

The Christian University of the Americas

Preparing a New Generation

Volume 1

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Guided by the Word of God, the Universidad Cristiana de Las Americas exists to prepare Christian men and women of Christ-like character for service in both ministry and professional fields.

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UCLA Magazine

Leading, Teaching and Preaching with Matthew Bixby

This past November I had the opportunity to spend a few days visiting the staff at UCLA Monterrey and the mission of the university. Several things stood out to me in very short order, the music ministry, a warm friendly atmosphere and the dedication and hard work of the faculty and staff of the campus. One of the key leaders I had the pleasure of spending time with was Matthew Bixby. Matthew carries many duties at UCLA with the primary one being a faculty member, but that would only scratch the surface of the many areas where Matthew plays a primary role. Visiting a mission for the first time is always an eye opening experience. You form an idea of what life would be like on the

field, but quickly you realize it is always more involved that you could possibly imagine. Such is the case with spending a day on the run with Matthew. Be it leading a class, working with the leadership team to guide the campus, or pastoring a mission church all at the same time is just an average day on his agenda. With that in

questions to get to know him better. I hope you enjoy his answers as much as I have:

Matthew grew up in a mission family in Spain so Spanish and English have always been part of his life. While in first grade he moved to the United States for a year and a half while his father finished his master's degree.



Losing some of the Spanish speaking skills, he had to regain them as they moved back to Spain.

mind I asked Matthew several

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Sacred Music as Guided by David Chapman

My first introduction to UCLA in person was attending a standing room only concert of "Hymns through the Ages" with the student orchestra led by David Chapman. For a university with a moderate sized student body, a full orchestra with a big following is a very telling fact. One specifically that music at UCLA plays a key role in what they do, and who they are. In order to find out more about this I got to meet David and get a tour of the music

facilities and hear his story. David is a key person playing a key role at UCLA Monterrey.

David, like many of the faculty at UCLA grew up in a mission home. He spent many years of his childhood in Antofagasta, Chile where his parents have been for 20 years. Before that his parents were Christian school teachers in North Carolina. David stated he immensely enjoyed growing up in Chile. My parent's

home is practically adjacent to the coastline: in the mornings I enjoyed waking up to the gentle Pacific Ocean breezes and at night I admired the lights on the huge ships floating less than a quarter mile away. Ministering things were tough. My parents have served 20 years in a church that numbers still only 30-35 people. People seem to be not as receptive to the gospel in Chile as they are in Mexico. **Continued on Page 2**

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*This Christian
 University is fulfilling
 the "Great
 Commission" by
 teaching and training
 Hispanic Christian
 students to reach the
 Hispanic World with
 the gospel of Jesus
 Christ.*

Sacred Music as guided by David Chapman (Continued)

David related his music background began when he was about 13, and began classical guitar lessons at 14. I studied throughout high school with my teacher in Chile, where my parents still serve as missionaries. Though my formal training did not continue, I have had many opportunities through college and afterward to continue developing my skills. The sacred recordings on which I have played mark highlights in my life.

With his varied background internationally I asked David if the music styles within the church are similar in most countries or very different. David states that there is no doubt that music styles represent cultural styles. So the real issue is to understand culture, and then you'll understand music. There exists a real danger of imposing American cultural styles (including music) upon those to whom we minister. This can happen no matter what the style (classical, popular, etc.). I believe that our focus should be on theological instruction, developing a passion for God in personal worship, and instructing in the musical skills that help to lead and organize corporate worship.

To better understand how music became such a central focus of UCLA I asked David about where that specific drive came from. He answer was that the music emphasis has grown very naturally with the school. Some of the (American) men that played key roles during the first years of the

University were musicians, and their burden has trickled down to the present. The musical activities were extra-curricular until the Sacred Music major was formed about 9 years ago. In spite of the relatively large number of Bible institutes and colleges in Mexico, we know of very few training centers that are deliberately training worship leaders. Our music de-



partment strives to help fill that void through competent musical training coupled with sound theological training and ministerial experience.

During our tour of the music facilities they have one room set aside for a future recording studio. I asked David what specifically he needs to finish it. The proposed budget for the studio was set at \$10,000, which would cover prepping the control room, wiring, acoustic treatment for the

recording room and control room, and basic recording equipment and software. We received some \$1200, which we used to buy wiring, and build a floor base and walls for the control room. What is left? The control room needs flooring (carpet/laminate), one more dry-wall section, window panes (\$300+), and acoustic treatment. The recording room needs acoustic treatment and some wiring. Finally, we still lack about 75% of the needed equipment.

Within 5 years I asked David where he would like to see the music program. I trust that in five years through the natural process of growth our musicians will be playing better music in better ways. More importantly, I hope that our department will be better meeting the needs of Spanish-speaking local churches. Specifically, I hope that the recording ministry is off the ground by then. I also hope that we will be able to offer a "certificate of church music", intended to help full-time workers or pastors to prepare themselves through a series of evening classes that accommodate their schedule.

