



June 2025 – Costa Rica ESI Visit

Thank you so much for praying during our 10 days in Costa Rica! We returned to Cleveland last night, deeply encouraged by what we saw—and burdened by the spiritual needs we encountered.

Our goal for this trip was to present ESI (Equipping Servants International) to several groups of pastors, hoping that some would catch the vision and commit to studying the Scriptures together in serious discipleship.

For Debbie and me, this visit carried special significance. We lived in San José in 1987 while learning Spanish. That was the year the Prosperity-Heresy began to gain ground across the country. Coming back now, 38 years later, we heard firsthand from pastors about the tragic long-term effects.

Although 33% of Costa Ricans today identify as Evangelical, many in the churches feel deeply disappointed with God. Pastors shared heartbreaking stories of people disillusioned after being promised miracles in exchange for money—promises that never came true. Many concluded that God 'doesn't work', that He can't be trusted. We heard from people spiritually wounded and cynical. One pastor described his church as "lukewarm."

We saw a sobering reality: discipleship has faded, few read the Bible, many have drifted into immorality or false teachings. In too many cases, the form of Christianity remains, but Christ is no longer at the center.

Yet even in the midst of this spiritual decline, we found hope. The pastors we met expressed deep concern—and a sincere hunger to return to Scripture. Many are eager to begin ESI Bible studies to recover a gospel-centered, disciple-making vision for the church.

In response to this, we have agreed to return to San José in February 2026 to lead a Facilitator Training Retreat. Please join us in praying that Pastors Luis and Jose will be able to gather 70 key pastors for that event. Ask God to prepare each heart and open the way for widespread transformation as these leaders begin studying God's Word daily—growing in their understanding that the Bible points to Jesus and the life-changing power of the gospel. Pray that pastors will become committed to preaching and teaching the Bible faithfully in their local churches!

Pray Colossians 1:28-29 with us: "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me."

We are deeply grateful for your prayers and your partnership in the gospel.

Kep and Debbie James

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