

# SOUTH AMERICA

**MISSION  
REPORT**
**FALL 1996**

## Norton Joins Great Cities Staff

**Dr. Howard W. Norton** has been added to the Continent of Great Cities ministry to help evangelize South America's capital cities.

**Bob Waldron**, co-director of the ministry, expressed his pleasure with Norton's decision: "Howard and Jane Norton bring a deep passion for world evangelism, years of proven experience in Latin America, and the respect of the brotherhood."

Norton's chief roles with Continent of Great Cities will be fundraising, strengthening the board, and assisting church leaders who need help with missions. Norton also will help recruit teams for South America and nurture missionaries on the field.

The Nortons worked for 16 years as missionaries in Sao Paulo, Brazil. He has preached in various congregations in both Texas and Oklahoma, most recently serving as pulpit minister for the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City.

Norton was a professor for 16 years at Oklahoma Christian University of Science and Arts and also served as dean of the College of Biblical Studies. Since 1981, he has been the editor of the *Christian Chronicle*, the most widely read publication among churches of Christ.

Norton, in explaining his lifelong commitment to missions, said, "I believe that reaching the lost is one of the most important things we can do to glorify God. Reaching the lost in Latin America has been a driving motivation throughout my life since 1957."

Norton is convinced that no other program in churches of Christ equals the Continent of Great Cities ministry in recruiting, preparing and getting teams to the field. "That is why," Norton added, "I wanted to be a part of this effort."

Norton thinks young people today are very idealistic, but



*Dr. Howard and Jane Norton*

need assistance to turn their missions dreams into reality. "Continent of Great Cities," he believes, "provides a path to the mission field that young people can successfully follow."

Norton admits to a 40-year love affair with Latin America. He justifies this enduring passion by citing the loving way he, his wife Jane, their children, and their fellow missionaries were received by the Brazilian people.

"Some of our most wonderful friends are Brazilians. I don't know of a more lovable people. They have done a great deal for us," he said.

It is a particular pleasure for Norton to watch the growth and maturity of the Brazilian church. He recently spoke at a conference in Brazil attended by 265 church leaders from all

over the nation. He was especially gratified to have known, since they were teenagers, three of the four men who organized the conference. "I have seen them grow up in the Lord," he said proudly.

South America is not the only field in which Howard and Jane Norton are interested. For the last several years, their daughter, Laurie, her husband, Allen Diles, and the Norton's grandson, Andrew, have lived in Prague, Czech Republic, as part of a mission team. Despite strong tugs on the heart, however, South America remains their chief focus.

"Latin America is receptive," said Norton. "Generally speaking, there is a culture of belief in Latin America. We must take advantage of this climate." Norton likes to quote Psalms 137:4-6 regarding his love for Latin America:

*How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill. May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy.*

"Latin America is my Jerusalem," concluded Norton.

## Using Our Minds in Missions

We are tempted to put our minds into neutral when the subject is missions. We wouldn't think of doing this in the fields of business, medicine, or education. Mission work, however, is another matter. After all, if Jesus commissioned the enterprise and promised to be with those who do it "to the very end of the age," why should we waste our mental energy on the project?

People who reason like this have forgotten important biblical examples about using the brain to do the Lord's work. Speaking of first-century mission work, Jesus said, "Be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves."

In the Parable of the Shrewd Manager, the businessman's master commended him for using his intelligence. Then Jesus said, "For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light." This parable shows the high value Jesus Christ placed on using the mind.

The apostle Paul spoke in I Corinthians 9 about the great care he took to "become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some." Later, he added, "Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air." Paul was a thoughtful, rational missionary who believed in using his mind, and his heart, to preach the gospel.

Both Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul used their intelligence creatively to spread the gospel message. They worked with purpose, on purpose, and left little to chance. True, they suffered frequent interruptions and had to adjust to new circumstances; but they did not work in a fog hoping that the Father would overrule mental laziness.

Romans 15 gives clear insight into the way Paul used

human intelligence in his work. God gave Paul the specific mission "to be a minister of Christ to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God."

Paul, however, took that commission and hammered out his own plan for accomplishing the task. He decided, for example, to "preach the gospel where Christ was not known," so that he "would not be building on someone else's foundation." With this goal clearly defined, he decided to leave the part of the Roman world where he had been working and set his sights on Spain.

