

# FACES

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## On The Cover

Teodoro Uribe delights the UBL community with his musical talent. The lilt of the *quena* can often be heard filling the evening air as he plays both traditional and modern melodies.

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Our email address has changed!

Write us at:  
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## Study Centers in Latin America are a wealth of inspiration for UBL

Dr. Jose Enrique Ramirez

In the last year, I have had the opportunity visit UBL affiliated centers in Colombia, Peru, Chile, Cuba and Bolivia. I also gave a course in the northern part of Argentina. The experience in these places, each different from the other, brought home to me some very interesting realizations concerning our institution. Quiet students who pass almost unnoticed through our classrooms, develop educational ministries that have enormous impact in certain areas of their own countries. Persons that con-



clude their studies as 'just one more member of their class', I have seen as initiators of social development programs in the far-flung regions of this continent. Those who struggled with the Spanish language during their time in San Jose, astonish me

later with the impact of the educational programs that some of them have introduced into their local cultures. We find our former students moving from one side of their countries to the other, educating, promoting, and launching development programs in their regions. The social, educational, ministerial, and economic impact that our graduates have (and have had in their countries for decades), is a source of inspiration for those of us who visit the centers. It allows us to put into perspective that which, from our campus in San Jose, we can only see bits of. The strength, inspiration, and the future of our institution lies in the hot and humid countryside of the Caribbean and in the fertile valleys of our Central America. It comes from the inner-city communities of the huge Mexican cities and the byways and villages of the Andes. It is here that we find the true campus of the Universidad Biblica Latinoamericana, and the future of this community for which we exist. Latin America. This Latin America has the face of a child, of an Afro-latino/a, of an old person, of an Indian, of a poor person, of a woman..... of hope.

### Tamayo visit

On June 27, UBL enjoyed a visit from distinguished theologian Juan José Tamayo, professor of religious studies at the Carlos III University of Madrid and the University of Valencia, Spain.

Dr. Tamayo is well known for his publications in theology, world religions, human rights, and philosophy, especially his book with Dr. Casiano Floristan, *Fundamental concepts of Christianity*. In this recent visit, the faculty and student body took part in a dialogue with Dr. Tamayo about his book *Fundamentalisms and inter-religious dialogue (Fundamentalismo y diálogo entre religiones, Madrid: Trotta, 2004.)*





# TEODORO URIBE

## *Searching for lost traditions*

By: *Jeannie McGinnis*

***“I do not believe that in order to be a Christian, I must abandon my culture.”***

**D**uring the time of the ancient Inca... before the arrival of the Spanish..... before there were any people at all in the area which is now Huancayo, Peru, the DelMantaro valley was a huge lake. Inhabiting the lake was a snake named Amaru. Amaru was a territorial animal and when a smaller snake invaded his space, he felt some resentment. The two serpents began to battle and by the time they were finished, the valley had opened and all the waters had receded. In the middle of this valley sat a rock. And it was on this rock that the first couple appeared. That was the beginning of the Wanka civilization. The Wanka had their own government, their own language, and their own god. It was a kindly god who lived on the Nevada de Huaytapallana, a beautiful plateau filled with flowers. The god, Wallallu Carhuncho, protected his people and their culture of farming and animal husbandry.

The Wanka were a happy people who believed in celebrating life. They kept a calendar of festivals and exalted every aspect of their existence. Until the arrival of the Spanish and Catholicism. The Spanish considered the Wanka to be idol worshipping pagans and forced them to convert. Their festivals were taken over and given Catholic names. To become educated meant to leave behind one's culture and assume the culture of the Spanish. Like all indigenous cultures, the Wankan culture began to die.

Rev. Teodoro Uribe is a UBL student from the Saint Paul Andean Seminary in Huancayo, Peru. A member of the Wankan culture, he is a Methodist pastor and is currently working on the thesis for his Licentiate degree. Uribe is a member of a committee that was set up when Antonio Otzoy, an itinerant professor contracted under the indigenous project, (a UBL project funded by the Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church) visited the St. Paul seminary to give a class in indigenous spirituality.

