

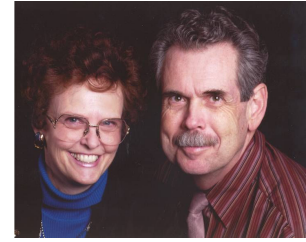
Esperanza Eterna: A Mission of HOPE

By Bob Young

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What We Are Trying to Accomplish

“Esperanza Eterna.” The phrase literally translated means “hope eternal.” We use the Spanish phrase, *Esperanza Eterna*, because we like the alliteration and because Latin America is one of the parts of the world dearest to our hearts. Our mission focus, however, is not limited to Latin America.



People frequently ask, “Exactly what mission work are you involved in?” We reply that our goal is to share eternal hope. Not long ago I was asked, “Is this your project, or are you part of a bigger organization?” **Esperanza Eterna** is the description Jan and I have chosen for the mission work we are involved in; we are not a part of a larger mission organization except that we work within the context of local churches both in the U.S. and in those countries where we go.

Ultimately, **Esperanza Eterna** (Eternal Hope) is not our project—we believe it is God’s project because it seeks to fulfill God’s purpose. The phrase reflects God’s purpose. God has a big purpose for his creation. God calls the church to participate with him in his mission of bringing eternal hope to the world. In fact, the church is the means by which God seeks to accomplish his mission. God has sent the church into the world as his instrument for accomplishing his eternal purpose. The church is the declaration of what God wishes for all humanity. The church is a foretaste of what God intends for every person. The church is God’s earthly version of what God is inviting all creation to share. The church must understand this dual purpose—to participate in God’s purpose (the mission) and to exemplify God’s purpose. The church exists not for itself, nor do members exist for themselves, but for the sake of God’s work and mission.

Missional Through and Through

Mission is not something people do sporadically (as mission trip, mission contribution, mission budget, mission support, etc.). Mission is the essence of God’s plan for his missionary people. Because the words mission (and missions) have a long history of use (and misuse), and to make a clear distinction concerning God’s intention for the church’s involvement in his purpose, we have begun more recently to use the word mission-al. A mission-al church is a community of Kingdom people who have glimpsed both their “sent-ness” and that they are a living demonstration of God’s plan. A mission-al person is one who sees clearly the call to be a missionary of God’s plan and purpose everywhere one goes, and to live out the reality of God’s intention in the activities and relationships of life.

HOPE—an Acronym

With God’s dual purpose for the church in mind, we find our calling and purpose in *Esperanza Eterna*. We believe that God wishes to establish a rescuing, saving relationship with every person on earth. We believe that God intends all people to know the reality of his peace-giving presence through the Holy Spirit, and to experience the deep fellowship of people gathered and

united in his purpose. We believe God wishes every church, and every Christian, to see opportunities to join God in his mission. These beliefs define our purpose.

Helping. We are helping churches and Christians find greater involvement and commitment in God's mission. We do this through special events and series, consulting with churches, and teaching and preaching. We help churches become aware of special Kingdom needs that are significant in view of God's mission. We communicate and serve as a liaison between churches and missional opportunities. The ultimate goal is to increase the number of persons around the world who know God's eternal hope.

Opening Opportunities. A part of our mission is to open the eyes of churches and Christians to the needs and the opportunities. We open eyes to opportunities, and optimize the effectiveness of the church's involvement.

Participating and Planning. We assist churches and Christians in finding opportunities for personal participation in God's work in the world. We also assist churches in planning their efforts for missional participation in Kingdom work around the world.

Encouraging and Empowering. Finally, we encourage churches in missional endeavors and empower both churches and individuals to greater involvement in eternal things.

We invite you to join us in God's purpose of sharing Eternal Hope. Every person who participates with us and requests it receives regular reports and accounting. Here are some things you can do.

- You can pray. Pray every day about God's purpose in this world. Pray every day about God's purpose in your life, and how you can participate with God in his mission. Pray for us. We are blessed by knowing the countless people who pray every day for us and the work we are doing.
- You can go. We will help you go. We travel several times each year to places where God opens doors to accomplish his mission and we walk through the doors of opportunity God provides. We enjoy helping others participate.
- You can send. You can help others go. The body of Christ, the church, functions as a unit, and when members in your local church want to go forth on behalf of God's mission, you can help them go. Those who are sent need those who will send them.
- You can share. Sometimes those who need to be sent are already in place but lacking resources. We are constantly aware of needs—most are not overwhelming. A congregation (even a small congregation) can easily meet most of these needs. An individual or family can handle some of the smaller requests. Such special needs are often urgent so we in faith provide the need and then seek those who will share.
- You can participate in our ministry financially. You can multiply our opportunities to share God's eternal hope and to help others participate in the mission by assisting with working funds.

Checks can be made payable to Main and Oklahoma Church of Christ and marked for "Bob and Jan Young Mission." The church asks that we do the accounting so checks should be sent to 1108 Ono Court, McAlester, OK 74501.