

Puerto Rico Christians Celebrate Fifty Years of Work by the Shappley's on the Island

April 30, 2016





The event was conducted Saturday, April 30, 2016, beginning at 4 pm, in the meeting place of the Bayamon, Puerto Rico church of Christ. It was organized by brethren in Bayamon, with the cooperation of the Gurabo and Cubuy churches.



In the Bayamon church building, looking from the vestibule through the tinted glass doors and partitions, into the auditorium. Pleasing decorations all around!



A table, with treats, in the vestibule.
Serving trays in the kitchen.
Tables for the dinner to be served.





Preliminary coordination for the program by Antonio Shappley, song leader for the event, José Juan Álamo and Jorge Ginés, deacons of the Bayamon church.



One hundred sixty, from nine different congregations, attended. Advanced years and/or sickness kept a number from attending. Fifty years in a place and work are a “lifetime,” as Puerto Ricans are accustomed to say.



Dewayne, Rita and Antonio Shappley occupy front row seats during the introduction by Alfonso Estrella, one of three elders of the Bayamon church.



Another view of those present for the event. Entrance to this auditorium is through the spacious lobby behind the tinted glass partition and doors.



Bro. Alfonso Estrella, elder, very capable preacher, teacher and song leader, opens the event. He uses the next eleven slides to present a Brief Review of the Shappley's work.

A Brief Review of Works Carried Out by the Shappley's in Puerto Rico

1966 -2016

**Principal places where the Shappley's
have worked are indicated by the
orange circles.**



•A few months after their arrival in 1966, Bro. Shappley was asked to take charge of a radio program. He continued to have weekly programs for over 30 years on stations KVM, then Sal-Soul and, later, WIAC.

•A lot of time on the highways: evangelism in homes throughout the island and gospel meetings.

•Numerous trips to the Dominican Republic for evangelism.

• 25 consecutive years as teacher in the School of Advanced Bible Studies for churches of Christ in Puerto Rico.



- The 11 lesson Bible course “What Does the Bible Say?” was offered in newspapers.
- Soon, the number of students reached 3,000.
- Very large numbers of lessons were needed!
- This circumstance lead to the decision to buy a small printing press, which was installed in the bedroom of the Shappley house in Sierra Bayamón... and **Sword of the Spirit Press** was born, later named **Editorial La Paz**.

Nombre del estudiante:

¿Qué dice la Biblia?

Lección 1

EL ORIGEN DE LA BIBLIA

Usted está comenzando un estudio del libro más importante del mundo: la Biblia. Esta primera lección trata del origen divino y de la preservación de la Biblia.

EL ORIGEN DE LA BIBLIA

La Biblia es una colección de sesenta y seis libros, escritos por aproximadamente cuarenta hombres. Sin embargo, 3.800 afirmaciones en el Antiguo Testamento sostienen firmemente que la Biblia proviene de Dios (Ex. 19:9; 20:1; Is. 1:10; Ezeq. 1:3). El Nuevo Testamento también afirma la inspiración divina del Antiguo Testamento, y asevera lo mismo en cuanto a sus propias Escrituras (II Tim. 3:16; 2 Ped. 1:20, 21; 1 Tes. 2:13; Jn. 16:13). Dios inspiró la Biblia, no realmente por escribirla ni dictar las palabras mismas, sino por guiar los pensamientos de los escritores para que escribiesen la verdad (Jn. 14:26). Pero, ¿cómo podremos comprobar que estas afirmaciones son verdaderas? A continuación veremos algunas evidencias:

UN ORIGEN RAZONABLE

Científicos modernos están de acuerdo en que nuestro universo presente tuvo un principio, porque está teniendo un fin. Las riquezas de la tierra se están agotando; el sol se va apagando poco a poco; las estrellas están desapareciendo. Entonces, ¿cuál fue el gran poder que dio al universo su principio? La primera oración de la Biblia nos da la explicación más razonable: "Dios creó los cielos y la tierra" (Gén. 1:1).

Pero el ateo se pregunta: "¿De dónde vino Dios?" La respuesta es la misma que él tendría que dar a otra pregunta: "¿De dónde vino la materia?" Francamente, algo no pudo aparecer de la nada; por lo tanto, algo siempre existió. Los cristianos creemos la afirmación de la Biblia en cuanto a la creación del universo por Dios (Heb. 11:3). Es posible que el ateo ridiculice esta fe, pero sus creencias también son producto de una fe. La fe atea es que la materia siempre ha existido, y que nuestro universo existe por pura

Year after year, Rita Shappley teaches classes for children, young people, girls only and women, motivating and training other ladies for these ministries. She organizes and carries out a great number of activities for youth. She prepares a very large quantity of materials for Bible classes. And works for a number of years in the printing facility, designing publication covers, cassette and CD labels, making hundreds of thousands of copies of cassettes, CD's, manuals and books.





