

# THE SPANISH WORK THEN AND NOW

**Just how and when did the Spanish Work begin? Whom did God use to raise it up? What growth has taken place thus far, and what must be done in the future? The Director of the Spanish Department of the Foreign Educational Service answers these questions in this interesting and informative report.**

by Charles V. Dorothy

**H**OW ABOUT a trip to exotic South America? Surely you've heard of the "country" called South America — the land of Spanish señoritas, hot tacos, chili peppers, the giant cataract called Iguasú Falls, sleepy natives under a cactus, the "end of the world" of Cape Horn and the Straits of Magellan, the famous Mardi Gras of Rio!

Wouldn't it be exciting to travel there? Well, then, take out a pencil and paper (not a suitcase and airline ticket) and we will travel to this exotic area to see what God is accomplishing there.

## Test Yourself

To comprehend this area better and to understand how God is working in this vast part of the world, you need to be able to answer a few questions to put yourself in the picture. Don't be afraid of the test — it won't spoil your trip even if you don't know all the answers.

QUESTION 1: Spanish, with several slight variations, is spoken throughout South America. True or False?

QUESTION 2: If you are in the U. S., which direction would you go from your area to arrive in South America?

QUESTION 3: If we draw a line due south from the state of Florida (no fair looking at a map now), that line would pass

(a) through the center of South America.



Ambassador College Photo  
Dr. Charles Dorothy (right) Director of the Spanish Department, confers with Mr. Enrique Ruiz, manager of our office in Mexico City.

(b) to the west of South America, missing most of the continent.

(c) through the eastern tip of Brazil, missing most of South America.

QUESTION 4: Brazil is larger than the continental United States. True or False?

Let's see how you have done in preparing for your trip. First of all, South America is not a "country," of course, but a huge *continent* in which are nine Spanish-speaking countries, Portuguese-speaking Brazil, English-speaking Guyana and two "semi-colonies" (Surinam and Guiana). Latin America is a term which includes Central America and Mexico in *North America*, as well as the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking parts of South America. (The realm of the "Spanish Work" consists of 23 Spanish-speaking nations in the world, including Spain and the Spanish Sahara.)

If you said you would go *south* from your location — *wherever* that might be in the United States or most of Canada — you are only partly right. You would have to go *southeast*. Your line due south from Florida would pass *west* of the Panama Canal, barely touch the westernmost tips of Ecuador and Peru and remain in the *Pacific Ocean*, *missing the whole landmass of South America!*

For the answer to the final question, Brazil, occupying nearly one half of the continent, including its easternmost

part, is larger than continental United States.

Now that you are coming along with me on this armchair trip, I am tempted to recite some of the exciting history of these intriguing lands "south of the border." But it would take many articles to cover the exciting adventures of the first man to attempt to explore South America (Ojeda in 1500), or Orellana's almost legendary sail down the Amazon River from Peru in 1541 and his account of the "topless" women, called Amazons, with whom he fought. (Since no pictures were taken of them, people still doubt he saw what he claimed). We could go on to the great liberator and world-government visionary, Simon Bolivar, and the heroic struggle of the *mestizos* and *criollos* for independence, but alas . . . that must be for another time.

What interests us now is the history of God's Work in the vast Spanish-speaking areas of the world.

### How the Spanish Work Began

The Spanish Department has a somewhat privileged place in the annals of the Church of God, Philadelphia era. It started with two men — Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong and Dr. Benjamin L. Rea (then *Mr. Rea*) — and a fact-finding tour to South America in 1954. Their tour produced two clear-cut results: a first-hand familiarity with Latin culture and with anti-Americanism; and a conviction that our Spanish neighbors were rapidly developing ties with our rising competitor, *Europe*.

Back in those days the "foreign work" (as we called it then; now the Foreign Educational Service under Mr. Ronald Dart) was striving for "firsts," that is, new breakthroughs in carrying the truth to the world. Due to Dr. Rea's dogged perseverance, by 1958 we had a good number of Spanish booklets (including the Work's first booklet in any foreign language) and we were on 13 radio stations in South America in the Spanish language! That radio door was another "first" for the foreign work in this age. The Spanish Department enjoyed a heavy share of "firsts" in its early days.

For those of you who may not know

or remember, Dr. Rea was a Louisiana-born American with a Spanish-sounding name. In the service he became a medical corpsman and was wounded on Iwo Jima during World War II. Returning to civilian life, he received a master's degree in International Economics and Business Administration from Louisiana State University in 1948. Soon after taking a position as an investigator for about 300 insurance companies in Louisiana, he came in contact with the Church of God. Seigler Springs, California, in 1952, was his first Feast of Tabernacles. The following Passover in Texas he was hired as Professor of Spanish for Ambassador College at Pasadena.

