

Report by Dewayne, Rita and Antonio Shappley

May 25, 2019

Part I



In the above picture, eighteen baptized at once

On Sunday, April 28, 2019

In Barinas, Venezuela

Several men of the 600 member Barinas Church of Christ did the baptizing. Bro. David Sosa, evangelist, who sent five pictures and a video of these baptisms, mentioned the tracts we have sent the congregation as contributing to at least some of these conversions. There were 101 visitors for the service that Sunday. 54 were baptized in Barinas during the first four months of this year.

Last year, in a report dated Dec. 10, 2018, a picture showed 19 baptisms in that same congregation on Sunday, Dec. 9, 2018.

Dear Brethren and Sisters in Christ:

I have been working on this report, off and on, for weeks! The daily challenges are to regularly add new materials to the Internet site www.editoriallapaz.org, and keep up with the e-mails it generates. Many can be answered quickly, while proper replies to others may require anywhere from 10 minutes to 10 hours, even more.

Like an exchange recently with Pentecostal pastor Osvaldo, who aggressively called into question the validity of extensive studies such as the ones on the gift, and the gifts, of the Holy Spirit. Affirming that the Holy Spirit gives him titles and content for each Sunday sermon, and directs him in all his movements, just like he did with Paul, Timothy and Luke, telling them not to go to Asia, etc., and leading them to Macedonia. He insistently and defiantly dared me: **“Tell me what your gifts are! You don’t have any, do you?”** So, I drew up a list for him of **“my gifts,”** explaining the nature, use and some fruits of each one, all the while informing him that he had obligated me, against my will, to make such a list, just as some Corinthians had forced the apostle Paul to do, against his will, more or less the same. That quietened him down.

Putting this type of exchange and material on the Internet site allows interested readers to weigh the pros and cons of doctrinal positions and arguments, and can be edifying for preachers, teachers and other members of our brotherhood. After reading it, a brother preacher from Colorado wrote: *"You have answered him completely. There is nothing to be added to it."* To the Lord all the glory and honor.

Add to the above the work Antonio and I carry on in the continued production of tracts, booklets, books, etc., time spent in packing, including much packing of food, medicines, clothing and printed materials for needy brethren in Venezuela, general office work, etc. And the date for completing, printing and mailing reports often gets moved farther and farther ahead. But, one thing never gets postponed, and that is our continual thanksgiving for the support you provide for these works, thereby making them possible as well as making them yours also, for we often mention you in our prayers, that God will reward your generosity, as we are certain He will.

Due to the number of photographs and the amount of information in this Report, I have divided it into **"Parts."**

All the "Parts" are truly important to us. Determining which should come first is difficult. This time, I have decided to begin with the **"Benevolent and Evangelistic Work on Behalf of Venezuela"** being carried on under the oversight of the Elders of the West Broward Church of Christ, Plantation, Florida, where our families attend.

As indicated in previous reports, Antonio has devoted **large blocks of time to this work**, especially during the first months, beginning in August, 2018. Using his bilingual ability and communication skills to compile considerable amounts of information that make possible viable, reliable, secure procedures of getting help to trustworthy brethren in Venezuela who would use it wisely. Handling money transfers. Purchasing and transporting supplies to the West Broward meeting place. Directing the entire operation of packing and shipping. Tasks which continue today, nine months later. Both of us have spent no small amount of time and energy in printing the evangelistic materials included in shipments. A number of West Broward members have helped regularly with the packing. And, the **Elders of West Broward** set the whole work in motion with their plan for it and challenge to the congregation to give at least \$25,000 to get started, a goal which was surpassed on the Sunday set for that special contribution.

On the receiving end are the faithful, diligent brothers and sisters of some 75 congregations in Venezuela who have prepared and distributed 15 tons of food, medicines, supplements, clothes, evangelistic materials, etc., they have received, and continue to receive, some even traveling long distances -like a 36 hour trip by bus- and risking their lives to provide medical and other material help. A formal record of their works and adventures would be most interesting. We can help a little to tell their story through the photographs and information included in this report.

