

worldview

LATIN AMERICA
CARIBBEAN

LAC

LATIN AMERICA CARIBBEAN



Gaylon Wampler

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GREG MUNDIS
AGWM executive director



OUR VISION
Christ will be proclaimed and His Church will be established in all nations through the power of the Holy Spirit.

OUR MISSION
Establishing the Church among all peoples everywhere by reaching, planting, training and serving.

THIS MONTH IN WORLDVIEW

Across Latin America and the Caribbean, the Holy Spirit is moving forward. From packed urban centers to protected Stone Age tribes in the mountains and along the Amazon River, LAC's cultures are numerous. So are its challenges. Many in the Church have viewed LAC as "reached" – having had sufficient gospel witness. Yet massive unreached areas still exist, and even the most evangelized area is only one generation from once again becoming totally unreached. Jesus' work in LAC is not done. And as Latin American and Caribbean believers continue responding to Him with brave faith, we rejoice to see LAC rising as a sending region—sending missionaries from their own nations into all the world.

JOHN EASTER
AGWM Partnership Development director



H O P E F O R

U R U G U A Y

By Kristel Ringer Zelaya



L A T I N A M E R I C A C A R I B B E A N

IN 2017, *WorldView* magazine visited the Latin American nation of Uruguay, meeting with remarkable missionaries and Uruguayan faith leaders. In the years since, the Lord's work has continued against all odds, and now is blossoming in wonderful ways.

Few testimonies are as exquisite as that of Uruguayan pastor and church planter Claudia Oggero. Originally told in “Beauty Born of Brokenness,” the September 2017 *WorldView*, Claudia’s story perfectly embodies Jesus’ ongoing healing of Uruguay.

Seventeen-year-old Claudia Oggero lay on the road bleeding. Swirling around her, she heard the voices of neighbors and friends she had known her entire life. “Who is this person? Does anyone recognize her or know where she lives?”

Moments before, Claudia had been on her bicycle, peddling down the road to work. Suddenly, straight in front of her was a truck. It slammed into Claudia, sending her flying from her bike and crushing her face.

Somehow, despite the searing pain in her head and down her spine, Claudia managed to identify herself. An ambulance was called, but instead of letting her lie still, well-intentioned neighbors dragged Claudia by her arms back to her home. There her sister screamed in terror, and her mother broke into hysterical tears.

“Please, just leave me alone,” Claudia slurred. “I want to pray.”

While she was resting alone in her room, she heard the voice of Jesus. She had accepted Him as Savior years ago when her family, desperate for healing and financial provision, began attending a Pentecostal church.

“Share testimonies about Me,” the Voice said, “and in three days, I will heal you.”

Claudia believed the promise.

She was rushed to the hospital, where doctors declared many bones in her back were broken. Even if she were to undergo multiple facial reconstruction surgeries, they told her, she would never be whole again. “No,” Claudia said. “I will be healed.”

The next day, despite everyone’s protests, Claudia went to school, intent on telling everyone of God’s promise to heal her. Some students openly wept when they saw her; others screamed in fear. The librarian fainted.

Claudia returned to school again the next day. Her friend, whose father was a renowned plastic surgeon, tried to console her. “Don’t worry. My father can operate on you.”

“No, thank you,” Claudia replied firmly. “My Father will operate on me.”

That afternoon when she got home, Claudia pled with the Lord. “Father, I know You will not embarrass Your children. I will trust in You.”

She went into the bathroom to gently wash her injured face. Bending toward the water, Claudia was horrified to see clumps of battered flesh falling from her face into the sink. A sensation she describes as “ants rushing through my skin” seized her. She felt her mouth and nose begin to move and snap. Terrified, Claudia could not bring herself to look up at the mirror.