Continuing to study and work diligently summers and between sessions, Dr. Rea received a Ph.D. in Spanish from *La Universidad Interamericana* in Mexico in 1960.

Dr. Rea was then transferred to England in 1960 to be a pillar in the raising up of a new college at Bricket Wood. He also continued with the Spanish Department. Structuring the new college and nourishing the Spanish Work, he drove himself constantly . . . to the detriment of his health. Suffering from very high blood pressure and a severe heart condition, Dr. Rea collapsed and died early in 1965, shortly after an upsetting interview with a persecuting London reporter. His last act was performed on behalf of the Work he so dearly loved.

He was a personal friend of mine and a fine person to be associated with. Most of all he was the one God originally used to build a four-year Spanish program at Ambassador and to initiate the World Tomorrow program in the Spanish language.

### The Spanish Broadcast

After Dr. Rea's second trip to South America in 1957, his account of it was published as a "diary" in the then 24-page English-language PLAIN TRUTH. In it he wrote:

We are commanded to *watch* as we see the end approaching (Matt. 24:42; Mark 13:35). But before we watch we must know *what* to look for. . . . This, then, is the prime purpose of the present trip.

Another purpose is to lay the foundation, or to break ground, as it were, for the evangelization of the countries south of the frontiers of the United States. This Gospel of the Kingdom of God *must* be carried to these Gentile nations *as a witness* before the return of Jesus Christ (Matt. 24:14). There is nothing that is more sorely needed by these people than God's truth. (The trip has already borne fruit. Plans are being made and time is being negotiated to begin broadcasting in South America this coming January!)

This broadcast did begin soon after that time. It was heard at first only in Montevideo, Uruguay and in Lima, Peru a *very small* beginning — and our poor-time, once-a-week, 15-minute *El MUNDO DE MAÑANA* program seemed very unpromising indeed. But God blessed that small effort. The earliest records I now have (1957 — before we began broadcasting) show a total of 282 letters (including those from Spanish-speaking people within the United States borders). In 1958, *after* we began broadcasting, 474 letters came in. That was a whopping 68% increase. I remember our excitement — our exultation: "the Spanish Work is *alive!*" In 1959 the letters jumped to 664 or a 40% increase. Yet our income for 1960 was a modest \$1,607.48. Reminds you of Mr. Armstrong and the Work in Eugene, Oregon, during the '30s, doesn't it?

For several more years we had startling *growth* percentages like 149%, 118%, etc., but of course the size of the Spanish Work was still very, very small. Then came the tragic and untimely death of Dr. Rea in England. In March of 1965, Mr. Ted Armstrong transferred the Spanish Department to Big Sandy under my direction.

### Yours Truly

As for my background, I graduated from the University of Washington in Seattle with a B.A. in Political Science, and was commissioned as Second Lieutenant in the Air Force Reserve. Then I came to Ambassador College in 1955. My plan in coming was a very un-Christian one: to strip the scales from the eyes of my longtime best friend and "adopted brother," David Jon Hill. His "embarrassing" religion — with its emphasis on literally believing the



Bible — seemed like a fraud to me. Thinking Mr. Hill had been deceived, I boldly dared to think I might be able to “un-deceive” him!

Instead it worked the other way — I got “un-deceived.”

With four years of Spanish and two years of Portuguese behind me, I continued Spanish classes at Ambassador out of sheer pleasure in that beautiful language. When Dr. Rea was transferred to Bricket Wood in 1960, it fell my lot to teach the Spanish classes and to supervise the fledgling “department,” such as remained on the Pasadena campus at that time. After receiving a Ph.D. in Latin American Studies in 1963, I was sent as a faculty member to help establish Ambassador College at Big Sandy, Texas in 1964.

### The Smallest of Mustard Seeds

All this time we were planning a PLAIN TRUTH in Spanish. Those days before the birth of *La PURA VERDAD* (the Spanish PLAIN TRUTH) were sometimes very dark indeed, but our faithful department employees never lost hope. Principally we never lost hope because of the letters we received from questioning, excited, zealous and happy, or depressed and pleading human beings. *The Spanish-speaking people* kept us going.

We maintained a mailing list by sending out either a monthly letter or, as often as possible, a reprint article. This list had grown to almost 2,000 people when the department transferred from England to Big Sandy. Believe it or not, we thought that was an *impressive figure!* The next year it grew to 3,000 and in 1967, to 4,500 — an increase of 50% every year! That growth rate seemed phenomenal, considering the critical problems we faced not even one office in a Latin country, mail delays of up to three months, and long waits between published articles.