There are about 150 congregations in Venezuela. This work of the West Broward church is directed particularly to those not receiving help from other outside sources.

As of 2018, the CIA World Factbook sets the population of Venezuela at 31,689,176, and falling rapidly due to the exodus of so many during the last year. The **urban population is 89.8%** of the whole population, and that, we understand, to be an equation for potential disaster on a large scale in times of crises that result in scarcities of essentials. Only 11% living on land where they might be able to grow their own food and survive.

It may be said that the population in general brought this severe crisis on itself by electing socialist governments that became dictatorships. Why, then, should we help? Perhaps because any population with the right to vote could commit the same "error," from which we ourselves may not be exempt. And, therefore, it would behoove us to be humble and compassionate. Should we not be just that anyway, whatever peoples have done to get themselves into a lamentable and dangerous fix? Whether individuals, families or nations. Besides, the crisis in Venezuela is not only an opportunity to do valuable good works. It also opens doors, by the hundreds of thousands, even millions, to reach souls in distress, and hopefully, many will thus be saved.



Recent arrival of food for the malnourished in Venezuela. Rice, beans, tuna, chicken breasts, cooking oil, supplements.

Venezuela Benevolence and Evangelistic Works Continue

Under the Oversight of the West Broward Church of Christ
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This work has been in progress since August, 2018. An estimated **30,700 pounds** of food, medicines, supplements, clothes, water filters, communion cups, Bibles, tracts, booklets, books and CD's have been packed in two rooms of the West Broward facility. In double-walled boxes, holding 1.5 cubic feet and weighing from 30 to 85 pounds. A total of **485 boxes** have been shipped. Most boxes have been picked up at the West Broward building by the CCargaXpress shipping company; the rest, taken to offices of the two companies used. Two wheelchairs have also been sent. Seventy-five congregations in Venezuela, several hospitals, one pharmacy, owned by church members, and one home for the elderly have been the recipients of these shipments.

Brethren have sent **more than 5,600 photographs**, all stored in a internet-based photo album maintained by Antonio, of materials they have received and distributed to the sick and needy. You may view the photos at this link: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/iT4XdzZ4Sg7YxUbQA>. Also, of scores of baptisms. Of congregations, evangelists and members in general. Of evangelistic activities such as open-air Bible studies and the distribution of tracts. Of Bibles being presented to individuals. Of individuals receiving and using water filters. The number of photographs grows steadily.

For this report, I have selected two or more from 20 categories into which I have personally separated the photographs, not yet being up-to-date with those received thus far. Some of the categories already have up to 60, or more, relevant entries, and there are so many for some, for example, of individuals and families receiving food, that I virtually capped the number of entries.

Obtaining food, medicines, clothes, tracts, etc.



Food, mostly from Sam's Club. \$850 worth on the two carts above. Also, from a wholesaler of oats, rice, beans and powdered milk. Some food and much clothing donated. Medicines and supplements from several sources, including Health Genesis, owned by West Broward members. Tracts (about 500,000) and other literature provided by Editorial La Paz, a work of churches of Christ (Above right, production in a part of Antonio's garage). 1,064 large, Spanish-language Bibles and 1,000 water filters through Healing Hands, Nashville.



Packing food, medicines, supplements, clothes, tracts, etc. in the West Broward, Plantation, Florida meeting place

Left: Five volunteers from the Spanish-speaking congregation. Up to 15 at a time are involved in the packing process. We have determined Sunday afternoons to be the best time to pack, after the Spanish-language service ending at 1:30 p. m.

Boxes packed, labeled and ready to ship



Each weighs from 40 to 85 pounds. Left: 23 boxes; right: 32 boxes. We have shipped as many as 71 at a time.

Boxes received in Venezuela



Large congregations may receive a number of boxes at a time, for internal use and distribution to outlying congregations. Evangelists, one or more boxes, depending on the number of members and other factors. The very efficient committee of evangelists and medical personal working in connection with a pharmacy owned by members of the church has received many boxes. **Third from left:** Unpacking the boxes and dividing the contents for different destinations. The black "Construction Quality" plastic bags used as liners inside the boxes are useful for reshipping to points within Venezuela.