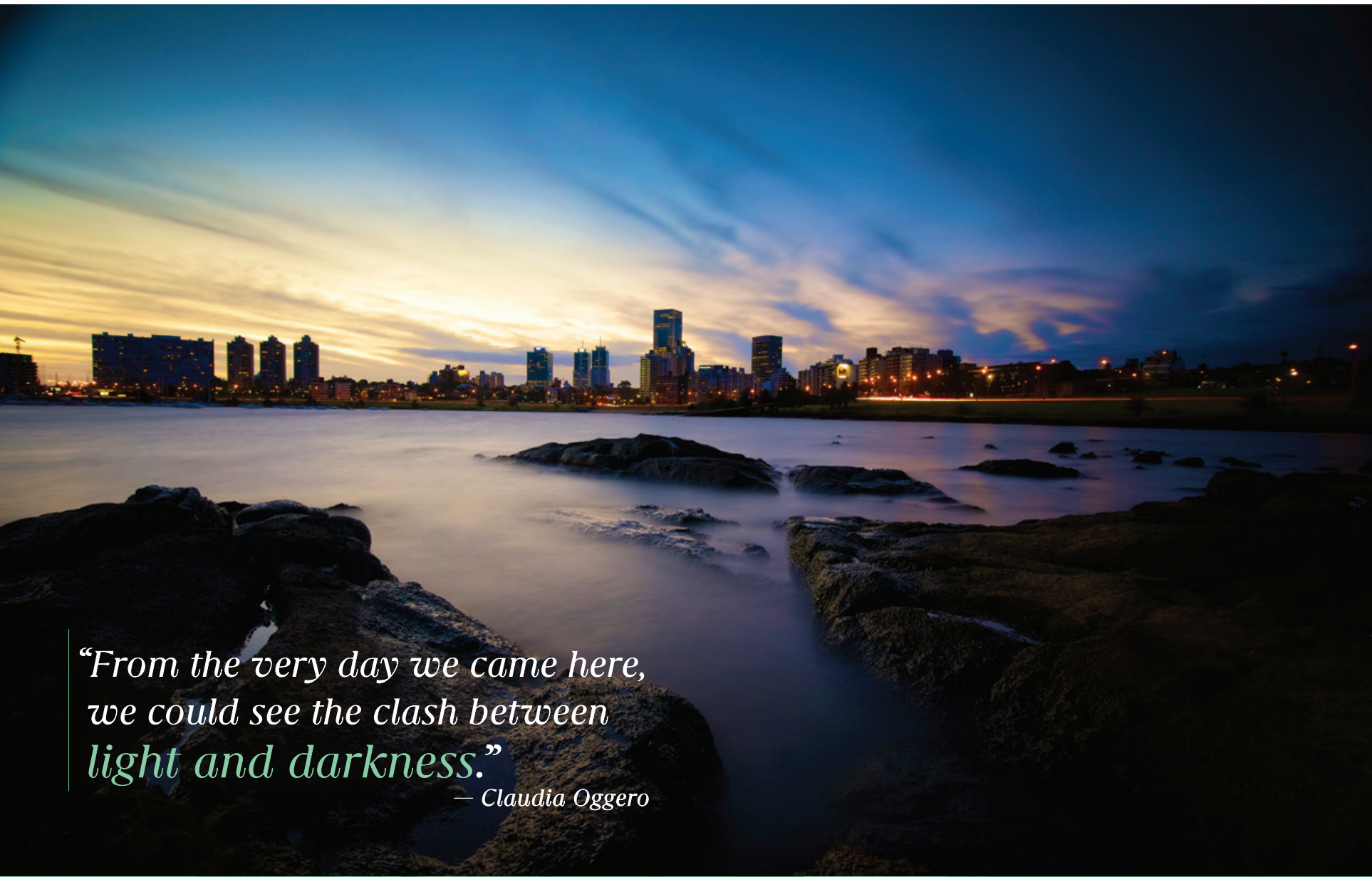
Finally, she raised her eyes to the glass. The face looking back at her—her face—was perfect, precise, whole.

Doctors had no explanation. No broken bones could be found anywhere in her body, and her face was perfectly restored. “Not even the best doctor in the world could have done this,” one surgeon stammered. “Not even on a newborn child have I seen skin so beautiful. Your God is real.”



“Not even the best doctor in the world could have done this. Not even on a newborn child have I seen skin so beautiful. Your God is real.”

Claudia Oggero



“From the very day we came here, we could see the clash between light and darkness.”
— Claudia Oggero

WHERE LIGHT AND DARKNESS CLASH

Claudia’s story did not end with the miraculous healing of her face at age 17. She went on to Bible school, where she experienced more of God’s prophetic and miraculous work in her life. She met and married Pablo Garcia, and together they pastor a small AG church—Center of Faith—which began in one cement building on a small plot of land. Across the street is a meeting hall that can be rented for parties and other events—a front for the largest drug ring in the area.

Claudia says, “From the very day we came here, we could see the clash between light and darkness.”

Yet she and Pablo continue in their ministry, unafraid. The God who completely and miraculously healed her is the God who protects them, their home, and their church.

He is also the God who called and sustains AGWM missionaries to Uruguay Steve and Jill McCarthy. He has placed the McCarthys on the forefront of Hope for Uruguay 100—a remarkable church planting initiative aimed at establishing 100 new churches in 10 years in the least-reached parts of Uruguay and helping provide permanent structures for these new and growing congregations (builduruguay.org).

Steve says, “There is momentum and an excitement to touch every corner of the nation, giving every Uruguayan the opportunity to have access to a good Spirit-filled, Bible-believing church. Over the past few years we’ve had two generations of church

planters go through our yearlong training and mentorship program. As a result, over 25 new churches have been planted. In the last 14 months alone, 14 new churches were built, fully funded and all with the help of local volunteers.”

