

Paraguay Trip Recollections

By Gordon Caylor, Albert Veldhuyzen and Louie Lunsford

God is great and He is good to his people. The Lord was good to us on our trip to Paraguay. We went there to bless His people, which we certainly did in many ways, but we were also greatly blessed in return by the tremendous love and hos-



Members of the El Renuevo Church greet the team at the airport

pitality shown to us by the folks of the El Renuevo Church. From the moment we landed, we were treated as long lost brethren who had just returned. We were all overwhelmed by the love of the Paraguayans; from our arrival at the airport to our departure at the airport 10 days later. We did many things on this trip. We accomplished every goal we set beforehand and more. This trip's enduring legacy will be the relationships we built with our hearts while we were working with our hands for God's glory doing such things as painting chairs, building walls, organizing Vacation Bible School, playing soccer, and teaching classes.

We got to know and love the people and each other just a little bit better. We were

up late with Pastor Marcos and Joel Acevedo, the former church planter and pastor



Chairs needed to accommodate the growth

of the El Renuevo Church, talking about everything from their hopes and dreams for the Paraguayan Church to Paraguayan history, politics, culture, and sociology.



Pastor Marcos baptizing one of the infants of the congregation

We met and came to love César Ayala also. He is a very mature 24-year-old young man, who works during the day and travels two hours each way in the evening in order to take seminary classes. César aspires to become a minister one day and the session of El Renuevo Church

envisions sending him as their first missionary. He would be sent to Piribebuy, a town in the countryside we visited where El Renuevo is praying about planting a church. When we visited the town we prayed that God would prepare the soil for the work that is to be done there. We saw



Paraguayans and the GPC team pray for an outreach in Piribebuy

so many needs to pray for, and there are so many who deserved our prayers and support. One such person is José Ortiz, who, thanks to an American donor’s financial support, was able to obtain a certification as an automotive electrician. For the first time in his life, he will be able to hold a steady job. He told us with tears in his eyes that, during his automotive educa-



José Ortiz shows his diploma in automotive electronics to Vickie Pitts, member of Project Paraguay

tion, everyday six days per week for six months he worked all day then biked to class, sometimes falling from his bike. But he persevered knowing that brothers and sisters in America were praying for him, believed in him, and were counting on him to succeed.

There was a certain early church flavor to the people and the Church there. They appeared to have a childlike faith, but not a faith that was simpleminded. Their faith was fervent and their prayers were powerful with anticipation of the work that God would do. The sermons by both Joel and Marcos were preached with great exhortation and conviction, but at the same time, they had great depth, with much biblical insight into the sovereignty of God. They were practical, emphasizing our need to depend upon the Lord.

The El Renuevo Church is a growing church—when we were there, they had nine adult baptisms.



Marcos Sotelo baptizing José Ortigozo, a convert from Roman Catholicism

On the night of our arrival, we had the privilege of attending a special program with very well performed plays with biblical messages. These were a great witness of the Gospel to the unchurched parents who were attending to see their children perform.

In Paraguay, we saw extreme poverty, in as well as outside of the Church. The peo-

ple in the church ranged from very poor to lower middle class, but among the Chris-



“La Bienvenida” (Welcoming) of the El Renuevo congregation includes an

tians there was a sense of happiness and purpose. Not so for those we saw on the outside. Theirs was a forlorn resolve: reconciliation to a life of poverty in flesh and in spirit. The example of our brothers and sisters in the Church, despite their material impoverished state, reinforced for us that happiness never comes from material wealth, rather it comes in a commitment to faithfulness to doing God’s work and building relationships with God’s people.



Gordon Caylor and Paul Pitts organize the workday

Romans 12:8, summarizes our trip, our experience, and for me, it describes the El Renuevo Church, “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.”



Bob Sowers and Vickie Pitts confer on the worksite



Members of the GPC team and the El Renuevo Church take a break from the construction job