There was no advertising in periodicals, nor were we on top radio stations — still, a trickle of mail kept coming. The stations continued broadcasting and re-broadcasting Dr. Rea's tapes even though we repeatedly wrote them and even personally visited them *asking them to stop playing old, nearly worn-out tapes!*

Then in what seems now like very rapid succession (but at the time it seemed such a slow, up-hill fight) three things happened: we hired a broadcaster, opened an office in Mexico City, and began the Spanish PLAIN TRUTH magazine, *La PURA VERDAD*.

While the department was getting established in Big Sandy, Jesus Christ had been laying the groundwork for something we thought would be a long way off in the future — an office in Latin America. Mr. Enrique Ruiz, Mexican by birth, bilingual in English and Spanish, and a former Arthur Murray dance instructor from the Phoenix area, came to Ambassador College and graduated in 1967.

So it was that Mr. Ruiz, accompanied by his beautiful and artistic wife, Holly, and their son and daughter, soon took up residence in exotic Mexico City to staff and manage an office which Mr. Ted Armstrong and I opened there in late 1967.

On an earlier baptizing tour for the Spanish Work in 1962, Dr. Rea had met a tall, husky, jovial Puerto Rican named Pablo Gonzalez. Mr. Gonzalez was baptized at that time and continued working for the Government Printing Office, never dreaming what God had in store for him. In 1967, he was chosen by Mr. Ted Armstrong to become our broadcaster and moved to the United States to work for the Spanish Department at Big Sandy. Mr. Gonzalez, who ably assists me with editorial responsibilities (along with Mr. Victor Gutierrez and Mr. Dennis Peabworth, who is Managing Editor of *La PURA VERDAD*), is now (as we kid him) “almost 40” and is complemented by his very pleasant wife, Aurea, and two pretty little girls.

Very shortly thereafter, on the 34th anniversary of the beginning of the English-language edition — February, 1968 — the first issue of *La PURA VERDAD* came off the press.

### A Big Breakthrough!

From November of 1968 until March of 1970, advertising in *Reader's Digest* Spanish editions swelled our circulation from just about 6,000 total subscribers to nearly 90,000 — the largest response to ads for any of

the foreign language departments.

A year later a vigorous renewal program endeavored to cut that list back to possibly 55,000, but we never again hit as low as 75,000 circulation. Almost mysteriously, the growth equaled — that is, balanced out — the cancellations! I say “mysteriously” because the Spanish broadcast is aired on only eight radio stations and for only 15 minutes *once a week*.

It is obvious that 15 minutes a week will not build much of a listening audience. Furthermore, there is no longer an advertising campaign in Spanish and there has not been *for over two years*. STILL *La PURA VERDAD* CONTINUES GROWING BY 2,000 NEW SUBSCRIBERS A MONTH! (At the time of this writing 100,000 subscribers are receiving *La PURA VERDAD* worldwide.)

Of course it is not entirely mysterious. First of all, God is blessing the Spanish Work. Secondly, the Latins have a free and open way of passing on and spreading around whatever they consider to be “a good thing.” While a British, American or Australian reader, for example, may tend to keep *The PLAIN TRUTH* to himself, a Latin will tend to share it with all his family *and his friends*. A third factor is that there is less competition in Latin America from high-quality magazines. *La PURA VERDAD* has some virgin fields in which to expand!

### Into Southern South America

Possibly the most exciting and far-reaching “first” for us took place through a strange set of circumstances at the end of 1967. We had been sending literature to a small sect headed by a Señor Loje of Lima, Peru, after he had responded to our program on radio *La Cronica* in Lima.

This small group of Peruvians literally believe themselves to be of full-blooded Jewish descent — observing the Jewish festivals, practicing circumcision (without which, they believe, one cannot be saved), and *animal sacrifices* — but using New Testament phraseology. They claim Christ as their Savior, yet very much practice “salvation by works.”

*(Continued on inside back cover)*

things are of *good report*; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, THINK ON THESE THINGS" (Phil. 4:8).

If you will follow this apostolic advice, then you will be able to do as Paul says in verse 4: "REJOICE!" You will find a great number of things to be happy about, to rejoice over, and to praise God for. But it all boils down to your basic attitude and frame of mind. *You* must make the decision as to what you are going to think about.

All of us in God's Church have *so much* to be thankful for. But we do need to stop and *count* our blessings — often — and not allow ourselves to forget them. It is easy to forget the miracles God has performed in the past, to forget His loving kindness toward us, to FORGET His mercy and patience. It is easy to get overly involved with physical things, to become entirely too engrossed with our jobs, occupations, pleasures, pastimes, families — or our problems, difficulties — and to FORGET the loving hand that is ever ready to intervene for us and to deliver us from trouble!

