

Rio Grande

MAGAZINE

ISSUE 54 FALL 2023



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**WORLD
MISSIONS
UNLIMITED**

OUR STUDENTS
MINISTERED
IN MANY LANDS
LAST SUMMER



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14

FALL 2023

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TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS PUBLICATION:

Rio Grande Bible Ministries or Rio Grande = organizational name
Seminario Bíblico Río Grande or SBRG = Bible College
MLS = Missionary Language School (1955-2017)
ICS = InterCultural Studies (2017-)
Year = Graduated or last attended

on the cover Our Bible College students fanned out all over the world this summer, from Uruguay to India; from the Philippines to Costa Rica, and several other countries. Building on their classroom learning and service at local churches and other venues, these mission experiences are a valuable part of their training for future service.

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PURPOSE To make God's people aware of the needs of the Hispanic World and the role that Rio Grande Bible Institute serves to provide godly Christian leadership.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

"NOW, I'M GOING TO DIVIDE YOU RIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE."

The young worship leader gave this opening threat with a karate-like gesture that suggested the edge of the hand crunching skulls, scattering vertebrae, spreading clavicles and scapula, while saving the lower bones for later destruction.

"All of those on this side of the karate line who have red hair will start in the middle of the first line. Those whose mother's maiden name comes between A and M will sing alternate notes, starting with the second bar in the last line." On and on he proceeded with his instructions, finally ending with, "Have you got that [stunned silence]? Don't worry, you'll catch on [stony, stunned silence]!"

Ready? Watch me! Go! There is now a merciful hiatus in the commentary for the next few minutes as the leader gasps his way to partial recovery of power of speech before turning loose the flood of complimentary remarks. "Now wasn't that great [general climate of perplexed doubt]?"

Somehow, between the classroom education with its cerebral planning, and the actual implementation of those studied plans, there is often



the hard crunch and splintering reality of real-world application. A vital component of our educational program in the Bible College is the practical ministry. Each student is assigned to practical ministry each week to give the real-world application to the theoretical learning from the classroom. Our desire is that every student who studies in our classrooms will also receive the practical application to put their education into shoe leather.

Come with me through this issue of the *Rio Grande Magazine* and read about some of the practical ministry opportunities of our students!



Lawrence B. Winkle

▲
A VITAL COMPONENT OF OUR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM IN THE BIBLE COLLEGE IS THE PRACTICAL MINISTRY.



MULTIPLE ROUTES

to MINISTRY



Our students look to God for guidance down the some-times winding road to service.



*By Luca Piovano
Rio Grande Grad, May 2023*



While on the road to becoming Christ-centered leaders with a biblical worldview,

Rio Grande students must understand that learning God's Word cannot be separated from our Lord's Great Commission—to make disciples of all nations. As one of our professors quotes in his classes, "Correct orthodoxy is accompanied by correct orthopraxy."

For this reason, students at Seminario Biblico Rio Grande are involved in different types of ministries in the Rio Grande Valley and farther afield. This incredible program involves not only the Practical Ministry staff, but also those in the Missions office, a number of local churches, as well as local and international mission organizations.

One of the opportunities students have participated in for the past two years is among the crowds of migrants camping at our nearby border with Mexico. Students have been participating in an evangelism and discipleship ministry in these Latin American immigrant camps in order to win them to Christ and build them up in their faith. God has also led the students to form a health care ministry among the immigrants, utilizing the professions of qualified students. Also, during this fall semester, a group of students will begin a work among the children and families in the camps, in order to disciple them from a young age.

Another example of the variety of ministries our students are experiencing is the outreach to large communities of immigrant Muslims in the city of San Antonio, just a few hours from Edinburg. These communities consist mostly of exiles from the recent wars in the Middle East. In order to share Christ with them, students must prepare themselves in evangelism as well as a knowledge of their languages and cultures.

Our students also impact the local community through various types of ministries in local churches, which include preaching, teaching, evangelism, local missions, and church planting. They also challenge the local church leaders to develop leaders within the churches who can carry the responsibility of ministry when the students are no longer there. It is beautiful to see how God builds and grows church plants in the Valley through faithful and responsible student ministry.