Sharon Laretta Shappley, with her daughter Michaela and neice, Kiara Karina, a few years ago.

Raised in Puerto Rico from the time she was 6, Lala, as she is affectionately known there, also teaches a great number of classes for children, actively participating in all kinds of activities, especially in the Bayamon congregation.



Antonio Shappley was born in Puerto Rico, in 1969.

He learned to operate the printing machinery and worked for 3 years in the plant.

When 13 years old, he sang in the chorus of 18 Christians who recorded the LP “Jesucristo te convida.”

Using his special gift for singing multiple voices, he has recorded 172 hymns in Spanish.

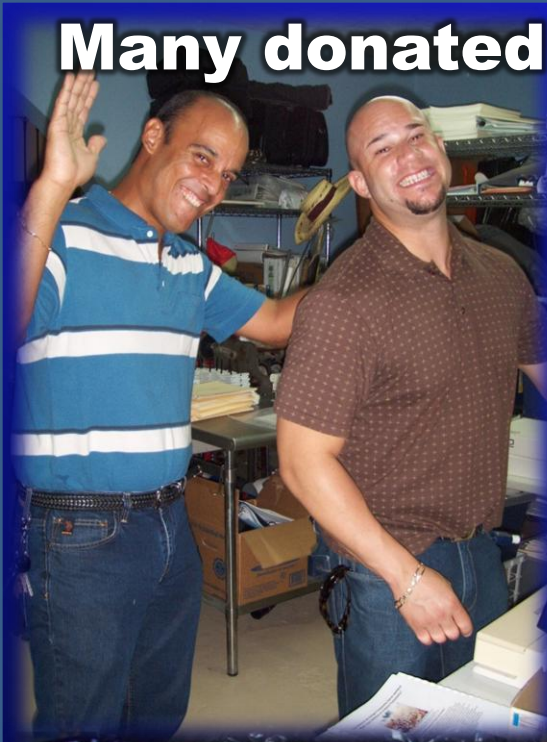
His wife is Irelis Caride Flores, of Guaynabo, Puerto Rico.

**Throughout Latin America,
materials prepared in the
printing plant came to be
in high demand.**

**28,300,665 tracts,
booklets, books,
cassettes and CD's
were produced.**



Many donated time and energy to different tasks in the printing plant.



But, in 2007, a sudden 300% increase in the cost of shipping made continuation of the project increasingly difficult, resulting in its termination in 2010.

**The Home Page of
www.editoriallapaz.org**



Sites on the Internet Designed and Developed by Dewayne and Antonio Shappley

www.editoriallapaz.org

www.iglesia-de-cristo.com www.apocalipsis.co

DATA from January, 2003 through March 31, 2016.