Cost of shipping each box

The cost of shipping each box, whatever the weight, is \$25.50. That includes pickup at the West Broward church building for a minimum of 20 boxes. And, delivery to just about anywhere in Venezuela.

Three weeks ago, one company that ships to Venezuela offered a Monday-Tuesday special of \$20.00 per box, up to 70 pounds. Antonio and I quickly packed and shipped 54 boxes at that terrific rate, mostly food.

In Puerto La Cruz, state of Anzoátegui, a well-organized and dynamic committee composed of evangelists and medical personel, working through a pharmacy, FarmaBien, managed by members of the church, has mechanisms, facilities and procedures in place to serve as a center of distribution and help for an extensive area. Large amounts of supplies go to them.



Left: The committee is composed of: Gustavo & Carolina Salazar, Jorge & Leyla Carvalho, and Carlos Presilla and his daughter, Priscila Presilla. **Next:** Shelving makes possible the organizing of products received, facilitating their separation into quantities for delivery to designated points. **Next:** The red and white boxes contain large Spanish-language Bibles. **Right:** a brother of one of the churches in the area with bags of medicinal supplies for delivery.



Severe scarcity of essentials in Venezuela. Empty shelves in this very large grocery store in Central Madeirense.

“A drought, combined with a lack of planning and maintenance, has caused a hydroelectricity shortage. To deal with lack of power supply, in April 2016 the Maduro government announced rolling blackouts^[265] and reduced the government workweek to only Monday and Tuesday.^[266] A multi-university study found that, in 2016 alone, **about 75% of Venezuelans lost weight due to hunger, with the average losing about 8.6 kg (19 lbs) due to the lack of food.**^[267]

By late 2016 and into 2017, **Venezuelans had to search for food on a daily basis**, occasionally resorting to **eating wild fruit or garbage**, wait in lines for hours and sometimes settle without having certain products.^{[268][263][269][270][271]} By early 2017, priests began telling Venezuelans to **label their garbage so needy individuals could feed on their refuse.**^[272] In March 2017, Venezuela, with the largest oil reserves in the world, began having shortages of gasoline in some regions with reports that fuel imports had begun.^[273]”

Picture and text from www.wikipedia.org. Information added to the picture caption, and bold added to some text, by Dewayne. **.75%** of a population of **32,000,000** is **24,000,000 people**. While many would not lose weight at all, and many might need to lose 19 pounds in a year, many millions would lose more, perhaps much more, than 19 pounds, suffering severe malnutrition and its consequences of physical debilitation, diseases and even death. And, we are speaking of one year. As of this writing, these circumstances have persisted in Venezuela for three years, or more. Looking at many pictures, one might think: *“Well, these people are, generally, well dressed and look healthy enough.”* Many may be, thanks to a lot of help. Let us also keep in mind that clothes, properly cared for, can last a long time and can also disguise serious physical conditions.

A member of the church who was able to get out of Venezuela visited the West Broward congregation where we attend. He told me he lost 68 pounds during the time leading up to his departure. He is 70 years old, if I remember correctly, and 6 feet tall.



The pins on this map of northern Venezuela show where boxes of supplies have been sent. 50% of the land mass of Venezuela lies to the south of the Orinoco River, yet only 5% of the population lives there. Of all the rivers in the world, the Orinoco has the third highest volume of water discharged at its mouth



Waiting on gasoline, Venezuelans spend DAYS in lines and cities are paralyzed to the point of collapsing.

by CRISTOFER GARCÍA | @CRISTOFUEG

<http://efectococuyo.com/la-humanidad/sin-gasolina-venezolanos-pasan-dias-en-cola-y-ciudades-se-paralizan-a-puertas-de-colapso/>

Published by **Efecto Cocuyo**

The interior of the country is at the point of collapsing due to the lack of gasoline. Hundreds of vehicles line up around gasoline stations, filling streets for long distances. People must sleep in their vehicles for days. Without fuel, the cities are paralyzed.

