

Chapter 28

Paraguay

— By David Wilson —

Paraguay is a landlocked country, bordered by Brazil, Argentina, and Bolivia. The official language is Spanish, although 90 percent of the population also speaks the Indian language called Guaraní. My first visit to Paraguay was in 1981 when I taught the OAC Sowers seminars to pastors, missionaries, and laypeople. I returned the next year to teach two more seminars and also flew in a Sower's teacher (pastor) from Chile to teach in 1983. There were good crowds in the open air with many responding, and the seminars went very well. However, those trained did not continue doing open-air evangelism. In desperation, I went up on the housetop where I was staying in Asunción and prayed for God to show me what to do. It became clear that I should wait and not return to Paraguay until He provided a Paraguayan evangelist to pioneer an OAC branch there.

In 1986, I met Juan Monzon at Word of Life (WOL) in Brazil; he was a student in my seminar on open-air evangelism. He was from Paraguay and did not know English, so we could only talk in Spanish. After completing a year with the musical class of WOL, he returned to Paraguay. Although I wanted to ask him about pioneering OAC in Paraguay, I decided to wait on God to lead him. In 1990, he wrote to me expressing his interest in joining OAC. He told about Felipe Diaz, his friend, who also wanted to join. Both had graduated from a three-year Bible school in Asunción. So, I returned to Paraguay in 1992 and took Juan and Felipe to Brazil, where they observed and preached with OAC in São



DAVID WILSON WITH JUAN MONZON (OUR FIRST OAC EVANGELIST) TRANSLATING



FELIPE DIAZ, JUAN'S FRIEND, AND OUR SECOND EVANGELIST



USING MUSIC TO PREPARE THE AUDIENCE FOR THE GOSPEL

Paulo. Then we went to Belo Horizonte to work with Wade, a Southern Baptist missionary whom I had trained. We saw over 2,500 in an open-air film meeting and the planting of a new church. Upon returning to Paraguay, we began open-air outreaches in Asunción, the capital city. Juan and Felipe worked part-time until their support was sufficient, and then came on as full-time staff evangelists.

A board was formed with missionaries, and I began the process of registering OAC with the government. This was a new thing in Paraguay, as a corrupt military dictatorship had been in power from 1954 to 1989, but by 1992, democratic reforms and equality for all religious bodies had been established. OAC was registered under the new laws in 1995, with President Juan Carlos himself signing the legal papers! We were authorized to evangelize in the open air, schools, towns, etc., wherever people could be reached for Christ. Public schools opened to us, and these became harvest fields to reach hundreds of thousands over the years. With increasing drug problems and even suicides, school principals welcomed OAC to show films on drug prevention and preach the life-saving message of Christ. Open invitations for students to trust Christ were acceptable, with many responding. In one school, our program was canceled due to two students committing suicide. After an investigation, it was discovered that a man who sold candy at the school gate was also selling drugs. It was believed that as a result of the drugs, the two girls got involved in a Satanic cult, which led to their suicides. Hearts were completely opened to God at this school due to these tragedies. When OAC returned, the response among the 1,800 students to



DAVID WILSON WITH FELIPE TRANSLATING



HERNAN LEADING THIS MEETING. HE CAME TO CHRIST IN AN OAC MEETING



MORE EVANGELISTS WORKING WITH FELIPE



HERNAN PREACHING IN THE ASUNCION BUS TERMINAL



FELIPE PREACHING

the good news of salvation was overwhelming! God had turned evil into good. (Genesis 50:20, Romans 8:28)

Our evangelists began going to the Indian tribes as a result of an invitation from missionaries who worked among them. Hundreds attended open-air outreaches. The Jesus Film was shown in the Guaraní language, and our evangelists preached in Guarani. In 1997, two nights of meetings with one tribe resulted in 60 new believers at the mission church the next Sunday. OAC was invited by the mission to hold campaigns in their entire tribal ministry. After one outreach, an Indian man named Simon walked seven hours to say, "Last year, when you came, I attended the meeting and repented and accepted Christ as my Savior. I came here because I wanted to share this with you." Several of the youth also testified to having found Christ the year before. During a 12-day evangelistic campaign with four tribes, our evangelists saw about 500 Indians gather each night, with many responding to Christ. Some walked several miles to attend and returned in complete darkness.

The ministry of OAC Paraguay has continued to grow. The first American team came in 1998, with others following. They helped open the doors for ministry, and some supported our evangelists. Invitations came to preach at military bases, which led to many soldiers hearing and responding to the gospel. Even the police academy opened its doors with up to 450 graduates attending the OAC services. Many of them prayed to receive Christ as Savior, knowing that the country was now plagued with drugs, and they could easily be killed.

Hernan came to Christ through the ministry of OAC in Paraguay in 1998. He went out on campaigns with Felipe and Juan as a volunteer worker. In 2007, he joined OAC Paraguay as a full-time evangelist. In 2013, Juan and his American missionary wife, Dawn, moved with their family to the USA and joined the Dallas OAC branch.

Truly, it was a Divine appointment for Juan to be in Brazil at the same time when I was there in 1986. God had planned this from eternity, and my prayer from the housetop in

Asunción was part of that plan. In 2024, four teams of dedicated OAC Paraguay evangelists reached more than 157,000 people and 919 schools. They give glory to God for all these precious students who heard the clear presentation of the gospel and for the many thousands who openly prayed to trust Christ as their Savior.



CHIP WELTON (LEFT) PREACHING IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL; JUAN MONZON (RIGHT) TRANSLATING