The Lord has also been working greatly in recent years during the Easter and Thanksgiving holidays, when all the students get involved among the unreached in different parts of the world. Classes are cancelled for an entire week, so that student teams can travel to different areas, mainly to various parts of Latin America. There they can apply what they have learned and bless local churches and missions that are working among the lost. Upon returning to the campus, the teams have the opportunity to share their experiences in chapel services and to be blessed by reflecting upon what God has done in each location.

Understanding that the Great Commission has no boundaries, students can expand their impact by going on summer mission trips to locations such as Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa. To prepare, they are trained and mentored for an entire school year, so that the impact during those months is significant and so that they can venture into the challenges of cross-cultural missions.

Undoubtedly, God is using Seminario Biblico Rio Grande to raise up a generation of future servants passionate about God and His mission to form a people for Himself from every tribe, tongue and nation, who are willing to serve God in all parts of the world, for the edification of the global church.

CULTIVATING CHARACTER FOR MINISTRY

*Elijah Windle, Grad of 2012
Director of Practical Ministries*



Students and local believers arrive at a church in a remote village on Palawan Island, Philippines.

TO MY QUESTION, “WHAT DO YOU FEEL CALLED TO DO AFTER YOU GRADUATE?” JHOJAN RESPONDED, “I’M NOT SURE. I THINK I’D LIKE TO BE A MISSIONARY BUT I DON’T KNOW WHERE, OR IF, I CAN BE.”

I ask this question of each of our students, especially as they are preparing for their summer internship before their senior year. Jhojan is a missions major and was trying to discern the specifics of God’s calling and to prepare for his future ministry. Last summer, we decided Jhojan would complete his internship with an experienced missionary couple in Southeast Asia. When he returned, he was noticeably changed. He came to my office and clearly stated, “God wants me to be a missionary, and I want to go back to that country. What do I do next?”

Academic excellence, while a great feature of the Bible College experience, does not necessarily make effective servants of Christ. Students must be guided into confronting the realities of ministering in this broken world, developing the skills to deal with those realities, and building faithful and godly habits that will carry them through those realities into a fruitful ministry. As we develop missionaries, pastors, church-planters, and Christian educators, we actively equip our students to minister to people with faithfulness and character.

This conviction is not new or novel. God gave his qualifications for overseers through Paul in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. In these leadership requirements, he specifies character, experience, and reputation rather than simply correct doctrine. Human institutions seek certifications and degrees while God demands faithful servants of character.

Our students consistently and conscientiously put the biblical, theological, and ministerial knowledge from the classroom into practice by serving every week in local churches, church plants, and

a variety of other local ministries. However, this weekly ministry does not provide the needed intensity and depth for developing healthy habits that help them survive and thrive in fulltime ministry.

Researchers state that with appropriate rules, incentives, and supervision, a person can develop effective habits in about two months. Since our summer internship program is designed to develop godly habits of character building and faithfulness, it includes at least eight weeks of guided and supervised full-time ministry before their final year of studies.

The internship process begins with an interview, like the one I had with Jhojan, to determine which internship fits with the student’s chosen major and the ministry he or she intends to enter after graduation. Pastoral majors will serve in a local church; church planters will serve in a church plant or at a church starting a new ministry; Christian educators will serve in local churches or Christian schools; and missions majors will serve overseas, preferably with an established mission. Following the interview, each student is guided through preparations with someone from the ministry where they will serve. The student is given the tools for ensuring consistent Bible study, prayer, and personal evaluation, and is expected to serve full-time for at least eight weeks.

The internships not only help develop skills and habits, but also refine the students’ calling, and define their final year of classes at Rio Grande, with some students bridging into a yearlong practicum after graduation. Jhojan, like so many others, discovered on the field that God didn’t make a mistake by giving him a passion for missions.



▲
FROM TOP TO BOTTOM
Rio Grande student Daiby (from Bolivia) and students from Ethnos Bible school with the children. Our students, Daiby and Christian (from Ecuador), hike to another remote village with Ethnos students. This village elder (with Daiby) prayed for more helpers for his church, and God answered!