One of the new buildings was for Center of Faith. Pablo and Claudia were able to buy the original property they had been renting, as well as the adjoining one. There a brand-new sanctuary was built, and next door they built their home. Claudia also continues to teach at two local public schools, boldly sharing that God still does miracles.



The McCarthy family



Claudia and Pablo

HOPE FOR URUGUAY

Even within Hope for Uruguay 100, the team has witnessed many miracles, Steve and Jill share. These miracles include both provision for and advancement of their work, as well as miracles in the hearts and lives of individuals touched by the work.

As Uruguayan church leadership became increasingly excited about church planting and recognized the importance of having a permanent structure, the McCarthys challenged leaders to begin acquiring property. They realize that having permanent buildings adds immense value for the congregation, gives local pastors credibility in the community, and provides a central community location for evangelism, discipleship, worship and fellowship. Builders International—part of AGWM International Ministries—agreed to come alongside, and the movement gained traction.

Then, just days before the first building teams were to arrive from the United States, the COVID-19 pandemic hit and borders closed.

Steve says, “We debated whether it was the right time to launch an initiative of this magnitude when there were so many financial challenges and no construction teams from the States could enter the country. However, we couldn’t shake the thought that in spite of these challenges, there were still lost people that desperately needed to know Jesus. We decided to move forward and trust God to do the impossible. And without a doubt, He has!”

Hope for Uruguay 100 moved forward, and the churches were built by new believers and other volunteers from neighboring churches.



Right page These 7 new churches show the promise of Hope for Uruguay 100.



“We decided to move forward and trust God to do the impossible. And without a doubt, He has!”

The project continues to be a beautiful example of partnership between the McCarthys as AGWM missionaries, the Uruguayan church, Builders International, and generous U.S. churches and individual donors.

At the one-year anniversary celebration of the first church built in 2020, Steve and Jill met many of the 124 individuals who committed their lives to Jesus in the new church. Jill says, “The church had to hold multiple baptism services this past year in order to accommodate all of these new believers!”

At another recent build, a retired man named Antonio came every day to help with the construction. His wife began to share with Jill how she had been attending the church, but her husband and older children never came with her. She was surprised to see that her husband wanted to help with the construction.

At the conclusion of the dedication service for the new building, Antonio told Steve the reason he had come each day to help was that he sensed something different about the church—that it was a place of love and peace, and when he was around the men from the church, he began to wonder if God might exist. With tears in his eyes, he informed Steve that he had invited his children and grandchildren to the service because he wanted them present when he gave his life to Christ.

“I had the privilege of praying with Antonio in front of his whole family as he took that step of faith,” Steve says. “Since then, Antonio was baptized, had his addiction to alcohol broken, and has shown up to help with construction on three different churches.”

In 2022, the McCarthys are believing to train and mentor 30 people with the goal of establishing new churches and also to help build permanent structures for six more congregations.



Below Baptism at one of the new church starts. Students at the drug rehab center.



In the last five to 10 years, violent crime in Uruguay has risen steeply due to a huge influx of drug activity.



REACHING A VIOLENT CITY

In addition to church planting, an exciting move of God is also occurring among Uruguay's broken and addicted.

Once a peaceful place, the capital city of Montevideo is crowned by beaches, palm trees, exotic flowers, cacti and the occasional Antarctic penguin swept along as the mighty Río de la Plata meets the Atlantic Ocean along the city's edge. The beaches are a source of great pride; special machines clean and groom the sand, combing it into swirling patterns.

Yet Montevideo is flooded by rampant drug use and drug-related violence and is viewed as a primary embarkation point for drugs headed to Europe. The entire nation is marked by drug problems, insecurity and widespread disbelief.

In response to this ugly shift in their capital's culture, the Uruguay Assemblies of God purchased land in 2017 to build the Salto Drug Rehab Center. Admission is based solely on each individual's desire to be free from the sinister authority of addiction.

Located about 300 miles north of Montevideo, the Salto Drug Rehab Center was formally founded by Uruguayan pastors Uber and Soledad Borges in July 2016, after they became involved in drug rehab because of their son's ongoing addiction.

Built on 27 acres of property, the center includes vocational training for students and graduates. MAPS teams from churches in Tennessee and Washington assisted with the construction of the campus's first building, which contains a chapel, a kitchen and dormitories. Staff and students are finding innovative ways to meet daily needs—including making weights for the workout area from concrete-filled buckets.

