



The TIBI HERALD



Editor

Steve Austin
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THIS ISSUE

*If you like people...
Cuba SWAT team
If you like numbers...
If you like both...*

*“Choose this day whom
you will serve...as for me
and my household, we
will serve the Lord.”*

Joshua 24:15

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If You Like People... Cuba SWAT Team: Second Wave!

In October, we welcomed our second “SWAT” team in Cuba. We chose this name to emphasize the special gifts and focus we want these Christians to have in evangelism and discipleship. These brothers and sisters are well-respected and liked in their congregations and provinces, and have great potential to serve the Lord for decades to come.



*New Cuba students—Back row (l to r): Luis Angel, Yadis, Alberto, Pedro, Javier;
Front: Alcibiades, Amizaday, Enrique*

This continues a three-year project designed to prepare talented evangelists to share the gospel in a relevant, Christ-centered fashion. In May the first group of five men, from three provinces, finished their intensive training. This past October, we welcomed the second group. This time there are nine, including two married couples, who come from four different cities in two provinces of Cuba. They come from a variety of backgrounds, including several doctors and an accountant!

We met with them for about 40 hours over six days. For the first couple of days, we talked with them about the core gospel—what is sin, how people are helpless to rescue themselves, and the good news of salvation of grace through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. We discussed God’s relationship with man throughout history, and the key concepts that run

through the Old and New Testaments. Then we analyzed and reflected on how we study the Bible, and how we apply its teachings—both on individual and church levels. Finally, we shared and reflected on the most biblical and most useful methods they could use to evangelize and disciple others.

It was gratifying to see how quickly we became friends and colleagues, and enjoyed the time together. They are quick, intelligent, thoughtful, kind, dedicated, and humorous. The time passed rapidly and productively. We look forward to our second seminar in April with them.

The focus with these groups is not to impart a large quantity of academic information, but rather to give a clear understanding and application of the core gospel. Our goal after the third group finishes in 2018 is to have a nucleus of creative, talented, and focused evangelists who then can train others to share the task. And then many brothers and sisters can expand the ongoing work of discipleship all through Cuba.

Obviously, our work with many others in Cuba continues, but we are excited about the potential of this “SWAT” group. They will reach people in Cuba whom we never could, and touch them in ways beyond our ability. Please pray that God uses them mightily.

If You Like Numbers...

Every so often it’s interesting to review some of our current statistics. While not the only nor most important things, they do provide touch points:

- 2500+ baptisms since 2009 in sites where we help train leaders
- 44 churches we’ve helped plant including in Cuba, since 2007

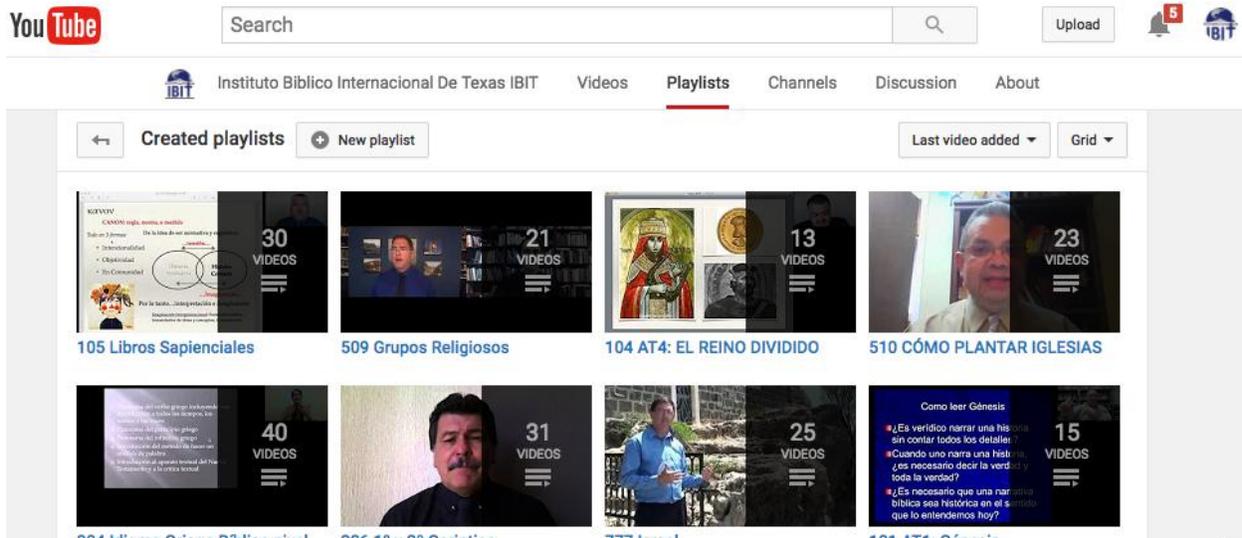
36 online video courses at es.sunsetonline.org

- 815+ students for these courses online. This includes 65 students taking courses for credit toward our bachelors’ degree.
- 850 students from places using our courses on hard drives (without internet).
- 69,320+ visits to online courses since 2011, from 110 countries total



Map of places where we have online students

- 29 current full-time students in our live video conferencing program
- 100+ video conferencing students, with 20 countries on the network
- 50 graduates with a Bachelor of Biblical Studies degree
- Approximately 3500 friends on our Facebook page
- 250,000+ views of our videos on YouTube in the first 20 months, with 1.9 million minutes viewed!
- 2100+ subscribers to that YouTube channel



How could we summarize or interpret these numbers? First, they demonstrate the blessing of God in opening doors, providing funds, and bringing people to us, constantly challenging and modifying the work we do. Second, they underline the hunger and need for quality training—a desire shared by Spanish-speaking people not only in Latin America, but in many other countries where Latinos live and work. Third, they show the great variety of ways in which we can minister—which also means we will always want to work with people who are passionate and gifted in these and other formats, to share the gospel in exciting, relevant, cutting-edge ways. Please pray that we can be perceptive, bold, and obedient in our ministry.

If you like both...

Whether you like people or numbers or both, one common element needed to help achieve these wonderful results is funding. We are grateful for the churches, individuals, and foundations who have been generous through the years.

We'd like to suggest three more ways in which you can consider giving. The first is more of a format—giving through social media or online, through iPads, phones, or computers. Through our Mobile Cause platform, you can give any amount, one-time or monthly, to any type of program we offer. You can set it up once and know your gift will arrive promptly and consistently. We have utilized Mobile Cause for Giving Tuesdays the last two years, and just launched a crowdfunding campaign for the Cuba SWAT project mentioned above. If you'd like to help through this option, click on this link:

<https://app.mobilecause.com/form/vWyR1Q>.

A second method of giving is estate planning. We would be honored to talk with you about leaving a memorial gift. There are ways to do this which can also help minimize your family's tax burden and maximize your charitable contribution. Visit with your tax advisor or contact us for competent advice from professionals in this area.

A third method of financially supporting TIBI is by contributing to our endowment. We are convinced that our mission of training competent ministry leaders and church members will be a crucially important activity for decades to come. We also believe that the Lord has positioned us to play a unique role in this field, as leaders in live video conferencing and online video training.

In order to provide stability for TIBI's future, a generous donor launched this fund in 2014, and it has already blessed some of programs of TIBI. Our goal is to raise at least four million dollars, to be added to the fund already established.

This would allow the interest to cover our core operating expenses, while freeing a sizable amount of our current budget to increase our scholarships and technology. If you are interesting in making such a fruitful long-term gift, or know someone who might be, please contact us with the information on the first page of this newsletter.

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