

TIBI HERALD

Editor

Steve Austin
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THIS ISSUE

Prayer opportunities and requests

"...On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers."

2 Corinthians 1:10-11

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Prayer Opportunities and Requests



Pictured (left to right) are Carlos García, Daniel Gomez, José Bracho, Aaron Andrade, David Marcano, Eudomar Osteocoichea, Manuel Franco, Hilario Marin, Lenin Perera, Jesús Marcano, Omar Méndez, Luis Pulido (RIB), Cesar Navarrete, Oscar Pereira, Melvin Muñoz, Alexander Duin, Luis Mujica, Francisco Arias (IBIT en Línea), and Wladimir Pereira

At a preachers' retreat in Venezuela recently, a sizable number of TIBI's Venezuelan students and graduates attended to share their work and encourage each other in difficult times. They gathered as many as they could and took this picture.

There are twenty men in all, and of course this does not include all our Venezuelan students or graduates. Many could not be there; others are women students and graduates who play important roles in their churches and communities also.

But I found this picture to be interesting and extremely encouraging. You see represented here literally hundreds of years of Christian ministry and at least 18 congregations. Several of these men work with multiple congregations.

These are good-hearted men, hard workers, intelligent, good-humored, passionate about the Gospel and the Kingdom of God. They could have chosen other careers (though some

do work in secular jobs, then spend much of their free time in ministry). They could have gone to other countries to get out of the difficult life in Venezuela, but they stayed to serve.

We are proud of them and all our students, in every country and church where they work. We know that each nation has groups like this one, and we are grateful to the Lord for them. We ask you to pray that God will lead, strengthen, and bless them as they persevere in their ministries, so that more people could come to know Jesus.

Women of Valor

In Luke 10:42, Jesus tells Martha, “Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.” This also describes very well the women in the picture, who are all students or graduates of TIBI, from 6 different countries.



Clockwise from top left: Cecilia Rios, Arelis Diaz, Lorena Mendoza, Elizabeth Tabares, Esperanza Olivo, Lourdes Gonzalez, Liudmila Bencosme, Silvia Acuña, Fior Beitía, y Roiza Gonzalez.

These women have faced life’s normal challenges—maturing, education, marriages, families, careers, health problems, church work, and much more. Some of them have been taxed by difficult combinations of several of these at once. Some have moved from their home country to a different one, for family or economic reasons.

In addition, women in various parts of Latin America often face prejudice, abuse, misunderstanding, or lack of opportunities, among other challenges. In some of their congregations, women have been, devalued, neglected, badly treated, and at the same time had to do a disproportionately large share of the work. Obviously, these things are not true in every city or church, but they are not rare either.

For these reasons and more, it is a privilege to know these sisters in Christ and work with them through TIBI or Kingdom projects. I have found them to be pleasant, hard-working, determined, good-humored, compassionate, and intelligent. Circumstances that might have defeated others, have been handled by these women with class and grace, persevering through all the challenges mentioned above. They are true blessings for their congregations and communities.

These women have enriched TIBI. They are a key part of our student body and our alumni. Approximately 30% of our graduates have been women, and we hope that many more women like these come to study with us as well. Our churches need more leaders like them in many kinds of ministry.

Please pray that God will continue to bless and guide them as they lead and serve in the Kingdom. We have been blessed by them.

Other prayer opportunities and requests

These men and women, as well as their ministry situations, are a fairly accurate and representative picture of most of TIBI's student body. If you know their stories, struggles, and successes, you have a good idea of what our other students are living also.

As you pray for them, please pray for the countries where they live. Many, such as Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua, are undergoing significant turmoil politically and economically. This can provide receptive hearts to the gospel message, but is always stressful for people even so. In addition, the infrastructure of electricity, internet, and transportation often fails, which makes it even more difficult to study and minister. This is why we have a deep and abiding admiration for these brothers and sisters.

The words of Paul apply to them, "Since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart...As servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships, and distresses;...in hard work, sleepless nights, and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience, and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God, with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left..." (2 Cor. 4:1, 6:4-7)

Just as these students are part of the face and front lines of TIBI's work, other groups and elements support them and make their work possible and even more fruitful., and we ask you to pray for them also:

- Pray that the TIBI board (Alan Mashburn, Randy King, Flo Mata, Lewis Norman, Micaela and Gustavo Villanueva, Greg and Jamie Lemon, and Paul Gidden) continue to help set the vision and parameters of our work, provide and raise funds, and encourage the staff.
- Pray that the administrative team of TIBI (Kevin Montgomery, Silvia Acuña, Pedro del Pozo, Carlos Camacho, Daniel Urdaneta, Liudmila Bencosme, and Steve Austin) can be wise in decision-making, daring in faith, and persistent in daily talks.
- Pray that the TIBI faculty (26 different men from 9 countries) can continue to teach the Word of God in biblical, fresh, faithful, and challenging ways; that they persevere in the local ministries which implement their teaching in their congregations; and that they can encourage and mentor their students day by day.
- Pray for the students and professors of Master of Practical Theology program as they help students deepen their biblical knowledge, ministry skills, and effectiveness in the local church, that they would not grow tired of doing good.
- Pray that the churches, individuals, and foundations that support TIBI would maintain their wonderful generosity that results in people praising God around the world, and that the Lord would send other donors for future students and projects of TIBI.

- Pray that our technology will function well in every location, and on every level, so that our students can access our courses and continue to network with each other, and we might attract new students worldwide. (Zoom, online course servers, internet connections, apps such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, and Instagram)
- Pray that new technologies, in particular simultaneous translation apps, will become more accurate, rapid, and cost-effective, so that some day TIBI can teach in several languages simultaneously.
- Pray for future opportunities in new cities, countries, schools, and churches will lead to growth of TIBI's network.
- And pray for every congregation with whom we are connected. We know of more than 235 congregations where we have an impact, and that does not include many congregations where some online students take courses, but have not contacted us to let us know more about their churches.

We know that when our prayers are in accordance with God's will, that he hears us. And we know that if he hears us, we have what we have asked for (1 John 5:14-15). We believe that what we do is at the heart of God's will—helping people understand the written word and Living Word, so that we can all love God and love our neighbor better each day. And so we look forward to God continuing to provide amazing, unexpected, and gratifying answers to these prayers. Thank you for participating with us in this way.

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