14,533,127 visits 28,284,411 documents opened

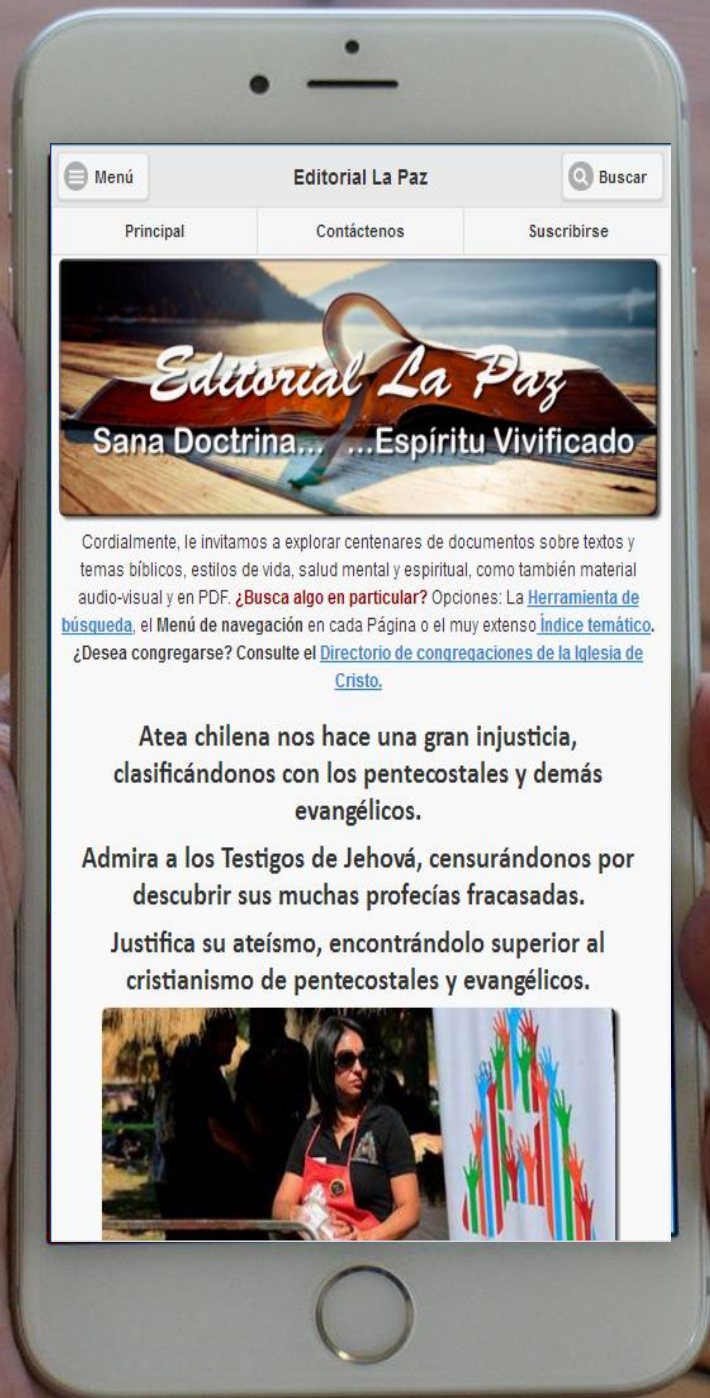
In addition, an average of 15,000 visits per month are registered to www.alabanzas.info, with 172 hymns available.

The Grand Total of digital documents, printed materials and audio: 56,584,076.

Fruits registered:

**Approximately
14,425 conversions
246 congregations
begun in different
countries.**





And the work continues...

During the later part of 2015, a version of www.editoriallapaz.org for smartphones is introduced. The audience on the Internet grows even more, reaching a daily average of 5,210 for March, 2016.


We ask your prayers on behalf of the continuation of these effective works of evangelism and edification.



After Bro. Estrellas' introduction and Brief Report, Bro. José Juan Álamo, deacon, preacher, teacher and song leader in Bayamon, took over as Master of Ceremonies.



Dewayne and Rita were asked to come forward and take chairs in front of those present. (The Shappley's have been married for 58 years.)

A man in a dark suit and glasses stands at a wooden podium, speaking into a microphone. A laptop is open on the podium. Behind him is a large projection screen displaying text in Spanish. The screen has a pink background with white wavy lines and three white asterisks at the bottom. The setting appears to be a church or a formal hall, with glass block windows on either side of the screen and a tiled floor.

**Cordero de Dios.
Y con alma limpia me presentaré
ante tu tribunal de luz.**

Antonio Shappley lead several songs during the event.

He and his daughter Kiara Karina came from Coral Springs, Florida for four days in Puerto Rico. Suffering from Lyme Disease, Antonio's wife, Irelis, was unable to make the trip.

Sharon Laretta Shappley, of Manchester, TN, could not attend due to various circumstances.



Bro. Alfredo Colón, 89 years of age, long-time member of the Ceiba congregation, was the first of several to relate works of the Shappley's in their areas.



On behalf of the Gurabo congregation, Bro. Félix Roldán, elder, presented a plaque to the Shappley's. The church there was established as the result of a radio program and scores of studies with mostly religious leaders of the community.



Johnny Camilo and José Rodríguez, leaders of the Barrio Cubuy congregation, present a beautiful plaque to the Shappley's. The radio program, preaching in the Canóvanas town plaza and follow-up studies resulted in the formation of the Cubuy church.

Chichín Rodríguez , of Barrio Cubuy, brother of José, took the microphone to tell how he had heard the same messages, but had moved, with his family, to Connecticut, without being baptized.

After a time in Connecticut, he and his wife became concerned about their spiritual welfare. Chichín said: “Let’s find a church like the one I heard about in Puerto Rico.” They did, an English-speaking one, and were baptized the next Sunday!

Chichín and his wife evangelized, in Spanish, members and friends of the family, works that resulted in the formation of a Spanish-speaking congregation in Farmington, Connecticut.

José Vizcarrondo of the Loiza congregation, tells how he was converted years after the establishment of the church in that Atlantic coastal town. The beginning of that church took place when five men were baptized one evening in the Atlantic ocean.