It is easy to forget, and to begin to question God, or decisions made in His Work, and to become disgruntled or embittered at some affront or imagined slight or snub.

But, as we have said, the way to eliminate such evil thoughts and reasonings is to replace them with POSITIVE thoughts — STUDYING the Bible every day, drinking in of those positive examples and case histories in the scriptures which inspire and stimulate us to draw close to God.

Entering the Kingdom of God is *not* as easy as rolling off a log. It requires positive, diligent EFFORT.

The Apostle Paul declared, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) CASTING DOWN *imagination*s [or reasonings], and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and *bringing into CAPTIVITY* EVERY THOUGHT *to the obedience* of Christ" (II Cor. 10:3-5).

Examine *your* life. Have you been as cheerful, radiant, contented, happy as

you *should* be? Have you been as thankful, appreciative, and joyous as you should be? Or have you allowed a measure of resentment, a bit of envy, or an ounce of carnal comparisons to twist and pervert your thinking? Have you been expressing the fruits of God's Holy Spirit — LOVE, JOY, PEACE — in the way you lead your life? Or have you been negligent? Check up on yourself.

### "Nobody Beats It"

One young drug addict told others who might be tempted to try heroin: "When I started, it was a big kick. I was doing something nobody else was

doing. It was a thrill. *But now I know better.* . . .

"I would tell kids today, *don't go near it. Don't* think you can beat it. NOBODY BEATS IT."

His words apply equally well to spiritual heroin. Don't go near it! Don't think you can beat it. NOBODY beats it!

If you think you are an exception — that you can "toy" with wrong attitudes, or "play around" with spiritual heroin — complaining, griping, grumbling — if you think you can get away with it, then you are kidding yourself. Far too many have made this mistake — and have paid the consequences. *Don't let it happen to you!* □

## SPANISH WORK

(Continued from page 4)

In numerous letters to us, Sr. Loje traced many similarities between his teachings and ours (Sabbath observance, Feast of Tabernacles, clean and unclean meats, etc.), while he indulged himself with lengthy, sprawling treatises on why we were wrong on this or that doctrine. Yet, strangely, it was through this man that God led a large group of people to us — and led us to open a Work in Southern South America!

Following is a translation of the first letter we received from a member of a church which was composed of a number of congregations in Chile and Argentina:

Dear Brother in Christ:

I am very pleased to address this letter to you and all your fellow laborers in the Work of God. During a recent trip to Peru in order to study various doctrines and Bible prophecies with the members of the "Asociación Israelita Evangélica del Nuevo Pacto" [Evangelical Israelite Association of the New Covenant], I learned from Sr. Jose Alfredo Loje, the president of this group, that he had various booklets and Bible courses which you had sent him. During my stay I had the opportunity to read several of these.

I've found your literature to be remarkable. I'm very impressed by your full knowledge of the Bible, its doctrines and prophecies. Maybe I'm particularly impressed because I am a member of an old, although small, religious group in Chile called, "Iglesia Israelita del Nuevo Pacto" [Israelite Church of the New Cov-

enant]. I was told by some of our elderly members that our group was started by a missionary named Zegers, at the turn of the century or thereabouts.

We number about 20 churches [in Chile alone] . . . practicing God's laws, commandments, and statutes, just as God gave them to the people of Israel by Moses and just as God has promised in the New Covenant to write them in our hearts.

By prophecy we have understood that God would in the latter days begin a Work which would eventually restore the truth of God to a world that has stamped it out by the feet of her false prophets. We believe that if we're faithful to the light God has already given us, He will give us more and more truth so that we can form a part of this worldwide Work foretold in Bible prophecy (Acts 3:21; Matt. 24:14). Please send me the same literature you've been sending Sr. Loje. I'd like to take it back to our churches in Santiago, Chile.

In mid-June of 1968, after having sent our literature to this organization in Chile, we received the following letter from a man named Manuel Garrido. It was the first fully descriptive letter we received regarding these Chilean people. Sr. Garrido eventually, and to this day, has proved a very valuable link to the group. This is his letter, dated June 18, 1968:

Dear Friends,

Thank you very much for the literature I've just received! I'm just thrilled that God has brought me in contact with you. The booklets are a great blessing to my family. My wife and I read them over and over again, especially *La PURA VERDAD!* As I mentioned in my first letter to you,

we have been practicing all these things for several years. But, after reading your booklets on God's Holy Days, I find a few differences with your understanding. We had been using the Jewish Calendar and following their observances. Please continue sending us your literature so that one day we can become *one* body.