I translated the above from the Efecto Cocuyo publication I read today (May 21, 2019). This state of affairs in a country with the largest oil reserves of any country in the world. Of course, all types of transport vehicles are affected. Drivers are unable to get food to the masses of city dwellers (90% of the population) if gasoline is not available for their trucks.

Part III

Recommendation: View the many pictures in this report under a strong light. The originals of almost all were of inferior quality. Smaller sizes help to reduce the amount of ink consumed by printers.

Contents of boxes



The above boxes were opened in Venezuela. Contents of most are varied: canned tuna and chicken, rice, beans, flour, sugar and other foods, as on the [left](#). [Next](#): Spaghetti, Spam and other foods; supplements, tracts, books, a water filter. [Next](#): Bibles, food, cooking oil. [Next](#): Tracts, medicines, supplements and food. When boxes are almost full of food and medical supplies, they are usually topped off with tracts, energy bars and clothing to fill up crevices and cushion the top of the filled box. I have been assigned that last procedure and taping the box closed! Some boxes are shipped completely full of only one category: All food, all clothing, all literature, all Bibles, etc.

Food for the Malnourished



I decided to put **“Food for the Malnourished”** before **“Medical Help for the Sick and Afflicted”** because a lack of sufficient, solid food and clean water is unquestionably, a cause of much sickness, suffering and premature death in the Venezuela of today. Above, a few, of hundreds of similar photographs, sent to us. Such

small quantities will not last long, but even a little can keep a person going two or three days more, maybe through a particular crisis, and if the assistance is provided at repeated intervals, then, the blessings are multiplied. What we send augments what people are able to obtain locally, in one way or another -work, barter, purchases with resources provided in other ways, other benevolent organizations, etc. Also, what they receive from relatives in the US, for we know a number of Venezuelans here in South Florida who regularly send boxes of essentials to their relatives in Venezuela.

Food for the Elderly, Children, Hungry Passersby...



Left two: At a Home for the Elderly. Right: An evangelist and his wife bring a little help to an elderly sister in Christ. Considerable supplies are being sent to a Home for the Elderly in Ciudad Bolivar, state of Bolivar.



Feeding the children



The table looks rather bare for these teens.



A Young brother gives oranges to the elderly.



Food for the aged



Members of the church provide bowls of food to hungry passersby.



Another strong, young brother trudged this flooded road for some distance to take food to the needy. His shadow is projected before him and shows him carrying a large sack of food on his shoulders.



Beans and rice are a staple. We have sent tons!

Purchases with Funds Sent Evangelists



By completely secure procedures, funds are sent to trustworthy evangelists so that they may support their own families and carry on their works in the Kingdom, both evangelistic and benevolent. They use designated funds to purchase and distribute locally available foods and medicines. The above five photographs are typical of many we have received showing some of their purchases.

How long will Venezuelan brethren continue to need help?

Updates. May 24, 2019

I have been asking this question as the months go by and the need becomes greater, instead of less.

This morning, I just read several relevant articles, in Spanish, published by the independent Venezuelan news agency **Efecto Cocuyo** -<http://efectococuyo.com/>. Of particular interest was a long article on agricultural production in that country. The translation of key paragraphs follows.

“The Confederation of Associations of Agricultural Producers of Venezuela warned, as of April 10, that, for lack of supplies [seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, gasoline and diesel], **production for 2019**, that starts with the sowing cycle during the rainy season beginning in May, **would be lost**.

“We are warning of a greater reduction this year, **much greater than that registered in 2018**, when we equaled the production of various crops registered **40 years ago**.

