

Central Spain provides setting for greater TBM Euro conference

By Frank W.R. Benoit, TBM Spain Field Supervisor

For the first time in over six years, the TBM missionaries in all of Europe were able to get together and also meet our new Executive director, Ron Thompson, and his wife, Wanda.

TBM Missionary Coordinator Vince Tharp was also along on the trip with them as they visited the north Spain TBM works in Logroño, Pamplona and Tafalla before the retreat, and the south TBM work in Puebla del Río, near Seville, afterwards.

The retreat was held at a lovely Christian camp/retreat center near Ciudad Real, in central Spain and we were 27 people in all. The five TBM Spain families were all represented (Manuel Martínez, John David Bennett, Dan and Lisa Leatherwood, Luke and Jodi Veldt, and Frank and Salud Benoit) and the TBM Russia family, Alex and Svetya Danilenka were also there, as well as most of the children from the TBM families. We also had 2 children/youth workers who helped out tremendously: Rebecca Orozco, of Chicago, IL,

and Rebecca Nichols of Kansas City, KS.

Apart from some very good times of fellowship, prayer, conversations, games, wonderful food, and a visit to a nearby castle, we had a chance to hear from Ron Thompson about the “Biblical Resolve and Resilience” needed



TBM missionaries gather for the greater Euro Conference.

for ministry and an update from Vince Tharp about the Home Office, all the TBM fields, and the final details about the move of TBM’s Home Office to LaGrange, WY. Ron also shared his goal

of having some vision projects in Europe in 2010 and seeing TBM grow to have 2-3 new missionaries in Europe by then.

By faith we hope to organize another TBM All-Europe retreat in 2 years and then every 2 years after that. We all agreed that it is necessary to keep our TBM family ties strong and healthy, as well as to get away from our ministries, share with each other, renew our perspective and hear about what else is going on with TBM around the world. May God help us to serve Him faithfully here in Europe and see more Europeans come to place their faith in Christ!

“We all agreed that it is necessary to keep our TBM family ties strong and healthy...”

A delayed harvest

By Franc Ortega, TBM Missionary, McAllen, Texas
(Reprinted by permission from Rio Grande Magazine)

“I can’t take this anymore, God. Hear me out now—I am not coming here next Sunday!” God listened to this cry from me week after

Somehow we survived that time until we were called elsewhere.

I thank God that He has developed me spiritually and deepened my character in the 25 years since then. The training received at Rio Grande Bible Institute (RGI), coupled with the years of pastoral experience have contributed to that growth. Mary and I were married and blessed with a family of three daughters. We have had a successful ministry in McAllen, Texas, at Maranatha Christian Bible Church. We are still learning of His patient love and mercy through experience and are acquiring more of His characteristics through His grace. But that learning is sometimes extremely humbling, as shown in two recent occurrences.

Several weeks ago, I received a phone call and a genuinely grateful voice said, “I called to let you know how much I appreciate your sharing the gospel with me and my mother 25 years ago!”

It was Israel Cadeña, one of the “terrible” threesome from Reynosa. Once I had



Franc looks on as Hugo Hernandez shares the difference Jesus has made in his life.

week and, as far as I could discern, ignored it. For almost three years my fiancée, Mary, and I had toiled under the blistering sun and horribly humid weather of Reynosa, Mexico, trying to minister to people whose “ordinary” lives dealt with alcohol, extreme poverty, drugs, and verbal and physical abuse. To say it was extremely depressing to me is the proverbial understatement!

Mary, on the other hand, was always energized. She kept “going and going” while I embarrassingly told God I couldn’t take it any more. Of course, He never let me off the hook in spite of the frustration from such individuals as the “terrible trio”—Israel, Hugo, and Juan Carlos. These three 13- or 14-year-old friends were part of the group with which we were ministering.



Adults and children happily display their new tooth brushes.

recovered from the shock and amazement, I thanked him for his kind words and asked about his life. He said that several years earlier he had crossed the border illegally and

“I am not coming here next Sunday! God listened to this cry from me week after week and, as far as I could discern, ignored it.”

—Franc Ortega



About 45 Maranatha members share gifts, food and the Gospel in Mexico mission.

gone to Houston. There the Lord touched him; he got right with God and legal with the US government. Since then the Lord had used him to begin three Spanish-speaking churches!

As he spoke, how vividly I remembered my complaining to the Lord about the seemingly fruitless sowing of the gospel seed! Yet here was a spiritually mature young man thanking me for being a “faithful man of God.” Tears flooded my eyes as I asked God to forgive my rebellious heart and negative attitude toward His will for me more than two decades ago.

Later I called Juan Carlos, the only one of the three who is part of our current church. He also had strayed from God’s will about four years before and landed in jail. His wife and three small children were full of fear and had many needs without the man of the house to help them. Several of our church men had joined together to assist the family until Juan Carlos paid his debt to society. He was released a different man. As we talked that Saturday night, he expressed how very thankful he was that we had shared Christ with him while he was a youngster. But he had more to tell me.

The third boy, Hugo, had come back to God after his brother’s drug-related suicide. Hugo had become a powerful evangelist who preaches all over Mexico and at times in the United States.

“Franc,” said Juan Carlos, “you will be surprised in heaven to see the number of people you’ve touched for the Lord on earth.” Those were marvelous words to my ears, but what stood out in my memory was how, in spite of my grumbling to the Lord, He still performed great wonders through unworthy and ungrateful vessels.

Are you disheartened in your ministry? Keep praying. Keep working without grumbling or complaining.

You might be touching the life of a Juan Carlos, an Israel, or a Hugo, who will in turn reach thousands more for Christ.

Actually, sometimes the “delayed harvests” are the most satisfying! Since Franc’s 1986 graduation from RGBI and his marriage to Mary, also a graduate of RGBI, they have had additional missions training at Columbia International University in South Carolina. For around 20 years they have devoted their lives to serving God through the pastoral ministry at Iglesia Bíblica Cristiana Maranatha, McAllen, Texas. In fact, when asked about his “interests,” Franc says, “faith and family.” A pretty good summation of his active, joyful life.



Hugo and Franc meet again after more than 20 years.



“I had crossed the border illegally and gone to Houston. There the Lord touched me; I got right with God and legal with the US government.”

—Israel Cadeña

Utah Field Council Update

By Delwin Fowler, TBM Peru

Our time in the Utah Field Council Conference was a great blessing. Not only was it neat to meet several TBM missionaries we had never before seen but also it was encouraging to find that we



The Fowler Family: Delwin, Teachy, Marcos, Sarah and Lucas

aren't alone in how we feel in the ministry.

Fellowship with other missionaries and our TBM board members is always so enlightening. Added to this is the striking similarity of the Utah field and our ministry in Tarapoto, Peru. People are entrenched in a cultural religion with many traditional customs. So much so that people in general are more concerned about what the religious leaders say than what the Bible actually says.

We found, that in the midst of all this religion, that the people on both fields are controlled by materialism. Furthermore, in both cases, the cultural religion is promoted as family friendly, when

in reality there is little knowledge or awareness of the biblical pattern of marriage and the family.

Again, the great need for prayer is obvious. Please pray for people who are religious but lost, for those stooped in the lies of Satan. Pray for strength and wisdom for our TBM missionaries working in these areas. Our job is to dispel the many misconceptions of a work-based salvation while faithfully preaching the whole council of God.

Thank you for joining us in the trenches.

“...it was encouraging to find that we aren't alone in how we feel in the ministry.”

—Delwin Fowler

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Acts 18:3-4

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Ronald Thompson, Executive Director

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