

VISION MINISTRIES, INC.

Summer 2004

Newsletter



“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us...” (1 John 1:3)

October 15, 2004



VISION MINISTRIES, INC.

**THE BARRACLOUGH
FAMILY**

Missionaries to Venezuela

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Dear Friends,

We pray all is well with each of you. We appreciate all the prayers you've prayed and all the offerings that have sustained us and the work here in Venezuela over the last quarter. We've especially felt those prayers in some times of prolonged sickness and periods of rioting and other civil unrest. We even endured the violence of a flash flood in the mountains, but praise be to the Lord for His grace and His people—the faithful ones that continually bear us up to the Throne of Grace, that we might obtain help in time of need.

We continue to feel ever grateful to the Lord for the blessing of serving Him on the foreign mission field, and for the special saints of God He has brought into our lives to make this ministry one that is touching Caracas for Christ.

The summer months were extremely busy here. During this time, we felt led to expand the work into some exciting new areas, while maintaining the pastoral responsibilities in Barrio Santa Ana as we fill in for the Akers' work while they itinerate.

If anyone was to ask us what we have been up to this summer, we could tell them that we made a whale, and before that we built an ark, but hold on—what about the rainbow we made last week with dozens of little children's hand-prints cut out on paper and glued together to remind the children that God keeps His promises? As you can tell, the poor children of the slums have had some exciting times in children's church lately.

Equally so, the young people have been up to their necks in fun. We've had some great youth services, and times around the altar as well as gone on field trips, organized special singings for neighboring churches, devoured refreshments as we soaked up what the Bible says about God-honoring relationships, planned and executed "good deeds" in the neighborhood, and at times just relaxed and played a game or two (or three, or four). We try to keep up with their youthful energy, which is easier said than done.

We've led prayer meetings, preached ourselves hoarse, taught doctrinal classes, hypothesized the poetic posture of music theory with our music class, met with new believers to examine their faith and challenge them to further growth, interrogated baptismal candidates on their commitment to Christ, carried the church members to a deeper level of commitment and participation in the services, instructed young preachers in sermon preparation, and bellowed out the Gospel via microphone & bullhorn in the streets of the slums...poured concrete, laid blocks, installed plumbing, ran conduit and wires, hung lights, painted, etc.

It has been exciting times around here! We are doing what we love best, and that is missions ministry. We thank God for the wonderful opportunity to serve Him here in Venezuela, and we thank you, our supporters, for the ever-so-important role of prayer and giving.

Please pray for us, as we seek to fulfill our calling to this country of over 24 million souls living in spiritual darkness. We have felt especially burdened with the need to plant additional churches, and reach into new areas with the Gospel, coupled with the need to train national ministers to further the ministry. The night cometh when no man can work, thus we work while it is yet day.

We do hope you enjoy this newsletter as we describe in more detail some of the activities of the ministry here, and as always, we look forward to hearing from you as often as you can.

With love in Christ to our Partners in ministry,
The Barraclough Family



Joe Judith Nadia Isaac Jennifer & Caleb Andrew

Joe Judith NADIA ISAAC Jennifer & Caleb Andrew

MORE THAN CONQUERORS



A photo of our first field trip to East Park, where we had a full day of activities and fun with 12 of our teens.

“Más que Vencedores” (*More than Conquerors*) is the name of our youth outreach. Within the last few months, this ministry has doubled in size from 7 young people to the present number of 14. The young people are returning week after week to our Wednesday night meetings to learn about the Lord and be disciplined in the Christian life. We’ve seen some exciting results, forged new friendships and learned much about the struggles of being a teen in the crime-infested, sin-laden culture of the slums. We continue to see young people getting saved through this outreach—and that is exciting!!!

The teens have been very faithful to our weekly services and are participating in lots of ways. Some ways they are participating are through leading singing, testifying, singing specials, and some are even preaching. No coaxing to get these youth involved!

What has been especially endearing to us is the encouraging atmosphere that has developed among the teens. The older, more mature are beginning to disciple the newer converts, spending time in prayer and Bible study with them. Truly, there have been some marvelous changes in their lives that the Holy Ghost has engineered.

We are constantly aware that these teens have few positive role models, receive little, if any, encouragement from friends or family, and most live in broken homes, never having learned what true love and acceptance is. What a contrast to all this, as our little group meets to encourage one another and press into the throne room of God, praying together, sharing their struggles, opening their hearts.