Paul planned to visit the church in Rome, be refreshed by them, and receive their help for his journey to Spain. He had a rational, carefully constructed plan for reaching the lost. Like a good military strategist or chess player, he was thinking several moves ahead.

The appeal in this article is for church leaders – elders, deacons, missions committees, preachers and missionaries – to be as thoughtful about mission work in our day as Paul was in his. Those who use their minds in their secular jobs must not turn them off when they plan the church's foreign and domestic programs. Our need in missions is not to think less, but to think more and to think better. Because of the eternal consequences, world evangelism deserves the best of our creative thinking.

I am excited about working with the Continent of Great Cities because the project has a long tradition of applying intelligence to mission work in South America. Under the direction of the Central Church of Christ in Amarillo, Texas, Continent of Great Cities seeks to recruit, train, place, and nurture missionary teams for the principal cities on the South American continent.

The Central church has encouraged the Continent of Great Cities to develop missions strategy that removes much of the guesswork from the task of preaching to every creature in the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries of South America.

Elders and missions committees who feel bogged down in their foreign missions programs would do well to contact Continent of Great Cities.

Preaching the gospel to the lost people of the world is too important to leave to emotions or chance. God expects us to use our intelligence to accomplish the Great Commission. When it comes to reaching the lost, God wants us to "be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves."

– Howard W. Norton



Gary Sorrells and Bob Waldron, co-directors of the Continent of Great Cities ministry, plot strategy for the evangelization of South American capital cities.

# News Items from South America

*Chimborazo Province, Ecuador* – Missionary **Louis McBride** reported that 20 years of broadcasts by World Radio have had an impressive impact. McBride counted 27 congregations scattered throughout the province, the largest with more than 500 members.

*Sao Paulo, Brazil* – **Randy Matheny**, missionary in Sao Jose dos Campos, spoke to 400 parents of children enrolled in the four day-care centers operated free-of-charge by churches of Christ in the city of Sao Paulo. Matheny's evangelistic message received an enthusiastic reception.

*Maracay, Venezuela* – Missionary **Ron Cox** tells of an outstanding turnout for a campaign in Maracay. More than 500 listeners were present each night to hear Cox's series of lessons entitled "Six Steps to Happiness." Amazingly, 450 of those in attendance were not members of the local congregation. By the end of the campaign, local members had received more than 500 requests for Bible correspondence courses and more than 300 requests for personal visits.

*Rio de Janeiro, Brazil* – Missionary **Larry Zinck** reported that a small change in wording on the sign used to advertise the School of the Bible resulted in a large increase in enrollment. Previously the sign read "Come Study the Bible." The wording was changed to "You Can Understand the Bible."

*Buenos Aires, Argentina* – Missionary **Joel Banks** is pleased with results obtained by two "Let's Start Talking" teams that worked in the city this summer. Banks reported that approximately 70 people studied the Bible in English with the two groups of university students from the United States.

*Recife, Brazil* – Missionary **Mike Pruitt** reported that a city-wide Sunday assembly on July 28 drew 709 worshippers. Pruitt continued, "One of our first language teachers was present yesterday. After the assembly, she cried with joy as she remembered how the small congregation of 20 (mostly missionaries and their families) would assemble in a classroom at her language school 16 years ago. She called it a mustard seed beginning."

*Vitoria, Brazil* – Missionary **Rick Sandoval** reported the recent baptism of Jenny, 92 years young. Jenny is the mother of Maria Jose, featured in the Winter 1996 edition of the *South America Mission Report*.



The Kreidels

## Comings and Goings

- **Walter and Mary Nelle Kreidel**, missionaries in **Ribeirao Preto, Brazil**, have returned to the U.S. The Kreidels originally went to Brazil with the 1961 Sao Paulo Team. They have also worked in Curitiba and Jundiai, Brazil. Congratulations to the Kreidels for a lifetime of faithful

service. We thank God for your missionary spirits.