God confirmed his calling, refined his vision, and renewed his passion and confidence. Today, Jhojan is preparing to go full-time as a missionary after graduation.

Every summer, students in our internship program serve in the United States, Latin America, and with missionaries across the globe. As a result, God is reaching the lost, strengthening the church, developing leaders, teaching habits of faithful and godly ministry, and setting the course of future ministry for our senior students. Each summer, like Jhojan, they are confronted with the reality of the world, the ministry, and God’s calling. As each summer ends, I am always reminded of God’s faithfulness in calling, equipping, and refining our students through their internship experiences.



MISSIONS TARGET:

URUGUAY

Vladimir Kalabujov, Current Student

**Uruguay, also known as the
"Switzerland of the Americas"
because of its political
and economic stability, is
one of the smallest countries
in South America.**

It has only 3.5 million inhabitants in an area of approximately 69,000 square miles. It is bordered by Argentina to the west, Brazil to the northeast, and the Atlantic Ocean to the southeast. Many of its inhabitants are European immigrants, mostly Spaniards and Italians, who enjoy its many similarities with the European continent. It is also one of the most liberal countries in the region, with religion greatly influenced by agnosticism.

This summer, Rio Grande Global, the missionary branch of Seminario Bíblico Rio Grande, sent a team of five students to serve in Uruguay—and to visit Argentina—for twelve weeks during the months of May, June, and July. The team consisted of Carlos Gil (from Mexico), María José Morales (Mexico), Steven Verdesoto (Ecuador), Ana Yaruro (Colombia) and Javiera Isamit (Chile).

The main purpose of this trip was to connect with evangelical churches in Uruguay. The team wanted to encourage the believers, because of their close cultural ties with Europe and the Middle East, to recognize these areas as mission fields with people who need the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For this reason, during the visits to the churches, the team focused on sharing the need to send out believers who are willing to take the Word of God to the hundreds of thousands who are on their way to an eternity without Christ.

However, it is a sad reality that the similarities the Uruguayans have with these other areas of the world also include the need for people in their own homeland to know Christ as Savior. In spite of the country's Catholic background, which is merely nominal, new ideologies that have affected the European continent are also drastically affecting the extension of the Gospel in Uruguay. The Rio Grande team witnessed that Uruguayans are not as open to the truth, nor is there as much freedom to preach the Gospel, as is the case in some of their neighboring countries.

That is why the Uruguayan church is very focused on reaching its own, especially the new generations who will be the ones to make a

difference in the future. Rio Grande Global's team was able to share and collaborate with the established ministry to children in some of the local churches. Many churches there have what is called "Bible School for Children." This takes place weekly, when the children have a time of approximately two hours of games, worship, and Bible classes with a teacher prepared for the task. It is a ministry that for decades has reached children with the Gospel, and through them, their families. Many of these former children are now missionaries or church leaders, men and women of faith who came to know Christ thanks to this ministry.

The team enjoyed participating in another program, called "Happy Hour," that is held in various locations. This program, similar to the Bible School but usually taking place outdoors, is having a very effective outreach in different areas of the country.

Rio Grande's students were also able to share the Word of God in meetings of men, women, teenagers, and youth, in homes for the elderly, and in the main services of churches. According to the team, the churches in Uruguay are intentionally focused on searching the Scriptures, and this has led to a radical and noticeable change in believers' lives.

Carlos Gil, team leader, shared his impressions of what he witnessed in Uruguay as follows: "The work of spreading the Gospel requires commitment, sacrifice, and above all, love. Each field is different: some workers are just preparing, others are sowing the seed, yet others are watering, and some are already harvesting. It is admirable to see all the work involved in sharing the Gospel, and for the person who knows Jesus, it is worth it."

The churches in Uruguay have the potential and the vision to send prepared people with ministerial experience to the mission field. But they need to expand their vision to include the reality of the lost around the globe.



The team focused on sharing the need to send out believers who are willing to take the Word of God to the hundreds of thousands who are on their way to an eternity without Christ.



**MAINTENANCE
PERSONNEL
NEEDED**

Who can help us fix a leaky faucet?

