

southern SENTINEL

of Gospel Mission of South America

Issue

03

September
2009

Church Planting in Chivilcoy

by Lois Kenney and Lois McAllister

As two single lady missionaries, we usually form part of a church planting team with a missionary couple or with a national pastor and his wife. After our last church plant in Maipú (Santiago, Chile), we sought the Lord's direction for our next place of service. He opened the door for us to work in Argentina.

In December 1999, we moved to Chivilcoy, Argentina, to become part of a church planting team with missionary pastor Tom Gibbons, his wife Debbie, and their four children. This move involved some big changes for us as we went from a fast growing church plant in a suburb of the capital city of Chile to a very slow church plant in a small town in Argentina. Right away we found that the Argentine people are much more reserved and closed to the truth of the Gospel, perhaps because the Catholic religion is so ingrained in their society.



Evangelizing door to door or working with children to reach the parents were not methods that brought results in Chivilcoy. Instead, forming friendships and establishing a good testimony in the neighbourhood proved important for winning people's confidence and thereby gaining opportunities to share the Gospel. This takes time! So, as we prayed and sought to win our friends and neighbors to the Lord, we missionaries were basically the only ones in attendance at our "church" meetings in the Gibbons' home for about one and a half years years. During this time, we did have some evangelistic



teas for our lady friends, evangelistic parties for children, as well as a children's Bible club, but very few came. Believe us, we were very happy for each one of those few!

As in all of our mission's church plants, we work as teams together with the Lord! HE gives the increase in His timing. Little by little, the Lord added to the Bible Center Church in

Chivilcoy those who came to be saved, as well as believers in the city who were without a Biblically sound church to attend.

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In July 2001, the Lord provided for us to rent a building across the street from the Gibbons' home. Our church family met there for three years. During that time, we had a children's Bible club and ladies' Bible study, besides our regular church services of Sunday school, worship service, and Thursday night prayer meeting.

We thank the Lord that in 2004, we were able to buy a large warehouse in which a temporary chapel was built. Our church family has now grown to about 70 people. A youth group was added to the ministry of our church about five years ago, and two years ago a men's meeting was added.

At the time of this writing, most of the first phase of our permanent church building has been completed. This includes two bathrooms, a kitchen, and a multipurpose room. We are thankful for the Lord's provision through His people and trust Him for the next two phases of our church construction in the future.

We count it a privilege to be a part of this church planting team in Chivilcoy and look forward to the possibility of extending this ministry in the future, Lord willing, to a new church plant in a nearby city as our church seeks to reproduce itself.

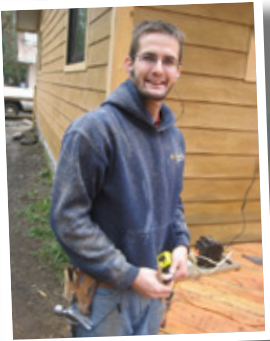


Ministry Opportunities

by Andrew Thompson

Missions Work Trips

Pastor Bill Park (pastorbillpark@hotmail.com) is leading two mission work trips this fall to South America. He would love for you to consider participating and/or sending some volunteers from your church to help work on two different Christian camp facilities. One camp is located near Temuco, Chile (October 23rd through November 7th) and the other is located just outside of Paysandú, Uruguay (November 6th – November 21st).



We have a missionary family at both locations and these men will organize the work.
Dan Vallette (dvallette@gmsa.org) serves in Uruguay
Dan Thompson (dethompson@gmsa.org) serves in Chile

The cost is determined by the flight price plus \$25 a day. Please contact the country coordinators for more information.

Pastors' Survey Trip

Pastor Bill Park is also coordinating a survey trip tailored for pastors interested in experiencing the ministry in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. This trip is scheduled for October 12th through 24th. Those traveling will be visiting church-plants and established churches, camps in various stages of development, and existing Bible training centers.

Pastors who are interested in this opportunity may contact Terry Thompson (tthompson@gmsa.org) for additional information.