“Through the Indigenous Project and UBL's Biblical/Pastoral Institute, we are beginning to evaluate how we do biblical and theological studies.” says Rev. Uribe. “In the past, when people began to study the Bible, they thought they had to leave their culture behind. But we indigenous are Latin American too and we want to learn to study theology and the Bible within our own culture and our own traditions. I do not believe that in order to be a Christian, I must abandon my culture. A religion that tries to kill traditions which support life is not from God.”

The Wanka committee is working to prepare materials and write articles and stories of their culture to be sent to Professor Otzoy (a Guatemalan from the Mayan culture.)

“We hope that our stories can be incorporated into future IBP courses,” continues Uribe. “Until now we have

By: Dr. Tirsa Ventura

# RIBLA



*Drs. Arnoldo Mora and Franz Hinckelammert share with the group. (author right)*

## Meeting Held At UBL

The annual RIBLA meeting was held from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April of this year (2005) at the Latin American Biblical University in San Jose, Costa Rica. Sixty biblical scholars from 16 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean participated in the event. There was also representation from Canada, the United States, Japan, and Germany.

The RIBLA (The Latin American Biblical Journal) meeting is an opportunity for men and women scholars who work in different areas of biblical studies in Latin America to study and dialogue together. Each year this group of biblical scholars meet in a different country in Abya Yala (an indigenous word for Latin America meaning 'continent of life'.) During the meeting, the coming editions of RIBLA, along with their themes, and release dates are planned. It is also an opportunity for discussion and strengthening of the development of biblical studies on this continent, and includes a time of Bible study for the participants. Academics from universities, seminaries, communities, and churches who study the Bible from the Latin American reality, particularly through the eyes and minds of women, Afro-latin-americans, indigenous, and youth and children are invited to participate.

The RIBLA meeting, as has already been stated, is important for Latin American biblical production. Even though professors such as Irene Foulkes and Elsa Tamez have long been a part of RIBLA, up to now, a meeting has never been held in Costa Rica. To have the privilege of hosting the RIBLA meeting on the UBL campus was yet another affirmation of the commitment that the institution has with the Bible on this continent. In addition, it is notable that around 45 of the 60 persons which participated in the meeting were from outside Costa Rica. The majority of these people had prior knowledge of UBL but had never been on the campus. This was an opportunity for them to learn more about the institution and its mission.

The academic interchange and community experience throughout the week-long meeting, made possible the strengthening of our educational and Latin American mission in relation to biblical production. One other important event during the week was UBL's presentation of a

book in honor of Dr. Irene Foulkes, *Ecce Mulber*; as well as a book by UBL professor, Dr. José Enríquez Ramírez, *Ruth*, which permitted UBL to share a part of its own production in the area of biblical studies.

The UBL School of Bible together with DEI (The Department of Ecumenical Investigation) were responsible for organizing this year's meeting. ISEDET in Argentina will be the host for the next RIBLA meeting which will be held in the second half of 2006.

### Bible Study – Gen. 1-11

On this occasion, the biblical study was centered on Genesis 1-11 and led by Dr. Milton Schwantes. Dr. Schwantes proposed that Genesis 1-11 be studied as a block of connected stories based around chapters 6-9.

In Schwantes interpretation, the flood is presented as the principal theme, which means that Gen. 1-2 must be read as a result of Gen. 11: 10-25. Gen. 2:4b through chapters 3 and 4 would then need to be read together with 11:1-9 and chapters 5 and 10. In his proposition Milton insists that Genesis must be read back to front, and that chapters 1-3 aren't the right beginning for an interpretation from a sociological point of view.

The group reacted by warning that, while they had no problems with reading the book back to front, it should be kept in mind that when reading from the point of view of specific groups (women, indigenous, and afros), that there are other important points. For example, in the case of women, chapters 2 and 3 are important for the image of the women which appear there and how these have been taken advantage of to justify oppression and the submission of women. (From Chapter 4 on, women do not appear.) In addition, chapters five and ten, the genealogy chapters, cannot be seen as secondary if we are interested in a reading that takes into account, among other things, the construction of the identity of humanity. Milton insisted that if the flood is not taken as the central event in the book, there would be a loss in the reading that preserves the history of humanity... the new creation.



First work team poses in the completed entrance.

