

Dear Family and Friends,

It is our sincere prayer that you are well. We are happy to send out another newsletter on the work in which we are involved here in Guatemala.

Time has gotten away from us quickly, so we apologize for the delay in our report. Because of the time that has transpired and to keep the newsletter from getting too long, we will only include a few details from the end of last year and the beginning of this year.

## End-of-Year/Beginning-of-Year Summary

During the end of last year and the beginning of this year, because Byron and Snezana had two additions to their family and did not travel, Hawatthia traveled to visit our supporting congregations by himself. Additionally, he also traveled to the Euro-American Family Retreat in Rothenburg o.b. T., Germany, to teach the teens. He was blessed to have the help of **Henry** and **Candace Shelton** and **Joey Booker**, our nephew. Hawatthia also made a special trip back to Guatemala to spend the Christmas holiday with the Benitez family. It was the first time in 19 years that Hawatthia and Byron were in Guatemala for this holiday.

While in Guatemala at the end of the year, Byron did not seek many additional opportunities to speak or teach aside from those he already had. He continued teaching the New Christians' class at Linda Vista, while Hi was traveling. He also served as part of the regular preacher rotation. In December he spoke at the Zone 8 congregation for a special activity. And in February of 2019, he traveled with Hawatthia to the Freed-Hardeman University (FHU) Lectures, where this year they both had the privilege of speaking. In addition, Hawatthia had the opportunity in March to be one of the speakers at the 2019 Faulkner University Lectureship in Montgomery, Alabama. From Alabama Hi traveled to Indianapolis to prepare brochures and other items for our 2019 ITL Lectureship. From Indy he traveled to Bethpage, TN (about 1 hour NE of Nashville) to meet for the first time with a congregation that is interested in the Guatemala work. Though a little bit tiring, Hi enjoyed his travels. It appears that lately any trip for him to the US turns into a multi-stop adventure. ☺

## The Adoption Adjustment Period

**Jose** and **Alex** came into the Benitez home on Friday, October 12, 2018. The first few weeks of the adoption were the most difficult. We had anticipated this, but it is not really possible to totally prepare for it. The



adjustments that the boys had to make in their new home, with their new parents, with new food, new beds—new everything—is difficult to express in words! The adjustments that we had to make to these two new souls, with their own personalities, their own preferences, and their own strengths and weaknesses, were tremendous, aside from the change in our established routines! This, in part, explains the delay in getting this newsletter out! ☺ Despite the major changes we have made, we are so grateful for these two little blessings God added to our family. Hawatthia is also enjoying these two little boys who absolutely love their uncle!

Our family is getting adjusted and we are developing our new routine together. We have been able to celebrate a birthday for each of the boys, so that has been a good time to bond and celebrate together. Alex is the youngest, but his birthday came first, on November 28. He turned five. For his birthday, we traveled to Auto



Safari Chapin, an animal park in Escuintla, Guatemala. On the way back, we stopped at Linda Vista for Bible study and after the study, we sang to Alex and enjoyed a cake. Jose's birthday came in March. He turned seven. For that

occasion, the family traveled to IRTA Petapa, an amusement park in the city. Later, when Uncle Hawatthia was back in town, he and our family traveled to the beach for the boys to play in the black sand of the Pacific Coast in Monterrico. We had a great time together.



In January, both of them started school. We enrolled them in a school not too far from ITL, so it is very convenient and we also can count on Uncle Hawatthia to pick them up periodically. ☺ Here you see them for their first day at their new school. They are so cute in their uniforms!



Welcomed by Alex's teacher on their first day of school.

Jose likes to joke, he enjoys playing tag with this brother (and with anyone else who is game) and one of his favorite meals is a bowl of black beans (Guatemalan to the core!). He is a little taller than his brother, lost four teeth since he has been with us, but is now about 1 ½ teeth away from getting them all back. He likes to boss his brother around, but Alex is not too much into that. Alex is now five and he, too, is a joker. He often imitates his brother (really?!). He likes to play with cars and really enjoys spaghetti and meat sauce. He is the same weight as his brother and has not begun to lose any teeth yet. He likes to hang from his father's and Uncle Hawatthia's legs whenever he gets a chance. Both of them really enjoy puzzles, playing a memory game, Legos, and playing soccer.

Both of the boys are really happy children. They began to call Byron and Snezana "Mom" and "Dad" the first day they were with them. That was a real blessing. And, they constantly ask about "Tío" (Uncle) Hi, of course. They are very social boys and they like to meet new family members and new people in general. At worship, they go from one person to another to greet and give hugs, and they like to dress up for worship (like little preachers). They have now been in the Benitez home over 7 months and we cannot believe how quickly time is passing by.