The need for such a center is profound. In the last five to 10 years, violent crime in Uruguay has risen steeply due to a huge influx of drug activity. The use of "pasta base," a paste leftover after manufacturing cocaine, has become rampant. The paste is notoriously strong and addictive; one use can potentially scrub the brain.



worldview
VIDEO

To view a compelling video on Uruguay please visit vimeo.com/agwmvideo/uruguay-21-wv

Uruguay's History

- A nation of extraordinary natural beauty, Uruguay was originally peopled by a warlike tribe called the Charrúa, and then colonized by the Spanish and Portuguese in the 1500s. Three hundred years later, when Uruguay claimed its independence from Brazil and Argentina, the Charrúa and two other native tribes, the Chaná and Guaraní, had shrunk to a total of only about 500 people because of constant warfare and the introduction of European diseases.
- On April 11, 1831, Uruguayan President Fructuoso Rivera gathered the indigenous peoples together under the guise of rewarding them for their aid in winning independence. He supplied heavy amounts of alcohol, and once the native men were drunk, ordered every single one slaughtered by the Uruguayan army. The remaining Charrúa women and children were pressed into slavery, and by 1840 only 18 of them were left alive.
- Uruguay is the only Latin American nation known to have no indigenous influence or population.

“Yes, the needs are great, but the Lord is blessing our work, and lives are being transformed by the power of His Spirit.”

— The Friths



Bob and Jennifer Frith

REBUILDING THE BROKEN

In February 2018, veteran AGWM missionaries to Uruguay Bob and Jennifer Frith joined the Uruguay Assemblies of God in its endeavors at the Salto Drug Rehab Center. They say, “We were impacted by the vision, the mentality, and the effectiveness of the program. Therefore, we have established a long-distance involvement of raising funds primarily for food, equipment and supplies.”

Fifteen students are currently enrolled, with a maximum capacity of 20 (a number currently reduced due to COVID-19). Due to the economic status of those entering the program, there are no charges to participate. Being a totally faith-based system, the center is financially dependent on people who believe in its mission.

Bob and Jennifer explain that the center’s effectiveness is largely due to the involvement of students’ families in the rehabilitation process. Since strong support is needed for each student to graduate, one of the admission requirements is a commitment to family involvement in all aspects of the recovery process.

Each Saturday, the center hosts a fellowship for students and their families, providing refreshments and time together with pastors and staff. This interaction not only benefits students, but has also resulted in 20-25 family members being reached for Jesus and becoming faithful attendees of Uber and Soledad Borges’ local church.

And in a wonderful partnership come full circle, both staff and students of the Salto Rehab Center have assisted Hope for Uruguay 100 in church-building projects in Salto and Paysandú, just a few years after the Hope for Uruguay team sent a crew to help build the rehab center’s dorm and church.

“God has called us to be actively involved in this very worthy project,” the Friths say. “We are seeking partners who will provide funds for equipment, supplies and food to ensure that students’ physical needs are met as God ministers to their spiritual and emotional needs. Yes, the needs are great, but the Lord is blessing our work, and lives are being transformed by the power of His Spirit.”



Against a backdrop of spiritual darkness, Jesus’ works in these lives shine all the brighter and come as a breath of fresh, vibrant air in an otherwise suffocating environment.



RESTORING THE HURTING

“Modern Uruguay is a melting pot of European immigrants from nations like Italy, Spain, Germany, Poland and Russia,” says Bob. “This means that many of the statistics regarding Christianity in Europe are mirrored in Uruguay. Only 3% to 5% of Uruguayans are evangelical Christians. About 3% of Montevideo’s population attends Catholic mass regularly, but it has no measurable effect on their lifestyle. Most Uruguayans profess to be atheists and agnostics.”

Uruguay—a self-declared socialist state—embraces secularism to an extent that distinguishes it from the rest of Latin America. Prostitution, marijuana, abortion and same-sex marriage have all been legalized. Uruguay has one of the highest suicide rates on the continent, with an extremely high index of adolescent suicide. The divorce rate is estimated to be 50% or higher. “Tolerance” and “inclusivity” are prized above all, and African occult religions are seeping in by way of Brazil.

Education is also highly prized in Uruguay, which boasts literacy rates equal to those of the United States. Yet any kind of Christian witness is forbidden in schools, and from a young age children are taught that it is scientifically impossible for God to exist.

“When God is taken out of a culture and society, the result is tragic,” states Jennifer.

To strategically position herself to reach those outside the Church who are suffering the symptoms of brokenness, Jennifer obtained a master’s degree in Human Services Counseling and works in conjunction with a licensed Uruguayan Christian counselor. From that position, she can speak biblical, Christ-centered truths for healing and help into the lives of many.

“Humanism and self-sufficiency are number 1 problems here,” Bob says. “So many view Christianity as a crutch and a sign of weakness—a lack of faith in oneself. The word *church* has a bad connotation. The need in Uruguay is great, but the Lord is blessing our work and lives are being transformed by the power of His Spirit. People who are hurting, afraid and living with a sense of hopelessness are increasingly receptive to the life, peace and hope only found in relationship with Jesus Christ.”