Of the five, Cicinio Quiñones had been a Pentecostal pastor. Later, Bibiano Salgado, another denominational leader, was converted, and these two men were pillars of the congregation before their passing away.

For years now, José Vizcarrondo has been taking the lead in Loiza. A very good preacher, he is also one of the directors and teachers of the School of Advanced Bible Studies. The self-supporting Loiza church has its own well appointed meeting place.

Efraín Reverón and Rafael Álamo, of the Park Gardens, Río Piedras congregation, recount their experiences with the Shappley's. Efraín, 65, executive accountant of a business operating fast food chains, was a fifteen year old Christian when the Shappley's arrived in Puerto Rico in 1966. He preaches some, as does Rafael.

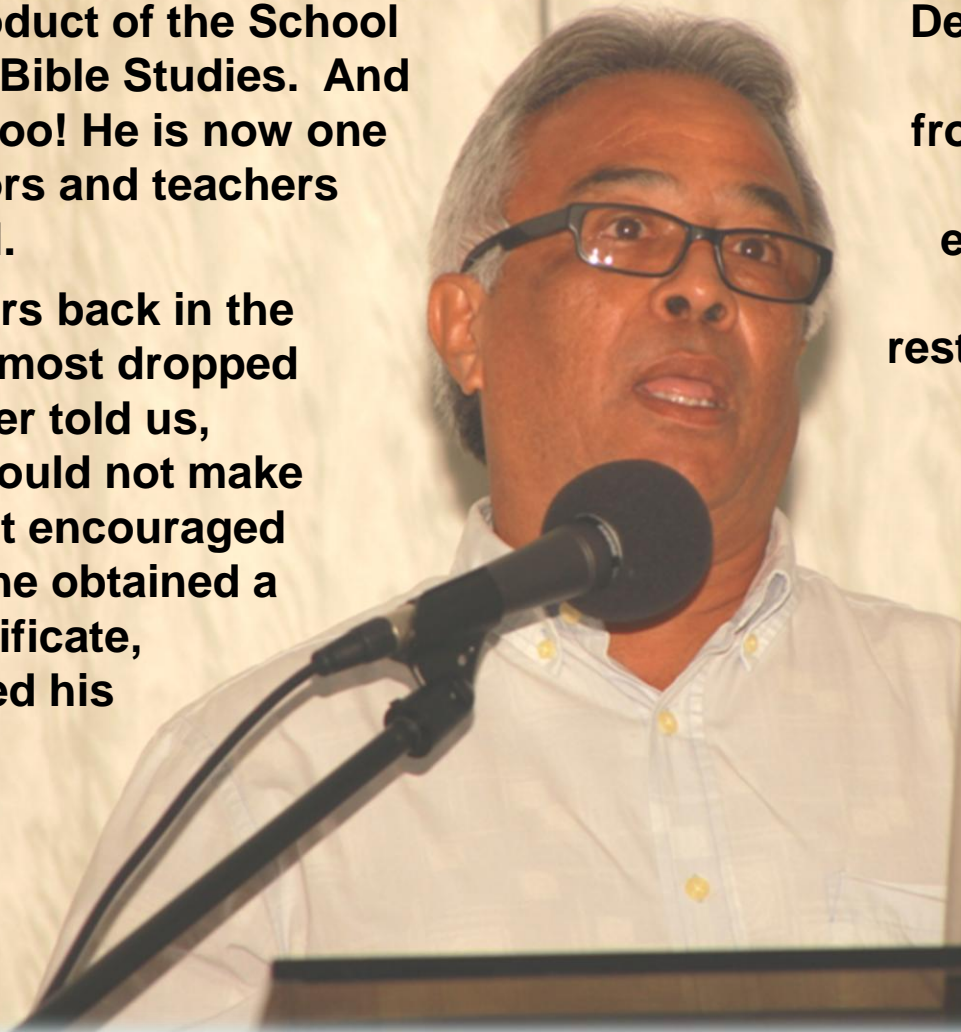


Park Gardens is the first congregation the Shappley's helped to begin in Puerto Rico. With an excellent property and building, this is where the School of Advanced Bible Studies has operated for 25 consecutive years.

Speaking on behalf of the Sabana Hoyos congregation, Eulogio Pantoja is, as he repeatedly affirms, a product of the School of Advanced Bible Studies. And a good one, too! He is now one of the directors and teachers of the School.

Enrolling years back in the School, he almost dropped out, as he later told us, thinking he could not make the grade, but encouraged to continue, he obtained a Six-Year Certificate, and has honed his talents so as to become outstanding.

Sabana Hoyos is one of the first places the Shappley's worked in Puerto Rico. Dewayne and Cheo Colón, a Christian recently arrived from New York, went house-to-house in the area, encouraging and teaching, efforts contributing to the restoration of a congregation already existing there.



