

# Latin American Baptist Missions

## *The Legacy Continues*

Supported through the work of Trinity Baptist Temple

### A Legacy

Trinity Baptist Temple (TBT) is honored to be the stewards of Latin American Baptist Missions (LABM). TBT sees it as a great purpose to continue on the legacy that was started over 40 years ago. It is through this legacy that tens of thousands have been saved and even more have been taught and ministered to. LABM spreads the gospel and preaches to the Spanish speaking people of Latin America. Over 16 cities and villages are served in Mexico as a result of this ministry.

### How it all began

**As written by Ernest C. Atchley, Sr., Founder, Latin American Baptist Missions**

It was January 8th, 1967. My wife and I, and our two daughters (Margaret 13 and Rebecca 10), had almost crossed the Barrancas in Western Mexico. It was night. We could look down and see the lights of Guadalajara from the plateau where we were parked with our 16-foot travel trailer and 1966 Chevrolet pick-up.

On that night, January 8, 1967, Latin American Baptist Missions was born. I had only one thing in mind – to reach those who had never been reached with the Gospel of Grace.

The next day, January 9th, we saw the city limit sign loom up before us – Guadalajara – our destination – what a relief! We got settled in an apartment, and enrolled the girls in school. The girls joined “Saints Anonymous” with Kay Arthur as their teacher. I enrolled in language school and attended for two months, at which time I came down with viral pneumonia and pleurisy. After recuperating, instead of going back to language school, I began working with a veteran missionary by the name of Byron C. Hunter. We worked out in the villages. At first I did little more than distribute Scriptures; but little by little, I learned the language well enough to preach in Spanish. With this ability I linked up with “Cruzada Mexicana en Cada Hogar” and we evangelized 495 villages in the state of Nayarit. Our aim and purpose was always to make sure that every home in each village was exposed to the Gospel. After our time in Nayarit, I determined to use the same method, “Gospel to every home,” in our state of Jalisco. Using maps secured from the Chamber of Commerce, we divided the state of Jalisco in sections and selected a section that contained 18,000 villages: ~ it was a big order. I knew I would need lots of help, and the helpers would have to be trained in the work of getting the Gospel to every home. So I started a Bible School and enrolled more than a hundred students. The building of the Bible School is a long story by itself, but we trusted the Lord for every dollar, until the building was completed. During that period I borrowed some workers from Brother Hunter, and went out nearly every day into the surrounding villages, doing what I had learned from the Cruzada: ~ Evangelizing! I had learned to win souls, simply by using the Word of God, and I was amazed at the many responses.

We began using crews of workers, going to several different villages in the same day, and I was more and more fascinated at the results.

But the workers were neglecting their families in order to go soul-winning, so I began to write back to the American churches, asking for support for these native workers. The support came, and that problem was solved.

But, no sooner was that problem solved than another one sprung up: ~ we had evangelized all of the surrounding villages: ~ some problem! We needed transportation to reach out farther. The truck I had would haul only one crew at a time. The other crews needed transportation also, so I wrote back and told about the problem. It wasn't long until Brother Bill Beeny in St. Louis had an International Scout waiting for us. We named it the “Spirit of St. Louis.” With it we could send out two crews at once. A little later, money came in for another vehicle, which we bought in Guadalajara; and then a third vehicle which we also bought in Guadalajara. The fourth vehicle was a four-wheel-drive Jeep, which we could use to go into villages where an ordinary vehicle couldn't go.

Then a friend of ours asked us if we'd like to use Gospel films in our ministry. We would, and we did. To use the films, it was required that we send in a monthly report of the date, place, attendance, and professions of Faith. We began this "nose count" in 1978, and I kept a copy of all the reports. During the next seven years, we had evangelized 551 villages, house to house, and had more than 50,000 professions of faith in Christ for Salvation.

For more than twelve years out of the eighteen, we lived in the village of La Puerta de la Vega. It was there we built the Bible School, a mission house, a baby clinic, and office building. We had no electricity for a while, water only from a shallow well, and no bathroom facilities. But we set to work and provided all of these facilities as quickly as we could ~ even to butane gas and hot water heaters. We also carried food, clothing, and gifts, from the United States to the field, for the needy and for the workers.

Annie, my wife, had her work cut out for her. We had church and Sunday School in the Bible School, and Annie did what she could with the children until we had trained some of the natives to take over. Annie also took care of the sick, many of whom were babies, so we had cribs in the baby clinic. Many times she had to carry patients to the hospital in Ameca, about ten miles west. We became very good friends with a woman doctor in Ameca, La Doctora Maria Elena Rodriguez, who helped us exceedingly with our patients. Once we had Typhoid to break out in the village. Another time, a half dozen got hold of poisoned masa (used for tortillas), and had to be rushed to the hospital. Then there were poisonous varmints such as alacranes and quichis, which sent many others to the hospital.

I also had been having many problems with my health. So, in 1985, at the age of 67, I came home to die. I was in such pain that I didn't see how I could live much longer. But God saw to it that I would not only NOT die, but that I would mend fairly well so that I could keep on living. My star helper on the field was Raymundo Chavez. He has been doing my work ever since 1985. He's doing a fantastic job. I have visited him a number of times. He sends me a report every month. He is supported by several churches and individuals (including myself). We keep him supplied with whatever he needs. Fourteen months ago, we had raised the money to buy him another vehicle, which he's proud of.

In 2007, I decided that the mission work needed a younger person in charge so I contacted Bro. James (Woody) Godbey, Pastor of Trinity Baptist Temple in Ft. Worth, Texas. Bro. Woody agreed to take over the mission. I transferred all the funds and mailing lists to Bro. Woody and I am proud to say the mission is living on.

Now I'm 91 years old. My wife has passed away. The only reason I can see for God keeping me around is for me to write my books and provide whatever support I can to the mission and my family. Otherwise I would be no longer needed in the world, and I am more than willing to go to my "long home."

But I reasoned thusly: - "if God is going to grant me some more time; if He may be able to use this old decrepit, broken-down, worn-out body, then I had better redeem the time I have left. So I will do my best to seek His leading from day to day, one day at a time, one step at a time, from one heart-beat to the next. I must see the extra time as a gift, directly from Him, and use it accordingly.

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**Thank you for your generous support!**



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