In 1996, Bob and Jennifer planted Cordón Christian Center, which to this day remains one of the strongest churches in Uruguay. Since 2004 they have pastored Abundant Life church, which they also planted. Recognizing that many Uruguayans simply will never visit church, they have also invested heavily in literature distribution over the years, composing and distributing tens of thousands of packets of evangelistic literature, with many miraculous salvations resulting.

“People who are hurting, afraid and living with a sense of hopelessness are increasingly receptive to the life, peace and hope only found in relationship with Jesus Christ.”

— Bob Frith

SENDING AND STANDING STRONG

Additionally, Jennifer was asked by the Uruguay Assemblies of God to develop a School of Missions in response to the growing number of Uruguayan believers being called to missionary service in other countries and finding themselves in need of training. Approximately 230 persons have attended the School of Missions, and 77 have graduated.

“Uruguayan missionaries are being called to parts of Asia, the Middle East and North Africa where it’s more difficult for anyone with a North American passport to go,” says Steve, whom Bob and Jennifer influenced when he and Jill initially arrived to serve in Uruguay. “Latin America truly is becoming a sending continent. However, the work here is not done. We must preserve and perpetuate the incredible work that has been done here. We are believing for new people with the call of God to come to Latin America, to come to Uruguay.”

As they work to usher in Jesus’ will for Uruguay, missionaries and Uruguayan believers alike find themselves faced with spiritual oppression, insecurity, loneliness and more. They are keenly aware of their need of the prayers of fellow believers as they lean on the Lord for strength and protection.

“There is a spiritual heaviness here,” Jill says. “At times, it feels like we’re trying to swim against the current. Even believers and leaders struggle with depression, but we know God can break that stronghold. We believe good things are in store for Uruguay, and we’ve already begun to see it happen.”

Bob and Jennifer agree. “After ministering in Uruguay for over three decades, it is an extremely exciting time to be a part of what God is doing. Workers are being prepared for the harvest, new churches are being planted, Uruguayan missionaries are being trained to serve around the world, and lives are being transformed daily. With great anticipation, we are looking forward to what God will do. Please pray with us for God to anoint His Church with power and authority to break the strongholds in this nation, confirming His Word with supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit.”

With authority over all darkness, the Lord—the expert Healer and compassionate Father who restored Claudia Oggero’s life

and face—is working across Uruguay to restore many more broken lives, bringing total wholeness that will, over time, transform the face of a nation.

Steve and Jill say, “For years Uruguay has been regarded as one of the greatest spiritual deserts in the world. Yet lately there is a sense that this is changing. Our churches desire to see gospel transformation in every area of our lives, and in every life in our area. Without a doubt, exciting progress is being made. But there are still many lost, living in communities with no evangelical churches. They desperately wait to hear the good news. Lost people matter, disciples need to be made, and the harvest plentiful.”

KRISTEL RINGER ZELAYA
AGWM Communications



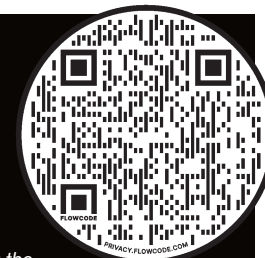
YOUR MOVE

PRAY • Pray with us for spiritual awakening in the hearts of Uruguayan people. Pray also for the next generation of new church planters—both Uruguayans and missionaries—the Lord is raising up, and for economic provision for the construction of 100 new churches.

GIVE • Help establish new churches and build permanent structures for new and growing congregations by scanning the code here or by visiting giving.ag.org and donating to account # 210752, class (60) Church Planting/Construction.

GO • The Lord is rebuilding the nation of Uruguay—opportunities to join His work are numerous! To learn more about Hope for Uruguay 100 and to find even more practical ways to pray and give—or to come help build new churches—visit www.builduruguay.org.

Scan the QR code to find out more.



Our churches desire to see gospel transformation in every area of our lives, and in every life in our area.

Mapping

THE NEED



Latin America Caribbean area directors

ANDEAN:

David and Margot Woodworth

CARIBBEAN:

David and Kristen Speer

CENTRAL AMERICA:

Jay and Nancy Dickerson

MEXICO:

David and Kelly Godzwa

SOUTHERN CONE:

Mike and Dodey Files

39

Countries

648

Unreached people groups

489

Missionaries & associates

15

Countries without missionaries

654,417,390

Total population in LAC

82%

Spiritually lost

LAC

lacworldmissions.org

*Interview with David Ellis
&
Updates from Latin America
Caribbean's area directors*

LATIN AMERICA CARIBBEAN: UNIQUE IN THEIR FAITH, CONFIDENCE AND HOPE”

WorldView spoke with AGWM Latin America Caribbean Regional Director David Ellis to hear his heart for the region, and to gain a better understanding of the places often mistakenly assumed to be already reached with the gospel. AGWM Latin America Caribbean area directors relate their greatest needs.

