible skits and puppet shows, Jewish dancing and singing, with a 7-year-old girl giving a solo performance-in Hebrew!



Long Goodbyes

After the memorial meeting there was the Sunday-school prize-giving, then we packed up to bus it back down to San Salvador. There were doughnuts and fruit salad on hand at the ecclesial hall while everyone waited for their rides home, providing another couple of hours for conversation and long good-byes.

On alternating years El Salvador and Costa Rica send a group of brethren and sisters and young people to each other's Bible school. This year 13 Salvadorans travelled to Costa Rica over the New Year weekend, along with the six visitors from Campeche and Ecuador. And Bro. Ed, who also spoke at the Costa Rican school.

We thank God for the opportunity to share a taste of the Kingdom in the love and fellowship of the brethren and pray that this year will bring God's kingdom of peace and righteousness which we all so fervently desire.



Costa Rica: Coming Together from Afar



The Costa Rican year-end Bible School was held from Thursday, December 31st through Sunday, January 3rd, 2016. It was held at a beautiful campground complete with cabins and hot showers, a swimming pool, and a dining room where delicious food was provided promptly and efficiently. The Costa Ricans have used this location quite a few times, and it is an ideal place for a Bible School.

To travel to the Bible School, the brethren charter a tour bus. This makes the trip easy and enjoyable. We were blessed with the visits of brethren and sisters from several countries, including almost 20 from El Salvador, many of whom made the grueling 24-hour bus trip to be there, and others who flew, two from Ecuador, four from Mexico, two from the US, and two from Canada.

Musical and Dramatic Talents



The brethren and sisters always do a wonderful job of organizing the school, down to the last detail, and this year was no exception. During the school, we enjoyed a fascinating series of classes given by Brother Ed Binch from Indiana, who spoke on the parables of Jesus and brought out some very valuable lessons that apply to our walk in Christ. Brother David Collister led the brothers' class on the different duties in the ecclesia, and exhorted on the Beatitudes. We were also privileged to see many different musical and dramatic presentations including several by the chorus, a play about Jesus, a puppet-show about the life of Joseph, and several skits. They were all very well done. We also enjoyed a barbecue on New Years' Eve, and ended the evening just after midnight with a group prayer. It was a very moving experience, and a wonderful way to begin the new year.



Until We Meet Again

The end of the Bible School came too quickly, and we were soon on our way back to Santa Barbara, Heredia, where the ecclesial hall is located. However, most of us were able to get together several times over the next few days, including an outing to a beautiful recreational area complete with springs, waterfalls, a swimming pool, and picnic areas. All in all, the visit was very memorable and served to refresh us spiritually. Of course, it goes without saying that many contributed in many different ways to make the visit so valuable for all, and we especially would like to highlight the wonderful job of organization by those who planned this event. We pray that God continues to bless the efforts of the Costa Rican ecclesia, as well as all of those who were able to visit, as we await the return of His Son.





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