

LATIN AMERICA REPORT

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WHY GREAT CITIES?

by Manuel Gonzalez, Church Planter, Siempre Familia Iglesia de Cristo, Fort Worth, TX



FOR OVER FORTY YEARS,

Great Cities Missions has been transforming lives and changing communities by helping church planting mission teams establish churches in the Latin World. Our staff is our ministry. When you support Great Cities Missions, you support people like *Scott Emery*.

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I met Scott Emery a few years ago when he took the place of Ken Lewis as Director

of U.S. Hispanic Teams for Great Cities Missions. I was working with the Siempre Familia church planting team in Fort Worth, Texas, at the time.

Several years before, we had been through a very challenging situation that fractured the team, causing one couple to resign, leaving the church wounded, confused and very fragile.

When Scott arrived at his new position at GCM, we were still suffering some of the consequences of that earlier, challenging time so we asked him to help members of the team and church members heal.

Scott jumped right in and worked tirelessly to help and find a solution that worked for everyone.

Scott spent almost six months talking to us about forgiveness and reconciliation. It was a tough situation for everyone, but I think it was also for him.

Without the ongoing support of GCM and Scott's work with Siempre Familia, it's hard to say if this church would still exist in south Fort Worth.

As I reflect on the ministry of my brother, Scott, I have to give thanks to God for bringing him to Siempre Familia. I have to give thanks for all the work he has done for this church. It would have been easy for most to quit or avoid the situation he stepped into, but not Scott. He has been courageous and done nothing for glory or vain conceit. He has not given up because he loves God, loves the church and loves the people.

It is difficult to find Christians who love and sacrifice for the good of the Gospel when problems arise; some flee, others look the other way, but Scott has remained firm. I am convinced that his work and his love has made a big impact on the Kingdom of Heaven. These words are too short and too small to express our gratitude for what Scott Emery has done, and continues to do, for our church and other Hispanic churches around the United States.

◀ Scott Emery

Great Cities

Join us on our journey.



I now know first-hand what our Lord meant by the above portion of His "Parable of the Sower". I have met two of the very ones that Jesus praises in this famous parable!

by Ken Lewis

rancisco and Liduina Lira became Christ-followers in the early 1980's in Fortaleza, Brazil.

From the moment they came up out of the water they were "all in" in their commitment to their new Lord and Savior! Francisco was a commercial sales representative for most of his career, working for national and international



companies until retirement a few years ago. Liduina was the consummate home-maker and spouse.



Somehow, even after working 50-60 hours per week, Francisco found time to share with others his new found faith. Liduina was by his side, an effective evangelist in her own right. They hosted small-group home Bible studies with 30-40 in attendance each

week. Literally dozens were taught the Gospel in individual studies. Soon, their suburb was the home of 80-90 new Christians, the majority of whom began their walk with Christ in the home of Francisco and Liduina.

But, they carried a burden in their hearts: Liduina's family lived in a rural area some 6-7 hours from Fortaleza. They were people of faith in God. They walked according to the light of the Gospel that they had. But, many could not read or write, and most had never possessed a copy of Scripture. Francisco and Liduina simply could not rest until her family had the opportunity to hear about the Christ of Scripture and His salvation offered freely to all.

After much 'prodding', missionaries from Fortaleza accompanied Francisco and Liduina to her family home, where approximately 50 had gathered to hear a "Word from the Lord"! Present were her parents, aunts and uncles, cousins, neighbors and friends. It was truly a "Cornelius-type happening" (Acts 10:23)! From that first meeting grew a new family of faith, of approximately 150 today. Out of this work, eight other smaller congregations have

been planted. Once per month they have a combined worship and fellowship day, that regularly has 300 or more present.

But, their story continues: The time came to return to the major industrial city of Sao Paulo, some 2,000 miles

to the south. Work opportunities for Francisco and schooling needs for their four children were driving

Feeding the hungry. Clothing those in need. Sheltering the poor. By planting churches in the Latin world.

forces in their decision. The church established among Liduina's family and friends was growing and doing well, so the time seemed right.

Upon arrival in Sao Paulo, the Liras identified with the 9th of July congregation, where he would serve for more than two decades as a deacon. His specific area of responsibility was as "deacon of missions and evangelism". Their children thrived at the 9th of July congregation eventually becoming leaders among the youth, while their parents helped to establish new congregations in the greater Sao Paulo area. New church families began meeting in three different locations around Sao Paulo (Baruiri, Sao Vicente, Praia Grande).

Two of the Lira children eventually served as members on Great Cities mission teams: Alessandra Lira Kelly served with her husband Chris as part of the Buenos Aires, Argentina, mission team from 2001 to 2007. Junior Lira and Patricia are completing ten years (started in 2009) as part of the all-Brazilian team helping to further consolidate the Brasilia church in the federal capital of Brazil.

Literally hundreds have become Christfollowers through God working mightily in this couple! At least eight congregations have been established. Their work continues through their children, even beyond the borders of Brazil!





"...and other seed fell on good soil, and produced...a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

— Matthew 13:9



