



Church of Christ

Missions

Campaign Venezuela 1995

When a campaign is put together, one hopes to accomplish 3 things: 1) Build up or grow the local work, 2) Encourage and help your missionary, and 3) Bring back inspired campaigners to work in our own mission field. Read the following first hand reports on the campaign work done in the city of Ciudad Guayana, Venezuela where South Baton Rouge supports Gary and Frances Green.

Gary Green, Missionary

In Puerto Ordaz we have worked with a long term plan for evangelizing our city, state and region. Before being able to launch out into our twin city, San Felix, which is very receptive to the gospel but financially unable to support a church, we decided to construct as strong a congregation as possible in Puerto Ordaz. From this base we would be able to reach out to San Felix, the newer portion of town called Unare, and then to the state capital as well as to other surrounding towns. Puerto Ordaz is definitely the uncontested "hub" of business and commerce in Southeastern Venezuela and one of the most important towns in all of Venezuela. Thus, the need is great for us to establish a strong church in Puerto Ordaz. With that in mind, we planned Campaign '95 in order to target Puerto Ordaz and augment the growth of the church in this portion of Ciudad Guayana. (Ciudad Guayana is a metropolitan area of 3 cities with a population of 500,000.) Looking back at the results, I believe that the campaign was a great success.

In simple numbers, our 32 campaigners joined with the local Christians to start 32 new personal Bible studies with 41 different visitors. At the same

time these campaigners delivered 300 courses to those who had responded to our radio advertisements. While some were delivering courses, others were doorknocking and enrolling new people in our correspondence courses. Approximately 223 people were enrolled in our course. At our night time meetings, 110 different people filled out "first time visitor" cards and we averaged 44 visitors per night. Our attendance average was 132 total with a high of 168 on the last Sunday.

Eight people have already been baptized as a result of the campaign and many more are sure to come. How well did we target Puerto Ordaz as opposed to our twin city San Felix? Of the 41 people involved in new personal Bible studies, only 3 come from San Felix and 6 of the 8 baptized come from Puerto Ordaz.



SBR Campaigners:

Greg & Andrea Phillips with Caleb and Angel, Bayardo & Anabel Jiron with Patricia and Miguel, Denis & Robbie Ruiz, Chuck & Leah Morris with Micah and Leah, Greg Douglas, Gerardo Bueso, Ruth Simien, Gabriella Chinchilla, Nora Fierro and Lea Carter

Since the campaign, the local church has picked up the slack in order to keep the momentum moving forward. Our lowest attendance since the campaign has been 99 and 16 different Christians are involved in studying the Bible with the new contacts. These 16 Christians represent 33% of our current membership. We are proud of our local members for their efforts in this follow up.

The local church knows that our work has just begun. The follow up from the campaign will take months of dedicated work. Our hope is that when we finally finish following up on all of the campaign contacts that we will have twice as much work ahead of us due to the new inroads we will have with many of their friends and families, not to mention the follow up from our correspondence courses.



Chuck baptizing Magaly

In short, we feel very excited about the results from Campaign '95! The base has been laid for a strong church in Puerto Ordaz which will continue to multiply through the years. If you were not able to participate in this campaign, we are already in the process of planning a medical missions campaign for June '96 in San Felix. Our goal for that campaign will be to establish a

separate church in San Felix. There is nothing that we would like more than to have you participate in such a great life changing experience - life changing for the people of Ciudad Guayana, life changing for you.

New Christians: Darinel & wife Nancy, Libia (Darinel's sister), Magaly, Patricia & Javier (sister and brother).





Patricia Jiron handing out invitations

Bayardo Jiron

Our trip to Ciudad Guayana was a wonderful growing experience. Some brothers and sisters had told me that a mission trip is a life-changing adventure. I did not fully understand what they were talking about until we experienced it. It is like "living the book of Acts" in two weeks.

The church is full of love for one another. Heaven must be

like the way we were -- all working, sharing, praising God, praying, eating and having fun in fellowship and love every day. Patricia and Miguel were impressed with the beautiful open hearts of the Christians in Ciudad Guayana. Anabel states "I feel so small compared to the great love they gave us."

It was good team work with excellent leadership from Gary Green and Daniel Mata. Gary, teamed with Daniel, is doing exemplary work for the Lord. Gary wears many hats in Venezuela and I can understand how tired he must feel at times. He is not only a missionary in the sense of preaching and reaching out, but he is also a counselor, a friend, a mentor who encourages people by his timely word and mostly by example. Gary and Daniel have been inspired by the Holy Spirit to have a great vision for the church in Venezuela.

We found a great openness in the hearts of people in Ciudad Guayana. They are hungry for God's word. We felt a sense of urgency in the work.

We had a family time like no other time! We felt so special to see our family doing something that does not come natural to do. We felt so proud seeing Patricia and Miguel handing out flyers and inviting people at the malls and on the streets. Once, they were asked to leave the mall...they were doing their job too good! It was wonderful for our family to feel so close and happy working all together for the same goal for Jesus.

We came back to Baton Rouge recharged with more energy to do the work of God. We came back with a new vision of ourselves as part of the kingdom of God and as to what is the purpose of our life in Baton Rouge.

Gerardo Bueso, an LSU student from Honduras has been a Christian about 1 year. He is shown here with Ana and David Guaicara. Gerardo states "What impressed me most was meeting Daniel Mata and David Guaicara. When I learned they had also become Christians while students at LSU, it gave me a vision that I could return to my country and do the same thing... share Jesus with my people."



When they weren't "fishing for men" by handing out flyers, the children were on the alert for other things! Micah & Leah Morris are shown with the iguana Micah caught.

Chuck Morris

The campaign was an inspiring event for me personally. It was a thrill to be able to devote that much time to personal evangelism with individuals hungry to know what the Bible teaches. Of equal importance, though, was the joy we felt in being able to share the experience with the Latin Americans from our Spanish ministry at South Baton Rouge. Most of the campaigners met our "first generation" of

Venezuelan Christians for the first time. It created in them a vision for the ministry in Baton Rouge and also a vision for themselves in their home country at a later date. Please pray that we will remain on a "campaign" among the Latin Americans here in Baton Rouge! Que Dios les bendiga.

Right: Chuck Morris, Mary & Daniel Mata

Lower Left: Ruth Simien, Gabriella Chinchilla, Robbie & Denis Ruiz cool off in the ice cream parlor.

Lower right: Leah Morris & Anabel Jiron share their "living water."