The school is looking for a fulltime maintenance man on campus. Responsibilities would include, but not be limited to, mowing, building repair, plumbing, and vehicle maintenance. Staff members do not receive a wage from the school, so any person interested would need to seek people ready to provide monthly support.

**Please contact Rio Grande at
956.380.8100.**



BECOMING AMBASSADORS of JESUS

*Cesar Garduño
Grad of 2022, Missions Committee*

In the Missions Department at Seminario Biblico Rio Grande, we seek to use the best means to achieve our main goals, which are the following: 1) to mobilize students to become involved in mission work, 2) to encourage the participation of local church members where our students do their practical ministries, 3) to assist students to experience cross-cultural ministries as part of a summer mission team, 4) to generate training opportunities before they go on a mission trip, and 5) to provide counselors to help them in their spiritual preparation for these trips.

Before they go out for the summer, we hope to accomplish the following in the students' lives: dependence on God, growth in their faith, and witnessing how God cares for their needs. During the nine months of training and formation, they can see how He not only provides their finances, but also guides them to a particular location or people group.

While they are part of a mission team, we hope that our students will be able to "strip themselves of themselves." That is, that they will be able to learn from other cultures in order to communicate cross-culturally, that they will have another perspective on the non-western world; but, at the same time, that their lives will speak of our Lord Jesus Christ and his message of salvation.

There is much to learn while on these trips, but the students also have much to contribute. They can share what they have already learned at Rio

Grande, then go on to train others. They have opportunities to teach, to do discipleship, and to collaborate in multicultural teams or in local churches. They are motivated to use their gifts and talents that God has given them to share the Gospel.

The students have realized the importance of mobilizing and sending missionary teams to other places. They have witnessed that, in many areas, they do not know Jesus Christ our Savior, or even His name. Many students have confirmed their calling while on these trips. God has shown them their strengths and weaknesses for their future ministry. He has used these opportunities to lead them to take new steps of faith, and to have

of idolatry or persecution. They realize that there is a great need for workers who will share God's Word with those who need to know our God and Savior, and they become more sensitive to the way people live in other areas.

At the end of the mission trips we witness the results that God accomplishes through our students. They recognize the privilege of being His ambassadors, being used by Him in His work. As they confirm His call, they can return with more passion to fulfill the Great Commission. They share their transformed and impacted lives, transmitting what they have learned and experienced to their companions,

God has shown them their strengths and weaknesses for their future ministry.

greater intimacy with Him. They have realized that God wants to use Latinos in His work in many parts of the world. They have gained a real love for the people where they have gone, and many desire to return for long term ministries.

This opportunity is very important because they have seen God's faithfulness, His love, and mercy for those who live in those distant lands, and they see answers to their prayers. The spiritual life of the students is transformed by living and spending time with the local church in places

families, and churches. Their enthusiasm inspires others to grow in their faith and motivates them to reach out as well. The individuals and churches who have supported the students continue to pray and give as part of future mission trips. We are very thankful to God for all He is doing through the students, their churches, our staff, and other prayer warriors. Let us continue to go and make disciples of all nations, and He will be with us always, as He said in Matthew 28:19-20. May Christ be glorified!

APRIL 1, 2023 - JULY 31, 2023

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Mr. & Mrs. Glen Guhde
Mr. & Mrs. Burl Penny
Helen Robinson
Mr. & Mrs. James Van Mark

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Mr. & Mrs. Robert Boley
Mr. & Mrs. James Van Mark

JOHN (JACK) ANDERSON, JR.

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John Taylor

HE WILL SWALLOW UP DEATH FOREVER!
THE SOVEREIGN LORD WILL WIPE AWAY ALL TEARS.

ISAIAH 25:8, NLT

RIO GRANDE BIBLE MINISTRIES
CAMPUS NEWS



◀
NEW STUDENTS

We have 20 new students this fall in the Bible College and 4 in the ICS (IntraCultural Studies/Spanish language school). They come from eight different countries. Please be praying for their adjustments to the school schedule and their teachers, and that they would be well prepared for God's service by their classes here.



