



JULY 2008

Team Expansion

Together Venezuela

CÚA, VENEZUELA



Venezuela 2008

"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, addressed to my forwarding agent. Do not put my name anywhere on the check. Donations are tax-deductible. Feel free to contact me with questions, news, prayer requests, etc.

Short-Termers Lead To Attendance Record

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We praise God for our best attendance month yet. Siempre Con Cristo averaged 130 in attendance for July putting us on track to reach this year's attendance goal.

The Lord sent us lots of help. First, we were blessed to host a short-term team

it was a blast leading some rocking worship music with Don, a piano virtuoso and FCCHB's Worship Director, and Lee, an accomplished electric guitarist.

Second, Matt hosted a group from his old campus ministry and together with our three Pathways Interns they staged a five-day VBS in two different communities. The following Sunday 172 people attended including 50 first-time visitors, most of whom were unchurched kids from VBS and their families.

By the end of July we had said goodbye to 20 short-term workers, thanking them for their energy and support. Now it is up to us full-timers to build upon the great boost they have given.

With Joy in Christ,

Sam



Eric, Matt, and I ham it up with the team from FCCHB. Top row from left are Eric's wife Chris, Don, Roberta, Lee, Al, Maria, and Lucas.

from First Christian Church of Huntington Beach, one of Eric's supporting churches. We put on a three-night conference on "The DNA of Relationships." The group joined us in going door-to-door inviting the community. Personally



On the Sunday after VBS the church could not accommodate all the kids so we took a piñata outside to the parking lot. All was well until Spiderman's arms got pulled out of the socket. Down went Spidey and it was pandemonium! Little Carlitos, in the beige shirt (second from right), was the first to jump on Spiderman. Then everyone else jumped on him! Thankfully there were some big guys there to restore order. It was one of those times that is a lot funnier after it's over. Banner-photo above: VBS workers, American and Venezuelan, together with scores of VBS kids.

Pray For Facility Expansion

All year long we have been praying that, at the right time, God would provide more space for Siempre Con Cristo. It seems that the right time is right now. Our facility, comprised of two conjoined shopping center locales, is packed out for second service.



A packed house is a common sight at SCC, as was the case for this youth event in early July.

On Sunday, August 3, people were seated to the very last row. We were worried another family would come and we would have no place to seat them. Then God acted.

The owner of the locale next to us came by and offered to rent us her facility for 500 Bs.F.'s a month, a price well below the going rate for these commercial spaces. In fact, two doors down, an aerobics gym is paying 1,200 Bs.F. Our lawyer is drawing up a contract. Please be in prayer that we would be able to close this deal without complications and that God would provide the people and the resources needed to knock down two walls and begin remodeling.

Miss Universe, Again!

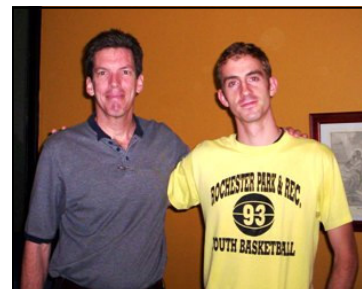
Dayana Mendoza, a former kidnapping victim, made Venezuela proud by winning the Miss Universe title on July 13 in Nha Trang, Vietnam. The extreme emphasis on physical beauty and fashion in this country, especially for its young women, makes it difficult to create a healthy church environment of modesty and purity.



Eric Barry Announces Leave

My friend, co-worker, and mentor Eric Barry has announced he and his family will be leaving Venezuela in May of 2009, moving to the Team Expansion home office in Louisville, Kentucky where he will serve as Director of Outreach.

I met Eric at the 2003 National Missionary Convention in Cincinnati. I worked with him as an apprentice in Venezuela in 2005 and it was an appreciation for his humility and strong leadership ability that led me to accept his invitation to return as a full time missionary. It will be tough to see him go.

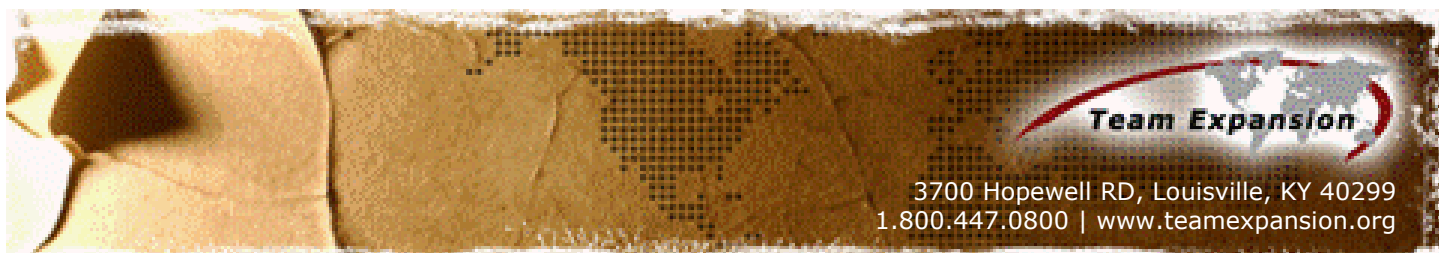


Eric and I in a photo taken in 2005 at the end of my apprenticeship under him.

Eric, along with his wife Christine, serve in many areas and are enormously efficient having served in Venezuela for 18 years. The next ten months will bring many changes as capable workers are sought to fill roles that Eric and Chris currently fill. Please bathe this transition period in prayer.

Prayer/Praise Points

- ◆ **Praise** for all the short-term workers who visited in July and for all the great things they accomplished.
- ◆ **Praise** for the chance to rent the locale next door to our church facility.
- ◆ **Pray** for the smooth acquisition of the locale next door to us, for the demolition of the wall in-between, and for the subsequent remodeling.
- ◆ **Pray** for Eric Barry and his family as they begin to transition out of their roles in Venezuela and prepare for life in Louisville.
- ◆ **Pray** for the Siempre Con Cristo congregation as a loss of a pastor is always a traumatic time for a church. Pray for the faithfulness of all believers. And pray for continued growth and leadership development



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