Carlos Pantoja, older brother of Eulogio, has been a strong leader in the Sabana Hoyos church for many years. Also a director and teacher of the School of Advanced Bible Studies. His deteriorating health kept him from attending the activity.



Juan and Lucin Camilo, of the Barrio Cubuy church, speak of their experiences with the Shappley's. Juan, a barber, elder of the Cubuy church for many, many years, and his very capable wife, Lucin, have done so much for the church in Puerto Rico that it would take a sizable book to recount them all. And, at their own expense! Rita and Lucin have spent endless hours together, working on all kinds of projects: fellowship activities, property maintenance, printing plant jobs. Strong ties bind the two families.



And through it all, Rita and Dewayne just sit there, taking it in, thankful beyond measure to be associated with such wonderful Christians. Some of the speakers even told funny things we did, or humorous situations in which we found ourselves!

We were genuinely and pleasantly surprised when directors and teachers of the School of Advanced Bible Studies took the platform to speak of our work with the School and present us a plaque in appreciation.



From the left, Jorge Ginés, Juan Camilo, José Vizcarrondo, Rita, Dewayne and Eulogio Pantoja. Because of illness, Carlos Pantoja could not be present. 36 Monday nights each year; nine classes (3 on each of 3 levels). Break for food, Rita and Lucin being the official organizers of this part. Dewayne was challenged to produce a large amount of materials for classes, courses of this nature, in Spanish, not being readily available.

On behalf of the Shappley family, Dewayne thanks all who spoke for their words of appreciation and encouragement, also expressing gratitude to all who came for making this such an unforgettable event, so full of brotherly love and joy in the Lord. He observes that he would like to have the opportunity to testify to the abundant works of congregations and individual Christians in Puerto Rico carried out across the years.



Indeed, these self-supporting congregations, each with its own building, have done, and are doing, substantial evangelistic and benevolent works. Not only in Puerto Rico, but also in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and India.



Karina Ramos and Yadiel Pérez, children of Omayra and Mirnita Sardina. All of them taught by Rita! Our granddaughter, Kiara Karina, is sitting in Rita's lap. At least two of them are listening to Dewayne!



Kiara Karina sitting with her nana Rita. Not a few children and young people in Puerto Rico, especially in the Bayamon church, look upon Rita as their “nana” too, and some of them say: “She is like a mother to me.”

The full dinner after the ceremony included this cake on a gold-flecked tablecloth. The picture on the cake was from the Shappley's Golden Wedding Anniversary, celebrated eight years ago.



The event held April 30, 2016 was to celebrate the Shappley's fifty years of work in Puerto Rico.

Though moving to Florida, they will continue in close contact with Christians in Puerto Rico, ready to respond when called upon. As Bro. Estrella said: "Keep a suitcase packed!"



Left. Major credit for planning and decoration goes to Wanda Reyes and her husband, Jorge Ginés, of the Bayamon church, standing here with Rita.



Above. The Shappley's with Ramón Ramos, Dali and their son, Mauricio. Many pictures like this one, with individuals, were taken. Precious moments to be treasured forever.

And, these...

**Rita and Gabriel give a hug.
Could Yanitza, right, be
jealous? No way! Or, maybe?
Dewayne performed the
wedding ceremony for
Gabriel and Yanitza three
years ago.**



Above

**Rita, Lili and her
sister, Yanitza. These
two young women,
plus their sister, Dali,
and mother, Nilsa,
have been like close
family to the
Shappley's for more
than forty years.**

**The Shappley's with Vilma
Venegas, whom we have
known since childhood. She
and her husband, Dr. Javier
Santiago, are members of
the Park Gardens church.
He is in Kuwait.**





NEW ADDRESS for the Shappley's

7000 NW 103 Ave., Tamarac, FL 33321

**Isles of Tamarac is a community for 55 and above.
Quiet and pleasant. 12 to 15 minutes from where
Antonio and family live in Coral Springs.**

787-930-0307 787-732-4444

hshappley@yahoo.com

**Here, Dewayne continues his
work of evangelism and
edification through the
Internet, with more than
5,000 visits daily.**

**He and Antonio plan to
continue improving the
sites, incorporating new
technologies to reach more
and more souls.**

**2.13 million Spanish-
speaking people live in
south Florida. Cuba is
nearby, with 11,000,000.
Opportunities to preach and
teach abound.**

**With continued funding,
present works may be
expanded and new initiatives
taken, building on the
knowledge and experience
acquired through 50 years in
Spanish-speaking fields.**