Asking David what is one thing about UCLA that most people in the United States don't know what it would be. I think people in the states would be surprised to know how many churches we serve here. I have been blown away as I travel around visiting churches. There are hundreds of gospel-preaching churches in the Monterrey area alone! Mexico is not unreached; in fact, it is be

David Chapman continued

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American Christians need to see their economic, political, and social trials as springboards to invest

Although David's plans in future are a bit in flux as his brother Tom returns to UCLA to serve, one



coming one of the major centers for world evangelism. That is why the ministry that UCLA has is so crucial at this point in history.

Considering David has spent time in a number of countries, do you see a glaring need in the US that perhaps we don't see ourselves? I think people in the U.S. are very concerned right now with conserving what they've always had. Though I believe such an emphasis is important, perhaps my fellow

themselves in God's work around the world.

David relates that one of the most exciting aspects of our ministry here is the privilege of investing personally in the lives of young people who plan to serve the Lord with their lives, whether it is in a career or full-time ministry. It is even more satisfying to invest in those who come from outside the borders of Mexico. We are humbled to think that we can have an impact on distant countries like Peru and Spain, right here in Monterrey!

thing is certain. David's impact on the ministry and his music will have far reaching impact. You don't need to spend a lot of time at UCLA to feel the vibrancy of the music, the call to worship and the heart of ministry that David leads.



Degrees offered:

- Accounting
- Business
- Church Music
- Law
- Education
- Theology

In many respects Matthew became a “third-culture” kid. Not really Spanish, not really American, but a person who sees the world from multiple cultures. This is one unique aspect of growing up in a mission focused home. While that presents multiple challenges, Matthew stated he wouldn’t change that for the world. Having a global focus and multiple languages has produced many wonderful things in his life.

Now Matthew and his wife Susan are raising their own kids in a Spanish speaking country so I asked him if they speak Spanish or English at home. His response was English, just to ensure that they have a full grasp of both languages. Besides UCLA the church also has a complete elementary to high school system just across the street. Having the opportunity to see Matthew’s kids in school, I can witness the fact that being a missionary is a full family experience.

One thing that is never lost in the busyness of his day is the focus on Christ. Be it teaching, preaching or providing leadership, Christ is the guiding light by which he operates. I asked Matthew what he thought the greatest need is of the church he pastors. His answer was that a young church plant such as themselves is grounding them in the scriptures and teaching them the basics of truly living in a personal, vital relationship with Christ. Beyond that, it would be to get the men involved in the leadership of the church, not just have someone from the outside leading them.

If you get the opportunity to visit Monterrey, you quickly notice the setting is dominated by the Saddleback Mountains just a short distance from the school. I asked Matthew if Christ were to preach a sermon on that mountain today what He would say. His answer was forth telling: He would tell them that material things cannot satisfy the longing they sense in their hearts. Monterrey is the most prosperous and expensive city in Mexico. Just as many Mexicans travel to the US to find financial prosperity, many come to Monterrey looking

for jobs and wealth. Yet weekend after weekend we see the broken hearts, the empty eyes, and the longing souls of people who have not been able to find satisfaction and joy in their jobs, money and possessions. I think Christ would preach part of a sermon he preached on another mountain: “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things will be added unto you”.

I asked Matthew if a short-term mission team were to visit UCLA what would you like to see accomplished. His answer was we tailor the projects to the specific skill-sets that those team members have. In the past, we have had welders weld, electricians run wire, computer techs work in the computer lab, men put up drywall, women sewing curtains, carpenters staining wood and fixing dressers. Typically when a teen mission team comes we have them involved in ministering to the children and young people of the different churches in the area as well as simple manual labor like painting, moving equipment and the like.

Of course UCLA is there for the students so I asked Matthew what is the most significant change you have seen in students during your tenure there. Matthew says when we look at our graduates and compare what they are like when they graduate with what they were like when they arrived, we are humbled and blessed. Christ’s character is developed in so many of them. They have been actively involved in serving Christ and others through the local church ministry as students. When they come out of the university, they immediately become involved in the local church ministry wherever they go. Matthew goes on to say, I wish everybody could catch a glimpse of the way graduates are serving the Lord in Monterrey, in Mexico, and all around the world. Churches are being pastored. New churches are being planted. Missionaries are going to other countries. Graduates who are



not in full-time ministry are heavily involved in church ministry. Many of them work hand-in-glove with pastors of small local churches, aiding in teaching, preaching, evangelism, and church planting. The real story is not what happens on site. The real story is what happens when they leave. That is what UCLA is all about. Training Spanish-speaking laborers going out into the harvest, not just to Spanish-speaking countries, but all throughout the world.

Speaking with Matthew about what areas UCLA really needs financial help, he specifically stated that they have an urgent need to replace 15 year old A/C units (very important in a hot city) or upgrading the computer lab. From a more involved financial range they would really like to purchase a lot next to the university classroom building which would allow for adding more classrooms in the future.

From spending time with Matthew, watching his family in action, and visiting his church plant I came away from the experience with a renewed commitment to missions work. The gospel is being preached, students are being provided the education they need, and the work of Christ is transforming lives. If you have the opportunity from the local church to support Matthew, his family, and the work at UCLA, you can rest assured you are investing in a mighty work.