What may be different between a teenager here and in the States is that these teens often receive the all-too-common ridicule and persecution from other teens, siblings, and parents in this Catholic nation for simply being an ‘evangélica’ (evangelical, or Christian).

Please pray for each one, that God will help them to become grounded in their faith and bold in their testimony.



Our family with four of our youth that have made a real commitment to the Lord. We spend extra time with the saved teens to train them in their Christian walk and encourage them in the Faith. The two boys in this photo have starting preaching.

A Call to Order



The spiritual growth of the church in Barrio Santa Ana continues to hearten us. As many of you know, Bro. Chuck Akers pioneered this church beginning in 1995, starting with a children’s ministry and then over time developing a full-fledged church. By the time we arrived to assist him, we found a maturing group of believers. Before leaving to the US for itineration this year, Bro. Akers felt it was time for the church to officially accept members. So, in June of this year the church accepted 8 new members, the first in the history of this church and a true milestone for these believers. These members have made a strong commitment to follow Christ—demonstrating an enduring faithfulness, and maintaining a biblical lifestyle of conduct and dress.

With Bro. Akers now on furlough, it has been our responsibility (filling in the pastorate on his behalf) to further develop these members. These faithful are now being trained in church responsibilities, and are participating in services, from serving as ushers to leading church services to preaching and leading classes.

In July we began additional training for church workers and ministerial training to those that feel a call to preach. In the following months we have continued this training, along with music classes and are ecstatic as we watch the Believers grow in Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The goal is to equip them to be self-governing, and with the acceptance of official members, we have taken an important step.

Please pray for our church family and for the members in particular as they assume new responsibilities and challenges.

We look to utilize their zeal and ‘willingness to help’ to assist us in the planting of new works as an extension of the work of this church as they grow and mature in their walk with Christ. Already, we are seeing some great results of their abilities and willingness to work for the Lord.

SPECIAL UPDATE ON VEHICLE



As of October 15, 2004 a total of \$2,100 has come in toward the purchase of a ministry vehicle for our work here in Caracas. We have been diligently checking into prices of used 4x4 vehicles that will accommodate the needs of the ministry. The price range we are looking at is around \$10,000-\$12,000 for a six to eight year old SUV.

We appreciate the funds that have come in, and thank you for your prayers and giving toward this important need. If you wish to give toward this need, please write “AUTO” in the memo line of your check. All funds received are held until final purchase.

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Kiddie Countdown



Nadia Victoria
Birthday: December 6, 1999



It's simply hard to believe that Nadia will be 5 years old in just a few months. How shall I describe her? She is outgoing but not strong-willed. She doesn't normally wake up real cheery (at least not from her naps), but she is very helpful in the

home. Nadia spends part of each day doing chores around the house with joy, bakes with Daddy sometimes in the kitchen, helps Mommy cut vegetables and fruit, likes to look at books, and has an incredible memory full of places, names, and Bible verses. She has such a good memory that she has beaten Dad at the game Memory, much to Dad's dismay. She's helpful with the other children, especially Andrew, and likes to feed Fred—no, not another baby! Fred is our lovebird that we inherited from Sis. Jennifer Nickell when she returned to the States. Nadia is a wonderful child!



Isaac Joseph
Birthday: May 26, 2001



Washing dishes

Isaac is one dear gentlemen. He is wonderfully affectionate and thoughtful. He has now begun to help with chores with great enthusiasm, and has learned to care for Andrew in a more "gentle" way. He loves to play his "dabie-dar" (play guitar) while Daddy plays his "big" guitar, and sing/scream with great zeal in family devotions. He has not mastered singing or talking quietly, but we love to hear him

praising the Lord. He remains a bit shy, and has the energy of the rest of us combined. He loves church and especially street preaching services. Overall, he's a very sweet boy who we love very much and are grateful to train him



Ministering to baby brother



Painting for Jesus



The children trying to master the movements in the song "Father Abraham", right hand, left hand...



Jennifer Ann
Birthday: August 7, 2002

Jennifer is loads of fun!!! She's quite a comedian, and likes to entertain the family. Try as she might, she simply hasn't been able to learn how to be quite gentle enough for Caleb's liking, although she tries to pat him and hug him



Who me? I'm innocent.