AGWM Latin America Caribbean references “The Other Five”—meaning that only 1 in 6 people in this region have a real relationship with Jesus. Tell us about those other five. Who are they? What are their lives and belief systems like?

It could be said that they fall into one of three categories:
1. *The Forgotten—indigenous unreached people groups in six countries of the Amazon basin, including Brazil*

2. *The Insignificant—the marginalized and poor*
3. *The Uncountable—the urban masses*

How can readers understand LAC’s varied missions environments and needs?

The above descriptions can help understand what environments exist in LAC. It is also true that most people in LAC have been raised to believe in the Catholic church. It is part of their history and cultures to believe that belonging to this church—considered in

many countries to be the national religion—connects them to their family, their country, and their history, and somehow is enough to please God. However, now this is usually no more than a profession of belief in the religion, along with the many practices they have been taught (which includes a lot of syncretism—blending Catholicism with other traditional religions). It is acceptable in LAC for a person to frequent witch doctors and shamans to obtain what they want, and the young generation is turning its back on the religions of their fathers, becoming more secular.



*David Ellis,
Latin America Caribbean regional director*



Andean: David and Margot Woodworth

We are privileged to work alongside a great team of missionaries in the Andean area (Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia). Our team has worked shoulder to shoulder with our host churches all through the pandemic and has been very creative in presenting the gospel and helping those in need in holistic ways.

We want to highlight both the example and the need in Venezuela. While facing very difficult circumstances over the past two years, the church has doubled its number of credentialed ministers and leads our region in starting new churches. Please pray with us for creative access and ways to help meet the needs of churches, pastors and their communities.



Caribbean: David and Kristen Speer

The Caribbean community in South America stretches over more than 1 million square miles from Cuba to French Guyana and is comprised of 15 sovereign states and 17 dependent territories. The community is multi-lingual, with Spanish, English, French, French-Creole, Dutch, Antillean Creole, and various indigenous languages spoken. Most of the inhabitants have cultural roots in West Africa, India, China, Indonesia, and Europe.

The amalgam of culture and language also shows up in religion, with large unreached populations of Muslims, Hindus, animists, and those who practice the Afro-Caribbean religions of Voodoo and Santería.

We are praying and believing for workers to join teams planting churches in the Spanish-, French- and Dutch-speaking areas of the Caribbean!



Central America: Jay and Nancy Dickerson

The seven countries of Central America – Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama – are represented by many diverse cultures inhabiting the area. From those who have called Central America home for many years to newer diaspora of cultures immigrating, each group needs an adequate witness of the gospel. More workers are needed to reach universities, gang populations, tribal groups, and traditional people groups, and also unreached populations, including Chinese, Arabs and Buddhists. Pray for more workers to come and make a difference in the lives of each of these distinct cultures, one person at a time.

Latin urban centers could be characterized by secularism and a belief in witch doctors, who some would view as counselors. Finally, in the Amazon you would encounter a mostly animist population. Power encounters with demonic forces are common both in the jungles and in urban centers.

How is the truth of Jesus best communicated in LAC?

With an awareness that many people are familiar with concepts taught in the Catholic church you can present Jesus as the Son of God and son of Mary, whom they revere. We have found that with this awareness, the stories of what Jesus said and did in the Gospels has a powerful effect. And what makes a big difference in LAC are miracles and power encounters. When starting new churches, church planters often announce meeting times with assurance of Jesus' healing and miracles.

What kinds of challenges do missionaries face while sharing Jesus in LAC?

Missionaries face rejection and resistance because of nationality and they will face the challenge of resistance from traditional religions and from demonic forces. It takes patience, persistence and the protection of Jesus' blood to start a church in LAC.

How do you see the Holy Spirit equipping His servants in the face of challenges?

The only way to face opposition is with the help of the Holy Spirit. If the missionary or church leader is new and is not familiar with the Holy Spirit and His work through us, it is beneficial for them to be a part of a church plant so they can learn how to work with the Holy Spirit.

Many people see Latin American missionaries as leaders in the future of the missions movement. How can we come alongside them?

I totally agree. Latin American and Caribbean missionaries have backgrounds and experiences that make them unique in their faith, confidence and hope in the Holy Spirit. Right now, what is happening is that AGWM missionaries are helping the LAC missionary with finances, with partnership, and even in the formation of multi-national teams. We are beginning to see missionary teams being populated and even led by people from LAC. This is a new and exciting development!

How can readers best pray for missionaries serving LAC and for local churches and leaders there?