▲
MEDICAL CLINIC

RGBM is pleased to open the medical clinic again on campus. Former doctors serving here were Doctors Steve Havener and Matt Johnson and Tony Lim. Former nurses included Joyce Good, Fran Nicol, and Linda Root. Our new doctor is Dr. Daniel Kohl, who will be offering medical care for students and staff at the school. We thank God for this addition to our campus!

PERSONNEL UPDATE RGBM has had some recent changes to our staff. We have received resignations from Mary Cano who worked in the library and from Louis Tyler, who was a teacher. We thank them for their years of service here. We also welcome new teachers Irian Hernandez (English), Brian Nacy (spiritual life and Bible classes) and Gregory Fink (Greek classes).

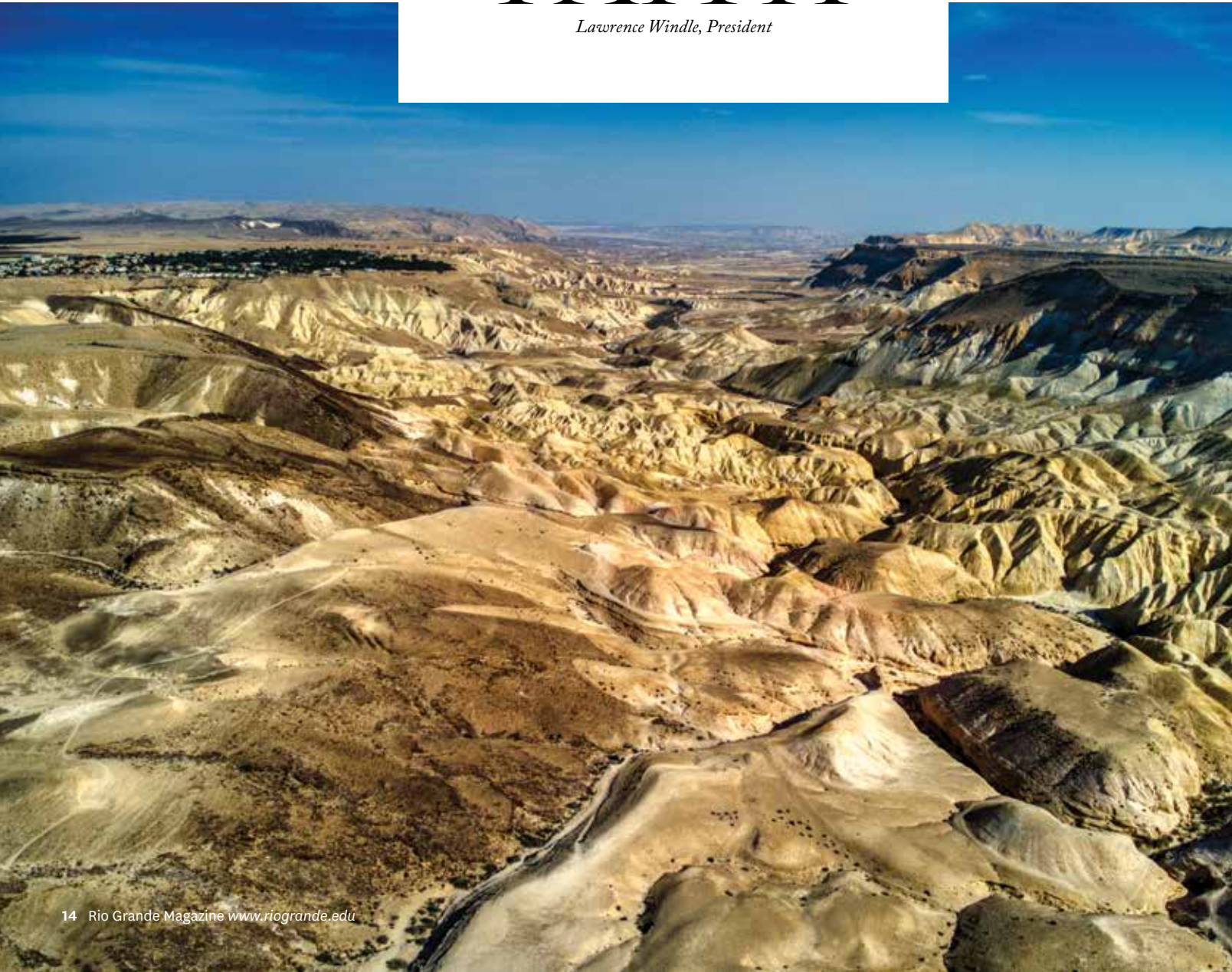
**PHILLIP BLYCKER
MEMORIAL** ▶

A memorial service for music professor Phillip Blycker was held recently on campus. Mr. Blycker was a beloved music professor here from 2003 -2019. We thank the Lord for his years of service here.



THE BIBLE *and* FAITH

Lawrence Windle, President



“STUNNINGLY PURE, ETHEREAL MAGIC SET IN A STARKLY BEAUTIFUL SETTING.” THE JAGGED HILLS, MOUNDS OF WATER-CARVED EARTH, AND ROCK FORMATIONS ARE INDEED NOTABLE.

The unique crater-like landforms, “Makhteshim,” are found only here. This place is called the “Negev”—Hebrew for “dry land.” Imagine the Israelites winding their way through this endless desolation day after day, herding their sheep and goats, dragging their tents and housewares through the deeply eroded washouts and scabrock hills in the blazing, dusty, merciless heat of the Middle Eastern sun.

The greatest nightmare for many was the marauders who waited, watching like hyenas. Any laggards, any tired and unsuspecting victims would be swiftly pounced upon and plundered. Listen to the graphic King James language of Deuteronomy 25, ¹⁷ Remember what Amalek did to you on the way ... ¹⁸ how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary;...”

Exodus 17 recounts, ⁴⁹ And Moses said to Joshua, “Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.” ¹⁰ So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of

the hill. ¹¹ And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. ¹² But Moses' hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.”

Simply note the wording of the final phrase of verse 12. The Biblical Hebrew word for *steady* means “reliable, trustworthy, dependable, steady.”⁷¹ This remarkable word is also translated various times as “faith,” including in Habakkuk 2:4: “The just shall live by *faith*.” This word does not mean, “believes really hard,” but rather “The person of justice lives in steadfast reliability.”⁷² It is a pattern of Spirit-controlled living rather than a mental exercise of believing strongly.