## Almost Finished!

UBL's latest construction project is close to being completed after the labors of two work teams in July and Aug. A team of seven led by Angi Alphin spent ten days in Costa Rica in July working on the entrance to the two apartment building. In addition to applying stucco to the walls, painting the garage floor, and putting in a small garden, some very hard workers took on the messy job of drywalling and sanding the ceiling.

The second team, led by Rev. Jeannie Jensen began laying tile in the ground floor apartment and painting the interior. Thanks to a timely donation by Charles Moore and friends, much needed doors and windows will soon be installed.

The upstairs apartment is complete and now being inhabited by UBL vice-rector, Daniel Chiquete.

Megan Jensen concentrates on her work.



### **BUT** there's still plenty to do.....

The work on the apartments is nearly complete, but there's still plenty of opportunities for work teams on UBL's campus. Due to our emphasis on the construction project, we've neglected other parts of the campus and there is a lot of painting, tile laying, stuccoing, and refurbishing that needs to be done. If you are interested in bring a team in 2006, let Jeannie McGinnis know.

Just send an email to [jmcginnis@ubila.net](mailto:jmcginnis@ubila.net).

## UBL Department of Community Welfare reaching out to students

In June, the UBL department of community welfare began two educational psychology groups for students, professors, and administrative personnel on the subject of *Women's issues and gender equality* and *Men's issues and gender equality*. The women's group is coordinated by Sara Baltodano, psychology and pastoral counseling professor, and the men's by Edwin Mora Guevara, psychology and pastoral counseling professor

Both groups had a large number of participants, and were especially enjoyed by the students. The groups met with an educational objective and shared events from their lives, feelings, and learned methods on how to provide support. During the sessions, brief summaries were offered on the topics and various techniques applied in order to provoke dialogue and sharing. The goal was to promote not only growth as a group, but also personal growth. The department also offers therapy for students, professors, administrative personnel and their immediate families. The department hopes, for the near future, to continue with the gender groups and has plans to offer two more, a parental training group, led by UBL dean, Mireya Baltodano and group therapy on the subject of separation and divorce, led by Edwin Mora.



Sara Baltodano (right) and students.

In 1937, fourteen years after the founding of the institution, Professor Kenneth Strachan developed an interest in providing the seminary's students with a library. He began by learning and working in a library in the Evangelical College in Dallas, Texas, and upon his return to Costa Rica, put together a small library collection. Four years later, 300 volumes resided in wooden cases, and in 1957 the collection reached the 3500 volume mark.

Since its beginnings the UBL library has operated within a very tight budget. For

Archive was started in 1986, but since 2000, with the support of the Program for Latin American Libraries and Archives, it has grown dramatically. It now houses several hundred boxes of primary documents related to the history of the churches, mostly Protestant, in Central América.

The library constantly looks for ways to provide increased and improved services to its constituency, which means not only the teaching staff and students but also the broader community that relates to it. This obviously means appropriate collection



Recent celebration of library's "new look"

## UBL's Growing Library

nearly four decades the department was run by faculty staff with the assistance of students. In the early nineties UBL's current librarian, Alvaro Perez, was hired. By 1994 space became a major problem, which was finally solved when the Library moved to a new, larger and much better facility on the new UBL campus.

In the last ten years that the library has begun shifting from a traditional setting to a more modern one, introducing appropriate library software for automation purposes. With the assistance of volunteer groups from the US the whole collection was bar-coded, security strips were added to all books, and a lot of deteriorated books were repaired. Currently the library is slowly migrating from an old classification system to an up-to-date system. The Wilton M. Nelson Historical

development in three basic levels (day to day academic needs, academic research in the short term, and research work in the long run). Collection development implies books and periodicals either printed or in electronic format. Technology changes dictate migrating to digital formats and equipment is needed for these changes.

More recently, Internet access has been added to the library services and UBL is studying on how to make better use of this resource. There are also plans to provide in-house productions to support the institution's academic work, such as digital images, electronic text, and digital videos as UBL continues in its goal to make this theological library one of the finest in the Latin American region.

*Alvaro Pérez*

*...Teodoro Uribe*

never been interested in writing our own stores. Others (anthropologists, etc.) have come from outside to write about our traditions, but this is the first time that we have ever written down the stories about our own culture, our own traditions. Our cultures are dying", he added, "we are trying to recover the traditions and values of our ancient culture. I don't mean we want to insulate ourselves from the modern world. I'm talking about the values and principals of our Wankan traditions. But, I also want to bring back the Wanka way of dressing and we need to salvage our traditional medicine."

