



MARCH 2007

Team Expansion

Together Venezuela

Church Planting with Sam Schutz

CÚA, VENEZUELA



Venezuela 2007

"I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."

Matthew 16:18

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Note:

Make checks payable to Team Expansion. Do not put my name anywhere on the check. Donations are tax-deductible. Feel free to contact me with questions, news, prayer requests, etc.

Matt Johnson Arrives, Gets Visa!!!

"Matt, great news!" it was Fanny from the Venezuelan Consulate. "Your visa is here in Chicago. I can't believe it!"

"There is only one problem," said Matt. "I am on my way to Caracas right now!"

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

You read in the January Newsletter about teammate Matt Johnson, his desire to join us in Venezuela and his frustrations in applying for a Venezuelan Religious Visa. After nine months of little progress Matt decided to use the Sam Schutz strategy of entering as a tourist and exiting and reentering every 90 days.

On March 23rd Matt flew out of St. Louis and, while waiting for his connection in Atlanta, received a call from the Venezuelan Consulate. His visa had finally been awarded and was ready to be picked up. Three weeks and a round trip ticket later, Matt entered Venezuela as a transient instead of a tourist.

Praise God for rewarding Matt's step of faith with confirmation of his calling to Venezuela. This is great news not only

for Matt but for the entire community of Christian missionaries in this country. Matt is the first American we know of who has received a religious visa in over two years (it was such a problem that, for better or for worse, the Mormons pulled out all of its American workers in the summer of 2005).



Matt and the workers at the Venezuelan Consulate in Chicago moments after his Religious visa was awarded, as Chavez watches over them all.

I will eventually do the same process Matt did and he is already giving me pointers. Apparently Fanny at the Chicago Consulate is a fan of chocolate. Anything for the Kingdom.

With Joy in Christ,

Sam

Venezuelan Vigils

A common church function in Venezuela is the all night vigil. Starting around 9p.m. the faithful pray, sing, preach, eat, play games and more until the sun rises at 6 a.m. I think they are torture but the Venezuelans love 'em. In February and March Siempre Con Cristo had two and



3/3/07, 10:10pm, still awake, a long way to go

was invited to a third. Vigils are great for fellowship and all but they are rough on my beauty sleep.

Congregation Fasts, God Answers!!!

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go..."

- Psalm 32:8

On March 24, 2007, after six frustrating and fruitless months searching for a bigger locale, the leaders of Siempre Con Cristo declared 24 hours of congregational fasting and prayer. We spent Saturday and Sunday morning fasting and on Sunday March 25, after worship services, we asked the congregation to kneel and pray that God provide a solution to our space problem.

The very next day, Monday, March 26, some church members were walking past a mall nearby where, upon previous inquiries, nothing was ever available. With nothing to lose except a few minutes, they decided to 'cast the net' one more time. "Funny you should ask," said the mall coordinator. "Just this morning a gentleman called saying he wanted to rent his two locals."

Brothers, this was God answering the petitions of his faithful and we praise Him for it. As March turned into April we were finalizing contracts and dreaming about

Music Students Progress

In March Albert filled in at drums for Sunday morning services as Carlos Enrique had a commitment at the university. He has music in his blood and he is already a decent drummer but Albert needs to work on spiritual growth, keeping a good testimony, and his overall maturity. Pray for him.

Also Alejandro played bass once in March for the youth group. I have one or two students who are only couple of months away from a debut. And I have a few more who have a long, long, long way to go. Pray for them...and me.



(Clockwise from bottom left) view of mezzanine looking towards front door; main floor towards front door; main floor towards back door; entire local from just inside front door. (front page banner photo) view of outside of commercial center, local is at top right behind cathedral looking staircase.

possibilities. Pray about this move as much more information is to come.



Prayer/Praise Points

- ◆ **Praise** for the new local God has provided.
- ◆ **Praise** that Matt got his transient visa.
- ◆ **Pray** for the move to the new local.
- ◆ **Pray** for the continued growth of Siempre Con Cristo and that the Holy Spirit bring non-believers to repentance and baptism.

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