Please pray with us for:

- *More missionaries to come to LAC to help plant churches and teach in Bible schools*
- *Missionaries from LAC to be raised up to help reach the Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu worlds*
- *An outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon every country in the LAC region that will cause "the other five" to be reached*
- *Specifically for the countries of Mexico, Haiti, Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia and Uruguay, all of which have very unique needs* 🙏



Southern Cone: Mike and Dodey Files

Among the five nations of LAC's Southern Cone – Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay – the nations of Brazil and Uruguay represent our greatest needs and the cry of our heart for the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers. Brazil's Amazon river basin has over 100 unreached tribes, and we are asking Jesus for a team of at least five missionary units to be part of reaching these tribes. The country of Uruguay is a self-declared socialist state, known for its self-sufficiency, humanism, and one of the highest rates of atheism in the western hemisphere. We need workers to teach at the Bible school and to establish the Church. Please pray with us for workers!



Mexico: David and Kelly Godzwa

While the population of evangelicals is on the rise, nearly 9 out of ten Mexicans have yet to put their faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord. In addition, there are vast swaths of the country, ranging from remote areas to teeming urban universities to large Deaf communities, that have yet to experience an adequate witness of the gospel. Throughout the country, people are locked in sin and shame. More than anything, Mexico needs those who would proclaim to them the message of deliverance.

“It takes patience, persistence and the protection of Jesus' blood to start a church in LAC.”

—David Ellis

PERU



The Price of Redemption

Story by James Wright
Photos by Gaylon Wampler

G

God desires to save all who are lost—even those who appear inaccessible. The people of Peru, from high in the Andes Mountains to deep within the jungles of the Amazon River, ensure the reality that following easy paths will not bring salvation to “the ends of the earth” (Acts 13:46, ESV). And the dedication of AGWM’s Latin America Caribbean missionaries makes clear God’s love for indigenous peoples, who usually dwell far from the beaten paths.

Latin America is known for some of the world's most powerful revivals. The Brazil Assembly of God reports over 15 million members. Stories of miraculous salvations and healings from revivals in Argentina are still reverberating around the world. But this common knowledge of Latin America does not reflect the unknowable complexity in cultures and languages found within the 627 unreached people groups in LAC. Missionaries and partner churches, like the Peru Assemblies of God, face real challenges to reach the 16 million souls comprising the people groups in their areas.

In the Cusco region of Peru, stories of the former Incan empire still resonate with the proud heritage of the Quechua, who are Incan descendants. The city of Cusco was the head of the former empire, and just down the mountain is Machu Picchu, religious head of the empire.

Lisa and Bob Holloway



Her husband said Marcusa would be better dead, because she cost more than he could afford.

MOUNTAIN CHURCH

At 11,000 feet, Cusco is a mountainous region. When lowlanders—like AGWM missionaries to Peru Bob and Lisa Holloway—first ascend past 10,000 feet, they need to start paying attention to the altitude. Their bodies adapt slowly to the difference in the air pressure.

However, the Holloways are not new to ministering in difficult situations. Living and ministering in Peru for the last four years, Bob speaks passionately about the need for local pastors and missionaries among UPGs in Latin America. He reports that there are not quite 1,000 churches in the Cusco region. Yet the government reports the region has 5,126 population centers.

“This statistic is always on my mind,” Bob says. “What do we do to plant the 4,000 churches needed?”

Jesus has not forgotten Peru’s mountain tribes. The move of God in mountainous Peru that *WorldView** reported on in 2017 is still ongoing. The story of Marcusa Huamán is compelling evidence of the price of church planting in the Cusco region of Peru.

At almost 13,000 feet, Marcusa’s village of Huayllarccocha is a community with no evangelical church. Images of animals and warriors abound in the village—residents hope and believe that the imagery will provide some protection from evil spirits. This is a farming community that lives on wheat, potatoes and quinoa.

While frequent sightings of llamas and alpacas around Huayllarccocha may seem like a dream, the hard work is anything but that. Marcusa, like others in the village, spends most of her time working in the fields. Looking like a typical Quechuan, her hat made from alpaca hair barely holds her dark braids—arranged more for function than vanity. Her passion for and deep commitment to Jesus easily transmit across the language barrier.

Before her husband’s co-worker led her to Jesus, Marcusa had fallen very ill. Even though she relied on the high-priced services of the local shaman, she got worse and worse. Her husband, facing crushing pressure from the prices of the shaman and Marcusa’s inability to work, said Marcusa would be better dead, because she cost more than he could afford.

Thankfully, Jesus was willing to pay the price for Marcusa’s salvation. Even though Marcusa had prayed twice for her own death, Christ turned her life around so much that she is now the one bringing life to her community.

After she converted to Christianity, Marcusa’s family turned their back on her. Yet she celebrates her freedom in Christ, knowing that she never again needs to be bound to the high cost of witch doctors. Held back from deep comprehension of written Scripture because of her limited education, she worships through song and the stories she has learned from the Bible. Quechuans love to sing, and Quechuan Christians themselves have hundreds of songs. Their worship time can take up most of their church service.

