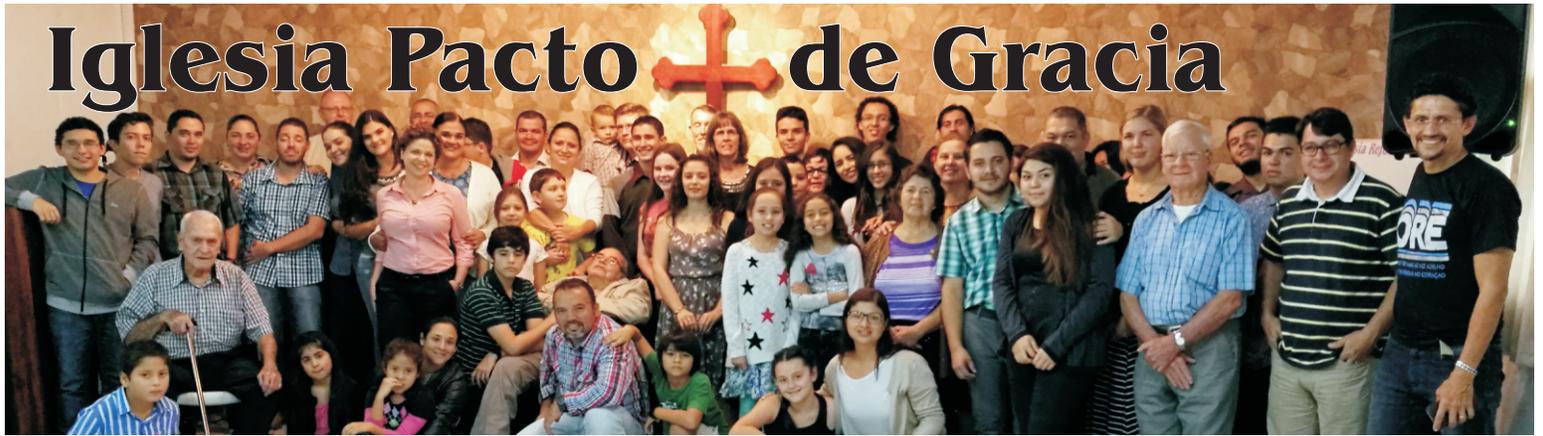


Iglesia Pacto de Gracia



2017 is here! God continues to gather His people

Manuel Sanabria goes home to glory

I met don Manuel sometime in 2011. He lived some two hours out of San José in the countryside of Turrialba, and I was visiting a couple for bible study. Manuel was the father of Norma, a member of our congregation. Norma's numerous family includes Norma (his daughter) grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The Jehovah's Witnesses had worked hard to get Manuel into their church, and I was always concerned at the pile of *Watchtowers* on his rustic table. I would stop for a half hour or so in the little shack he lived in, take some eggs and meat (because I could tell that he was not eating well). Manuel was 82, not too strong physically, but lucid mentally. I took a bible to him once, as well as other books we printed, and as an avid reader, Manuel

devoured the literature.

We established a good friendship.

Upon returning from the US in 2012, I was informed that Manuel was in the hospital, in serious condition. Providentially he had been brought to the hospital nearest us. I



went with Norma to visit, and found him in a coma, with oxygen and feeding tubes in his nose and mouth. We learned later that some younger doctors almost un-hooked Manuel to let him die, but an older doctor insisted on attempting further treatment. I read Scripture and prayed, and we went home. In about a week Manuel had come out of the coma, and was released! While in the coma, he had been able to hear the conversation about letting him die, and he wanted to cry out "Please don't let me die, I'm not ready!", but of course he couldn't. But once he was conscious, there was only one thing

he wanted - to be reconciled with his Creator.

Norma took him home, and Manuel insisted that I disciple him in the faith and baptize him as soon as possible! I've never had such a willing disciple.

(cont'd next page)



January, 2017 Newsletter
Contact: clirprint@gmail.com
Visit us at: www.reformedmissions.org

Manuel Sanabria - cont'd

The day that Manuel stood in front of our congregation to own Jesus as his Lord and Savior, at age 85, was a moment to be remembered. There wasn't a dry eye in the whole church! That very Sunday we had communion, and Manuel took his first Lord's Supper the day he was baptized.

Every Sunday morning after that, Manuel was the first to rise in his house, bathe, take his cane, and wait for me to come by with our old bus. Only when he fell and broke his arm did he miss church. Otherwise he was there early. What a blessing to have four generations of the family in church!

In late December, 2016, Manuel was taken to the hospital for what turned out to be pneumonia. Even though he was very uncomfortable, he had peace. He even told the family that he thought it was time to go home to glory. This time he was ready. On December 24 Manuel went to sleep at 3



Baptism of Manuel with extended family accompanying him

PM, and died peacefully at 4 PM. No one knew when he stopped breathing - the Lord took him gently to heaven. He was 87 years old.

The funeral was the next day in Norma's house, with family and members of our church. I preached on Psalm 116:15 "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints". With some members of the congregation, we traveled to Turrialba where he was buried.

In the cemetery we held a final mini-service, where I had the opportunity to testify to many family members who were not Christians, as to Manuel's hope of glory, and why he died such a peaceful death. In a country where funerals are tragic events, I'm sure many were amazed that we sang a hymn of hope and grace right there among the tombs!

We will miss Manuel. But we know he is safe in His Lord's arms!

Thank you to all!

Receive our heartfelt thanks to all who have stood by us this past year in prayer, and with your financial support! **Thank you** to so many who sent cards and words of encouragement! We aren't able to respond to you all - but we praise the Lord for each one. We look forward to this new year, trusting in our Lord, who has opened so many different opportunities for promoting the kingdom. Feel free to contact us directly with any questions or requests for information.

Ministry goals for 2017

Please keep these things in mind as you pray and consider giving for the Costa Rica ministry in 2017

- ➔ Translation and publication of Reformed theological and biblical materials for Latin America
- ➔ Biblical conferences and courses
- ➔ Finishing the construction of the Costa Rica Ministry Center

Prayer requests for January / February

Bill with travel to Mérida, Mexico for a conference on "Christianity vs Liberalism", and also will translate for Dr. Peter Jones. Dates: Jan 7 - 14

Construction of CLIR print shop and CECRE High School - now beginning!!! Pray for a steady and speedy advance of the work.

School starts on Feb. 6, with many details to attend. Pray for CECRE - teachers, students.