This kiss is a little fishy

(while Caleb things she's hitting and choking him). Bless her little heart, she is trying hard to be a little lady. She likes to clap hands

fervently and sing to her heart's content in worship to the Lord. Perhaps, her favorite thing to do is eat, and eat, and eat, and eat,



Dad's little secretary, shuffling my papers.

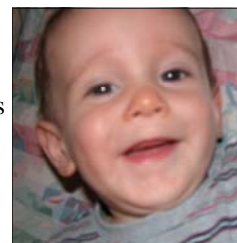
and she is doing quite a bit of talking now, both in English and Spanish. She's simply precious and we love her dearly.

Caleb Andrew
Birthday: August 7, 2003



"Peek-a-boo!"

MOBILE UNIT 1—is in full motion, walking, giggling, turning, jawing, mimicking, and so on. He has gone from being small and wiry to a little chunky fellow. That would be due to his passion for consumption. He's ALWAYS hungry. He started walking about a month ago, and his two front bottom teeth have come in now. He is easy-going and generally happy. He's already potty-training with great gusto (after all, he has quite a cheering section among the other children and Mom & Dad). He tries and tries to communicate with the family, and has definitely learned the word "No". About the only time he protests is when we corral him to the crib to take a break. We love him to pieces, and thank the Lord for his health and growth.



A winning smile.

A WORD FROM MOM

There are definite challenges to being a mother of four on the mission field, but the blessings outweigh the disadvantages. My favorite part is having the whole family together most of the time, and seeing our faith passed on to the children through training and example. It's a little bit of heaven on earth. Thank God for my babies and a supportive husband! —Judith

In early September just as I was finishing up our newsletter to recap the summer activities, something wonderful began in the church in Barrio Santa Ana—a spontaneous revival. What I mean by spontaneous, is that the Holy Ghost began to move in a mighty way in and through the believers. In August we had a real burden to pray and fast for a move of the Spirit, and the Lord rewarded us, first of all with a refreshing from Heaven. Believers began to worship—the kind of worship that sounds heavenly—pouring out their souls to God. The Lord began to move on the believers to be used in the Gifts of the Spirit, and the services were rich! Needless to say, the preaching flowed and the people were stirred.

The result, you ask? 1) Renewed commitments to the Lord and a changing of priorities. 2) Soul-winning became a passion, and 3) prayer became essential. As is the normal flow of such events, the Christians began reaching out with renewed efforts and ended with new power to win the lost, and the church has grown, with souls being saved. New converts are seeking the Lord for the Baptism, the youth group is “on fire” and is reaching out to other teens. Not only has the church grown in numbers, but in maturity and depth.

Please continue to pray that the Spirit of God will be outpoured upon these believers, and that they will take the Gospel to their own countrymen. This is our burden and aim. As I reflect on the events of the last month (and finish this newsletter), I’m overwhelmed with joy, even to tears, at how God is building His church and reaching the lost sheep in the slums of Venezuela.

A Sprinkling of Heaven

The other sinner-turned-saint is Filadelfia, who was saved in one of our street services. As I prayed with her and she repeated the sinner’s prayer after me, she wept and wept for joy at her newfound Salvation, as the Presence of the Lord filled the room. God is mindful of those who even in the twilight of years, need a Saviour. We continue to teach and reinforce to the believers that the church house is the place of discipleship, NOT the place of evangelism. The place of evangelism is out on the streets—the highways and hedges—where we are to compel them to come in.

The tender fruit of these labors, as two widows have received the Lord recently, that otherwise would have not heard the glorious news of salvation through Christ.

One widow, Maria who is 83 years old, lives in a run-down wooden shack. Though her surroundings may be dismal, her gratefulness is like a bright shining light to chase away the dreariness. She was saved on one of our visitation days, claiming salvation in Christ, after all of these years walking in solitude away from the dear Shepherd that had been searching her soul.

We especially praise the Lord for around where we have preached.

Street services are a “big deal” around here. We’ve seen more impact lately and more zeal from the believers as they sing, preach and exhort out in the streets of the slums.

We’ve taken the believers out every other Sunday afternoon to hold these services, and then follow up with door-to-door visitation to the homes around where we have preached.

Recent street service in the slums of Caracas.

Have Bullhorn, Will Travel



Recent street service in the slums of Caracas.

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