Marcusa is excited about and committed to planting the church in Huayllarccocha. The AGWM team works together with the Peru Assemblies of God and loyal Christ followers like Marcusa to plant God’s church among the Quechua, who are hungry for something better and real.



Marcusa Huamán



* For more of Marcusa’s story see *WorldView* Volume 3, Number 12.



FIRST-CENTURY STRATEGY

It is easy to see that reaching people like Marcusa is not for the faint of heart. The lands they live in, whether mountain or jungle, are each in their own way difficult to experience, and daily life is hard. The culture and languages are also hard to penetrate. Bob is clear about the difficulties of overcoming accessibility issues and communicating effectively.

Additionally, many indigenous people are illiterate. Marcusa reports that she has a second-grade education, not uncommon among the Quechua in Cusco. Those who leave the village for education frequently do not return. Bob reports that even students who travel for biblical training often find ministry in the city and do not return home.

But something culturally deeper is also at play. Many indigenous people are oral learners—that is, they do not read the language they speak.

Rather, they have a deep desire to process and learn through story. That is how they keep their history and culture. It is how they best respond to the story of God's grace and redemption for them. Bob says, "You can see the lightbulbs come on when we tell stories!"


Oral learners can follow Christ much like many New Testament believers—who were also from oral cultures—did. The process of reaching them with Jesus' story and subsequent discipleship can look different, but it is Bible-based and strategic. Besides adapting to the local learning style, the LAC network that Bob represents has found other keys to reaching people in distant places and cultures: they work



in teams, and their teams learn indigenous languages and cultures (a substantial investment of time). These two methods have given strength to their efforts and allowed God to work.

THEIR FUTURE

Though Cusco has been a very difficult place for missionaries, the AGWM team in Cusco continues to grow. Operating together helps them to confront spiritual warfare and support one another. One more family is expected to finish language school and be in Peru in January 2022.

Bob and Lisa Holloway have been praying for more workers in the mountains of Peru for years, even before they left Venezuela. Bob says, "We know that God has us here for a purpose. If nothing else, we are here to raise up future workers. We may not be the ones to see the success we are all praying for, but we can prepare others to do it." 

JAMES WRIGHT
AGWM Communications

worldview

ANNOUNCEMENT

We are excited to announce some upcoming changes to the schedule of WorldView magazine.

In January 2022, *WorldView* will shift to a bi-monthly schedule—each year you will receive one copy every other month. Great effort and prayer will continue to go into each of these six *WorldViews*, which are created to inform readers, inspire prayers, and mobilize those the Lord is calling to step forward onto the mission field. *WorldView* is a leading piece within AGWM because of the stories it tells—it speaks from the frontlines of missions today.

We will be updating our subscription prices to minimize our use of missions funds in *WorldView*. This takes effect amid drastic changes in the printing industry and reflects the increased costs of travel for both writers and photographers. The new annual cost for individual subscriptions will be \$12.00. Bundle subscriptions are \$4.30 (minimum of 6).

These changes are a direct result of AGWM's goal to provide more resources, not fewer. In addition to these magazines, we are redoubling our efforts in the development of new, interactive digital and physical resources and on other AGWM publications and resources that we sincerely hope you will take advantage of:

— Primeline magazine —

Produced three times annually in partnership with Assemblies of God (USA) Senior Adult Ministries, *Primeline* tells the stories of key missional leaders and veteran missionaries still active on the field. It also provides encouragement and resources for those seeking to transfer their faith to generations coming behind them. Subscribe to *Primeline* by visiting sam.ag.org.

— Social media —

AGWM's most up-to-the-minute prayer requests, updates and more are shared via Facebook and Instagram. We seek to bring quality social media content that encourages those who follow the Lord and also testifies to those who do not.

We thank every WorldView subscriber—you are the backbone of our mission as we seek to establish the Church among all peoples everywhere.

AGWM

ABCs *of* Salvation

To know God and place your trust in His Son as your Savior...

A. Admit you are a sinner.

*"There is no one righteous, not even one...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"
(Romans 3:10, 23, NIV).*

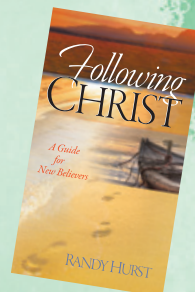
B. Believe in Jesus as your only hope of salvation.

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"
(John 3:16, NIV).*

C. Confess that Jesus is your Lord.

"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9, NIV).

Let us know you have accepted Jesus as your Savior, and we will send you a free booklet as you begin your walk with God. Please visit agwm.org/salvation and provide your mailing address to receive *Following Christ*.



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