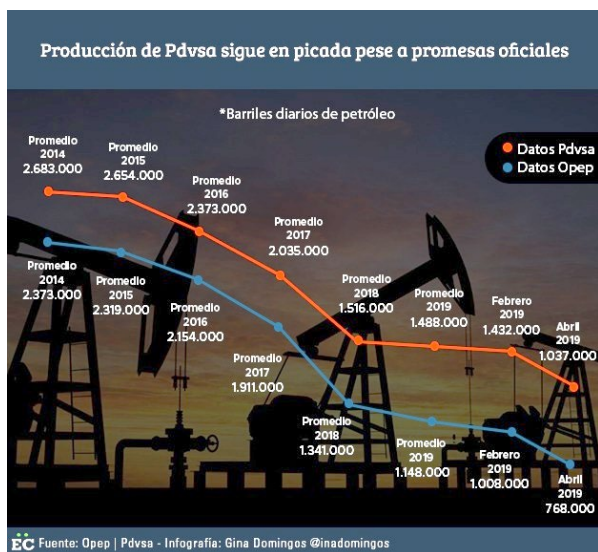
“The loss of the winter cycle this year, ‘more important in terms of the production of food,’ is due to the **lack of distribution of supplies** by the agencies responsible for providing them: Agropatria and Pequiven.

“The existing inventories of supplies in Agropatria and Pequiven are **hardly enough to cover .03% of those needed for all kinds of vegetables**.

“With the decrease in agricultural production, they warn about the consequences to the country of a **supply of food at a more critical level than the present in Venezuela**. They made it plain that **the ‘economic motor’ of seventeen states of the country is deactivated**.

“In addition, FEDEAGRO warned that the loss of agricultural production this year would generate an **increase in unemployment** and in **extreme poverty**, in particular, in the rural sector. **‘We Venezuelan farmers make a supreme effort to keep up our work. Despite the deterioration to which our properties have been submitted by incompetent public politicians, we stoically carry on.’**”

Also, very informative were articles on the growing scarcity of gasoline and diesel in Venezuela, with limited supplies going to the capitol, Caracas, while large parts of the rest of the country are deprived to the point of coming to a standstill, thereby making the delivery of foods, and the maintaining of other services such as public transportation, extremely difficult, if not impossible. I have translated part of the information for you.



“The principal cause of the scarcity of gasoline and diesel [according to representative José Guerra] is the lack of refining brought about by the decrease in the extraction of crude. The data of OPEC reveals that the Venezuelan production of petroleum is barely 768,000 barrels daily.

“Actually, the country’s refineries are completely paralyzed. With the exception of **Punta Cardón**, in the state of Falcón, no other one is functioning. And this one is capable of producing only about 100 barrels of gasoline daily.

“The financial sanctions of the Treasury Department (of the United States) paralyzed the import of fuels from the United States. Nevertheless, Venezuela continues to be supplied by sources in Spain, India and Russia.

“Through agreements with the companies Repsol, Reliance and Rosneft, the administration of Nicolás Maduro continues the importation of gasoline at very high costs. ‘Within the country, it is practically given away. This is unsustainable,’ warned Guerra.

“In the process, the representative clarified that PDVSA exchanges barrels of crude to said overseas refineries for barrels of fuel, especially gasoline. He farther clarified that, notwithstanding, in each of those exchanges the country loses \$20.00 per barrel, the difference in the prices of the two products.”

In view of these **dire prognosis**, again we ask: **How long will our Venezuelan brethren continue to need help?** My personal understanding is that they merit our continued help until a positive change of government takes place and, hopefully, the floodgates of international help open up widely.



I am still motivated to cooperate in the preparation and shipment of boxes to our needy brethren in Venezuela. And to help in acquiring what is needed to fill them.

If you, or your congregation, wishes to cooperate, you may send a contribution marked for “**Venezuela Relief**” to: Venezuela Relief, West Broward Church of Christ, 12550 West Broward Blvd., Plantation, FL 33325. In general, \$100.00 for the contents and shipping of a 75 pound box.

The photo to the left of boxes received in Venezuela was received May 23, 2019. They were shipped about four weeks earlier. Proof that boxes are arriving despite shortages of gasoline in Venezuela. These are 7 of 54 boxes shipped on the same date.

The meeting place of the West Broward Church of Christ, Plantation, Florida.

Center: Entrance and auditorium. **Left:** Fellowship and classroom facilities. **Right:** A wing of classrooms. **Not visible** farther to the right, another wing of offices and classrooms.