The Word of God is Not Bound

by Diane Steward

The first time we went to Pudahuel Jail, a detention center in a seedy district of Santiago (Chile), we didn't have any idea of what to expect. And to be sure, the men we met there--all police officers awaiting trials--were vaguely acquainted with another religious group and expected something quite different from us too!

Curtis and I had been participating in the lovely choir of the Los Avellanos Bible Center, led by Bible institute students of ours, Rebeca and Hernán Contreras. Hernán had a neighbor, Oscar Alegría, who had recently fallen prisoner in Pudahuel and he proposed to take the choir to sing there during Christmas week 2007. The Bible tells us to "remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them..." (Heb. 13:3), so cheerfully we all set off for what we thought would be a one-time outreach.

What we found were guys, aged 20 to 50+, who were lonely for conversation and friendship, hungry for the sandwiches we'd brought, and desperately in need of the Lord. After a brief service, we spent more than an hour visiting with the men over "once" (Chilean tea time). Not one of us left the jail that night unmoved.

Over the next two months of the Chilean summer, a ministry was born and snowballed. Hernán led his friend Oscar to Christ... Oscar thought Miguel Canto needed to hear the good news... then there were Alfredo and Abel... By March we were holding Saturday evening services/fellowship lunches each week as well as periodic special events. Hernán began a Monday afternoon Bible study and had counseling sessions with the new believers. In May the first baptism was held in the jail yard. All this with the police authorities' sanction--the discipline and morale in the place had improved so vastly!

A year and a half later, we go every single week expecting a blessing. You would be touched too if you could hear one of those young men testify (after waiting nearly two years for a trial), "I thank God that I was caught and sent here, because otherwise I would never have met Jesus Christ." I think I hear the Apostle Paul



echoing, "The things which happened unto me have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the gospel, so that my bonds...are manifest...in all places" (Phil. 1:12-13). What God has done and continues to do in Pudahuel has become notorious!

Not every man in Pudahuel Jail comes to hear the Word, of course (one even committed suicide last year). Not everyone who hears the Word makes a decision, and not everyone who makes a decision goes on faithfully with the Lord either. But overall, God has given a bountiful harvest. Many lives have been transformed; families--wives, children, parents--have been saved as well.

The first "crop" of Christians has now been moved on to other prisons, prompting an additional Bible study in the main penitentiary as well as an outreach in the town of Molina. Two other men have been released and we see them with their wives in church on Sundays! God continues to raise up new disciples in Pudahuel. A second baptism was held last month. Ours may be a captive audience, but "the Word of God is not bound" (2 Tim. 2:9).



Appointee Connect

Appointed to Argentina

James and Donelle Morrell - sjmorrell@suscom-maine.net

Appointed to Chile

Phil DeMarte - phil10dem@gmail.com

Appointed to Uruguay

John and Kristen Ball - johnball2@mac.com

Mariano and Becky Proto - fliaproto@verizon.net

Bruno and Audrey Couto - bruno@coutofamily.com

Appointed to GMSA's US Office

Raul and Jane Villalba - rvillalba@gmsa.org

And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.
Numbers 13:30

Wholly Following the Lord in Missions

by Terry Thompson

Caleb is one of my favorite Bible characters because of his can-do faith in God and his willingness to be different from the crowd of his day. The Bible states several times that Caleb "wholly followed the Lord," a quality and standard setting him apart from most of Israel during days of national uncertainty, days of living in tents and days of warfare.

Nationally and internationally our world appears uncertain today. We need men and women like Caleb who are committed to "wholly follow the Lord" in missions. Those who will say like Caleb, "let us go ...we are well able..." The articles in this issue of the Southern Sentinel are just samples of the great work God is doing around the world today. If you are questioning your present involvement in missions or contemplating even greater involvement in missions, may the Lord use Caleb's example to challenge your heart and strengthen your resolve to press forward. Let us continue to "go", "send" and "pray."

Want to get involved?

For ways that you could get involved visit us at
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or e-mail us at
gmsausa@gmsa.org