We are so thankful for all the prayers and support from family and friends all over the world. Our family in California and Tennessee, especially, showed great generosity to these boys by sending them lots of clothes and toys! Thank you! Please continue to pray for all of us. We consider ourselves so blessed to have these boys in our lives. Our hope is to teach them the ways of the Lord so that one day they will serve Jesus with all their heart!

Finally, we share the good news that our boys now officially have the Benitez last name! The process necessary to change their last names to ours just recently was completed. Now, please pray for us to be able to get their passports and travel visas!

## WEI Teacher

**Blane Anderson** was back in Guatemala this year. If you recall from a previous report, he came last year in February and worked with students for about a month.

Blane arrived to Guatemala at the end of January. After making a quick visit to Chichicastenango for a few days, he traveled to Antigua Guatemala for a week to take some Spanish classes for a week. In February, he returned to Guatemala City and began to teach classes to a number of students, as he did last year.

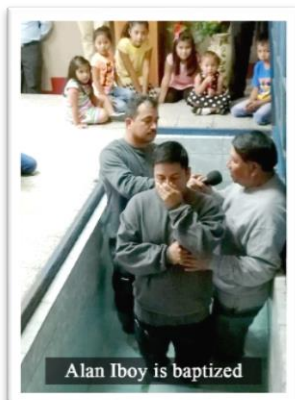
This year, we were blessed to have Blane's wife, **Terry**, here in Guatemala. She joined Blane for a long weekend in mid-February. Both of them are very warm Christians and we pray that they will continue to consider the work in Guatemala in the future. After Blane departed Guatemala, he left us with many good contacts. Please pray for these individuals so that they can continue to show interest not only in English, but also in the Gospel.



Blane and Terry Anderson with Alex and José

## Linda Vista

The work at Linda Vista continues onward. **Walter Dardon** is doing a good work as the evangelist. Please pray for him. He continues to visit many unfaithful members, to have studies with non-Christians and to work with the local school in the community called La Paz.



We ask you to pray for the recent additions to the church family. In November of 2018, **Allen Iboy** was baptized. He has since married one of our younger widows, Magaly Morales, who has two sons, Juan Carlos and Alejandro. The

family is growing together in their faith. Also, in February, **Joselyn Lucas** and **Edgar Palma** were baptized. Joselyn is the daughter of Jose and Yolanda, members at Linda



Vista. Edgar is her fiancé. Recently, **Mara Villatoro** was baptized. She is the mother of one of our teenage Christians, Oliver. Please pray for her husband **Eddy Villatoro**, who is struggling with his decision to serve the Lord.



## Update on Anibal Ramirez

Also, please continue to pray for **Anibal Ramirez**, our coworker in the ministry. Our last report explained how he was very sick and was in the Roosevelt Hospital. Thankfully, he received good care and recovered enough to go home. While he was there, he was able to get into the hospital's new hepatitis treatment program that uses the very effective medication Harvoni. This hospital is the only facility in Guatemala authorized to administer this medication, so we see this as God's merciful providence. Just last week Anibal started taking this medication that requires a 12-week treatment. He has been feeling a few of the side effects, so please pray for Anibal to have enough strength and health to be able to endure this treatment and respond well to the medication. We are hoping that the side effects will not be too severe and will diminish or disappear over time.

## Master's in Ministry from FHU

We want to update you on Byron's efforts to complete his Master's in Ministry from FHU. In 2012, he began to take courses with FHU. This year, he completed his final course with them, a two-semester practical course on 1, 2 Peter and Jude under **Dr. Mark Blackwelder**. Byron was able to integrate his studies into the ITL program, where he taught 1, 2 Peter and Jude to the ITL students, as well as having several other practical applications. He is now ready for graduation! He gives thanks to God and to Dr. Blackwelder for his guidance to reach this achievement.

## Next Newsletter

In the next newsletter we will inform you about the ITL lectureship, along with other details.

We would like to close by saying THANKS to everyone for your support through your prayers, encouragement and financial contributions. It is our prayer that the Lord will bless us to continue to serve jointly for His Cause. May God bless you always! We love you!!!

Con amor en Cristo siempre,

*Hawatthia*

*Byron and Snezana*

Missionaries to Guatemala



Teaching the CENTRAL MESSAGE in CENTRAL AMERICA!