Hebrews 10:38-39 translates this Habakkuk passage into Greek instead of Hebrew. Notice the impact this has in our understanding of the passage, ³⁸ Now the just shall live by faith (*steadfast reliability*); But if anyone draws back [i.e. is not steadfastly reliable], My soul has no pleasure in him. ³⁹ But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe (are steadfastly reliable).”

This perspective sheds light on the next verse, Hebrews 11:1, “Now faith (steadfast reliability) is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” The rest of the chapter then gives dramatic examples of just people who lived in steadfast reliability before God. ⁱⁱⁱ

God gave special instructions to every new king of Israel in Deuteronomy 17, ¹⁸ Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book... ¹⁹ And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes.” Each king had to write out the Torah and consult it daily so that he could walk steadfastly before God. Paul notes, in the famous passage of salvation by grace through faith in Romans chapter 10, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”^{iv}

We live in a world that is lost and condemned. People don't know the truth, and they don't live in steadfast obedience to God's standard. They lack the understanding of the truth, the transformation of regeneration, and the obedience of faith. ⁴⁹ ... that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation....¹³ For whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. ¹⁴ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ ...As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,...” ¹⁷ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

**IMAGINE
THE ISRAELITES
WINDING THEIR WAY
THROUGH THIS
ENDLESS DESOLATION
DAY AFTER DAY.**



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The Latin American church is no longer just a mission field, but is becoming a mission force. The experiences that our students have during their summer mission trips have the potential to help further mobilize the Latin American church.

BY GIVING TO RIO GRANDE, YOU CAN BE A HUGE PART OF THIS EVANGELISM EFFORT.



► FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT BOB ALLEN, VP, MINISTERIAL ADVANCEMENT, 956-380-8125, [BALLEN@RIOGRANDE.EDU](mailto:balLEN@RIOGRANDE.EDU)