

ACTION

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True Vision

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True Vision

by **Bob Spencer, Latin America Area Director**

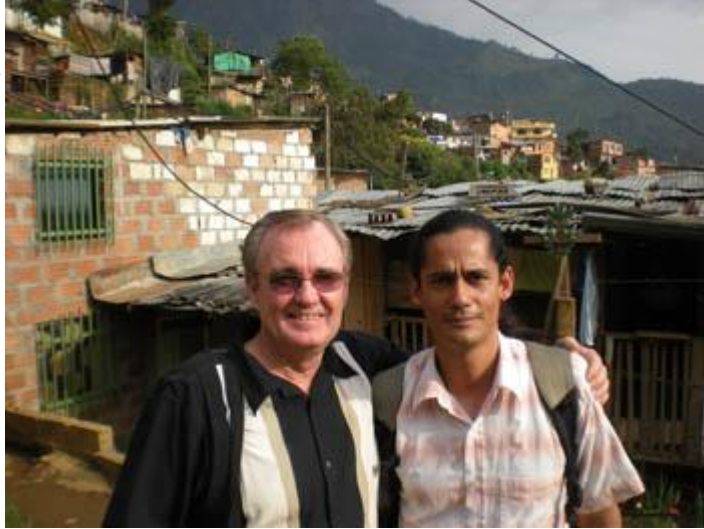
True vision is when God lets us have a peek into His heart. But if that peek seems a bit beyond our natural limitations we tend to doubt, even chuckle within. Those feelings went through my mind when CinA board members and President Gordon Donoho shared **Vision 60**. Simply put, I was to lead the planting of 60 churches in Central Colombia by the year 2015! I agreed to keep an open mind.

In July, I traveled to Medellin, Colombia, the northern most city in the Andean Region. There, a series of events took place that caused me to “own” **Vision 60**. First, I shared **Vision 60** with 50 pastors of Medellin at a weekly pastors meeting. The pastors gave a resounding “Amen” followed by their prayers of blessing for CinA to begin church planting in Medellin! To have the pastors of this city bless us was a major open door and I never could have proceeded without it.



Pastor Jose and his wife were at the pastors meeting in Medellin. They came to Bob after the meeting and said, “We are ready and willing to work with CinA.” Pastor Jose has a Masters degree in theology and has been working with indigenous people in Colombia for 15 years.

On to the next God-appointed event. Jim and Miriam Marquardt, missionaries with CinA, have been teachers/counselors at the Bible school of Medellin for the last eight years. Two of the pastors the Marquardts have counseled over the years came to me without any prompting from the Marquardts or me. Both pastors basically said their vision is to plant churches and they no longer wanted to work alone. The Marquardts had only wonderful things to say of these two pastors and their wives. I could see them working well with the Actis family (pictured below) from Fresno, scheduled to arrive in Medellin in September 2010. Our team in Medellin was coming together as well as **Vision 60**.



Daniel Soto, standing with Bob, pastors two churches. One church is in Villatina, the area behind them, considered the most dangerous area in Colombia, due to the large number of paramilitary who live there. Two church elders and their families live in this area.



Matt and Shelly Actis and their four daughters are being commissioned by their church as missionaries to Colombia with CinA. Is God asking you to work with them?

As I considered the major cities of the Andean Region (notorious for producing 50% of the world's supply of cocaine) heading south toward Bogota, I realized we needed a key person as a circuit-riding pastor who could teach and edify the newly planted churches. It was then I met Pastor Jairo Niño in the city of Armenia. He and his wife Doris had been missionaries from Colombia to Portugal for five years. We had a lot of fun speaking Portuguese together, as I had been a missionary to Brazil. As it turned out they too had spent a year at the Bible school of Medellin and guess who counseled them?

Once the Marquardt connection had been made, Jairo was eager to connect with CinA. He, too, was working alone and was searching for a way to fulfill his ministry, which was to teach pastors how to more effectively plant churches. The more I discovered about Jairo the more I realized that he was a key man in God’s vision for Central Colombia. Jairo is a qualified teacher of the Omega Course, a great course in saturation church planting. When I reviewed his teaching materials I realized that this is exactly what CinA has needed in South America in order to more quickly plant churches. In all my 35 years of missionary service my only regret is that I didn’t plant more churches. This, to me, was the Lord saying, “You are still far from the finish line!”



James and Miriam Marquardt, career missionaries in Colombia.



Pastor Jairo Nino, pictured with Doris and their children, will be a key man in God’s vision for Colombia.



Bob met Pastor Lizarralde two years ago. This time, Bob met him on a Saturday, and Pastor L. asked Bob to preach on Sunday, the next day! Bob preached on missions. After the message, Pastor L. stood up and said, “Today is my birthday. God gave me Bob as a present, to encourage me. I was empty, I had nothing to say.” He left, renewed to serve the Lord.

With two key pastors, a North American missionary couple, and a circuit-riding teacher in place, I now fully own **Vision 60** as my vision for the Andean Region of Colombia, where there is less than a 1% Christian population. We still need three more missionary families or singles in training by 2010. Will you believe God with me for them? Sometimes it's easier to ask for money than for dedicated missionary families. Without dedicated people, nothing happens. **The harvest is great, but the laborers are few!**



Jesus brings hope to these children and their parents, who come to Pastor Daniel's church in Villatina.