Uribe particularly mourns the loss of traditional medicine. "Andean medicine is very positive," he stated. "My own elder brother cured a man with cancer using traditional medicine. But we no longer have the recipes." The committee has plans to search out some of the older Wankas and learn from them before the ancient ways are lost forever and are hoping to find funding to further this work.

Not all Wankan traditions have gone by the wayside, Teodoro admitted. The construction of houses is still carried out by the whole community working together. Traditional music is still played and is being incorporated into church services. And his church is now using traditional colored clothes on the altar rather than the white cloth that was brought in by the Catholics. But as Teodoro and his committee are the first to admit, there is still a long way to go.

The World Council of Churches chose “God, in your grace, transform the world” as the theme of the Ninth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), planned for February 2006 in Porto Alegre, Brazil. UBL, as a WCC mission partner, adopted this same theme for its integrated seminar.

This years seminar had thirty-four students enrolled from 13 countries (Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, the United States, Nicaragua, Peru, Germany, and Venezuela) and 10 denominations (Pentecostal, Methodist, Baptist, Congregational, Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Moravian, Mennonite, Evangelical).

UBL’s integrated seminar is an annual event which combines biblical, theological, pastoral, and social reflection around a specific chosen theme. The seminar is a required class for all licentiate students and an opportunity for students from all over Latin America and the Caribbean to work and study together.

In addition to UBL professors, visiting professors Dr. Xabier Pikaza, Dr. Arnoldo Mora, and Dr. Wim Dierckxsens took part in the seminar. Extra-curricular activities included the painting of a mural in the student coffee lounge under the direction of artist Anne Spickel, a trip to ‘La Selva’, an experimental biological station located in the

Braulio Carrillo national park, a candle making workshop, and worship services organized by the students.



## XABIER PIKAZA Speaks at Mackay Conference

The annual John A Mackay Conference took place May 24-26 on the subject of “Inter-religious dialogue. Each year UBL presents this important academic undertaking with a carefully chosen speaker. This year’s invited guest was Spanish theologian, Dr. Xabier Pikaza. Born in 1941 in the Basque country, Pikaza was a professor of religion and theodicy in the Universidad Pontificia in Salamanca from 1975-2003 and is considered an expert in religious orientation. He has written many books, among them: *Dios como espíritu y persona*, *El Dios cristiano/ Diccionario teológico*, and *Hombre y mujer en las religiones*.

The conference was well attended and an event in which the entire community of UBL, as well as a large number of invited friends of the institution had the opportunity to listen and discuss with Dr. Pikaza on the subject of Inter-religious dialogue. He spoke each of the three days on a different theme, the first being “Man and Woman in religion and culture”, the second, “American Indian Religions: challenges”, and finally, “Inter-religious dialogue, a plan for life and a culture of peace”. Each day’s theme was responded to by a UBL professor or student after which a general discussion was held.

In addition to the three day long conference, Dr. Pikaza also participated in UBL’s annual Integrated Seminar by giving an intensive week-long course, “Grace in biblical traditions”.



## **Letter from UBL rector**

*It is with great sadness that we have received the news of the tragedies in both London, England and the southern United States, particularly New Orleans, with its thousands of people left dead and homeless by Hurricane Katrina. Both of the incidences have caused pain and suffering to those affected and to their entire countries. It also grieves us greatly that the war in Iraq with its many thousands of casualties continues with no end in sight.*

*This university has its roots in Latin America, a continent that has suffered for so much of its existence in violence and poverty. As a theological institution that works to advance peace as well as promoting justice and equality to the poor, we feel in solidarity with the efforts of the churches and other organizations of England and the United States as they seek to provide aid to the people affected by the bombing and the floods. We pray that the people of Iraq will soon see an end to the violence that they face each day.*

*The entire UBL community keeps those who are suffering from these tragedies in their thoughts and prayers as we renew our commitment to our struggle for justice and peace in this world.*

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.”*

*Violeta Rocha A.*

# **FACES**



of the Latin American Biblical University

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