- **Bryan and Larisa Elliott**, missionaries in **Montevideo, Uruguay**, returned to the U.S. in July.
- Missionaries **Verlan and Telma Manor** moved from Natal, Brazil, to **Recife, Brazil**.
- **Joe and Susan Placencia**, missionaries in **Quito, Ecuador**, for the past seven years, returned to the U.S. in June.
- **Steve and Josie Mock**, also missionaries in **Quito, Ecuador**, recently returned to the U.S.
- **Edison and Teresa Quevedo**, missionaries in **Los Teques, Venezuela**, recently returned to the U.S. after almost 20 years of service in South America. Congratulations on work well done!
- **John and Catherine Pennisi**, former missionaries to Sao Paulo, Brazil, have announced plans to return to the mission field. They are looking for a supporting congregation and hope to begin working with the church in **Sorocaba, Brazil**, in January 1997.

## Congregations at work in South America this summer

Thirty Christians from the **Hughes Road** congregation in **Madison, Ala.**, the **Forest Park** congregation in **Valdosta, Ga.**, and individuals from **Tennessee** and **Florida**, held an evangelistic/medical campaign in **Lima, Peru**. The group provided free health exams, free dental care and distributed medicines and vitamins. Evangelistic services were held at night, resulting in 25 baptisms.

The **Golf Course Road** congregation in **Midland, Texas**, sent 38 members to **Campo Grande, Brazil**. Members of both congregations wished to reach out to each other following the death of missionary Eugene Goudeau in September of last year. The group from Midland helped with building construction, visited church members and taught recently translated praise songs.

The **Mayfair and South Walker** congregations, both located in **Oklahoma City**, sent 18 people to **Vitoria, Brazil**. The group distributed food, handed out evangelistic literature and taught Bible studies in English. Twenty Bible studies were set up as a result of the visit.

The **Northside** congregation in **San Antonio, Texas**, sent 22 members to **Fortaleza, Brazil**. Primary activities included distribution of evangelistic literature, door knocking, public singing in Portuguese, and attendance at a nightly evangelistic campaign.

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CORRECTION: In our last issue, we inadvertently omitted the **Ridgecrest Church of Christ in Midwest City, Okla.**, from a list of the supporting churches for the work in Curitiba, Brazil. As the supporting congregation for Antenor and Phyllis Goncalves, the Ridgecrest congregation provided prayers, funds, and personnel for the work in Curitiba. We apologize for this oversight.

# Memorial Gifts

A thoughtful way to extend the memory and good influence of a friend or loved one who has died, is to make a memorial gift in his or her name to a suitable organization. Such a generous way to honor loved ones is greatly appreciated by their family, and is an appropriate way to express condolences in a time of sorrow. Helping to enlarge the kingdom of God is a fitting way to remember and honor a



Memorial gifts, like monuments, pay homage to lives lived for the Lord.

life of faithful service.

A memorial gift to Continent of Great Cities will both honor the memory of a special person and honor our Lord's command to preach the gospel to all nations. Such a gift to help establish strong churches in South American capital cities is a wonderful way to honor a friend or relative.

Memorial gifts

to this missions ministry will bear fruit long after flowers have died and names are forgotten. Such gifts multiply to bless hundreds, for they help God's family grow larger and stronger.

A commemorative gift to Continent of Great Cities helps turn a time of sorrow into a time of hope for new life in Christ. It is a tribute that enables others to experience the same saving grace which the honored person enjoyed. Recruiting, training and assisting mission teams to plant churches in South America is a worthy cause that brings honor to those who have been so dear.

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25, 26). With your help, Continent of Great Cities offers this living hope to the millions who live in South America's urban centers.

All memorial gifts will be recognized in the *South America Mission Report*, and acknowledgements will be sent to the family. Contributions to Continent of Great Cities are tax deductible.

## Death Claims Longtime Supporter of Brazilian missions

E.R. Carver, who backed Brazilian mission work for 35 years, passed from this life on July 30, 1996. He was 95 years old. Brother Carver was an elder of the Central Church of Christ in Amarillo, Texas, when the first team of missionaries from churches of Christ went to Sao Paulo, Brazil, in 1961. He remained an elder until the time of his death.

He was an encourager of missionaries and supported the establishing of the leadership training school, the construction of the Ninth of July church building, and the Continent of Great Cities ministry. Roy Carver is survived by his wife, Stella, with whom he had been married for 70 years.

## Memorial gifts

### IN MEMORY OF

Elfreda M. Edwards . . . . James A. and Glenda Ravanelli  
Eugene Goudeau . . . . . Ed and Marsha Allred  
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