The church to which I belong in Chile has been here for about 80 years although I don't know exactly the date it started. Some of the older members say that a gentleman named either Sbegezel or Seguesel came here from a distant country (either England or North America — I forget) and started preaching among the Seventh-day Adventists. Only one person believed what he said. A man named Manuel Avalos who then continued Seguesel's work after he returned to his homeland. Avalos understood only about there being three festivals: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Several people then left the Adventists and other sects and started what came to be called the "Israelite Church of the New Covenant." Although we all assumed that elsewhere on earth there were others believing as we do, it was only recently that we have contacted other congregations in other countries with the same beliefs.

And now, miraculously, we have come in contact with you!

We are not a very numerous body of people. There are about 1,000 of us in Chile and a similar number in Argentina.

Please forgive me for writing such a long letter — it's just that I'm so happy God has led me to you!

About this time we became aware of Pope Paul VI's planned visit to Colombia for the Eucharistic Conference. We knew our Latin American readership would be interested in reading about his visit in *La PURA VERDAD*. And a trip to Colombia would place us in a position to visit Chile at comparatively little additional cost. So with two objectives, covering the Pope's visit for the worldwide editions of *The PLAIN TRUTH*, and visiting the newly interested group in Chile, Mr. Gonzalez and I journeyed to South America.

In firsthand contact with the Chilean feast-keepers, we were told that the man who first brought the message to that remote corner of the world was a "North American" (the Spanish name for a U. S. citizen) named William Shegers who arrived in 1896, began preaching in the town of Vic-

toria in 1897 and whose first convert was Martin Avalos. We know the exact chain of authority through successive ordinations from Shegers and Avalos on down to the present day.

### Where Matters Stand Today

In the summer of 1969, we sent Mr. Robert Flores, a long-time member of the Worldwide Church of God and an ordained local elder, first to Chile, and later to Argentina, to visit and teach those whom God is calling from these groups. We knew from the outset that not all 1500 to 2000 Sabbath-keepers there would be called into the Philadelphia era of God's Church, though our goal was to reach all, or as many as possible, with the truth. Once they were reached, about 14% seemed willing to come out of old ways and begin to follow seriously the biblical teaching on church government, Passover on the 14th of Nisan, Pentecost on Monday, and so on. But physical death in some cases and spiritual defection in others has dwindled that number to about 10%.

We have 70 bona fide baptized members in Chile today. In Argentina — in the area of Bahia Blanca, on the coast five hundred miles south of Buenos Aires — we have 60 people in attendance under the pastorship of Mr. Flores. So far he has baptized or approved the baptisms of approximately 20 people. Scattered elsewhere throughout Argentina are a dozen more members, some of whom have recently been baptized as a result of Dr. Rea's old programs!

Somewhat to our surprise, God has opened up a foothold in the small but fairly prosperous democratic nation of Uruguay — we have seven members there. At this time more of the people of the "Israelite Church of the New Covenant" are avidly studying our literature. We thrill to see what God has done with these faithful people and what has been produced through the untiring efforts and the personal sacrifice of Mr. and Mrs. Flores!

### What Lies Ahead?

All the figures and statistics you have read may make the Spanish Work seem to be rather large, but do not be

misled. The Spanish Work is in one sense the *smallest* "foreign work" in the Worldwide Church of God today!

How can this be so when it has the largest circulation of the foreign editions of *The PLAIN TRUTH*? Here's how: there are 300,000,000 Spanish-speaking people in the world, so our operation compared with the field we need to cover is the *SMALLEST BY FAR* of any presently going on in the Foreign Educational Service. We have farther to go than anybody now operating as a department, with the possible exception of the Japanese.

We have a solemn commission to reach the 23 Spanish-speaking nations of the world. But that job is not easy. We fervently request your prayers for God's Spirit and power to penetrate old, time-worn, crusty, religious and traditional barriers, and for success in planning so the Spanish Work can pay its own way.

You can have a part in helping to accomplish these goals by joining us in prayer to the Captain of our salvation and to the Almighty Father who is a God not only of Israel, but also of the Gentiles worldwide! □

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## Readers Say . . .

(Continued from page 13)

ples. We start today, and how eager I am to begin an adventure of dramatization and storytelling about some of the greatest men and women who ever lived.

~~I feel confident now that with God's help and His clear-cut set of guidelines, my children will begin and continue to grow in knowledge and wisdom of God. Thanks again.~~

Mrs. B. G.,  
Hebron, Indiana

*The GOOD NEWS* (July 1972) has the most marvellous articles. All the articles are good — but as our little daughter would say, "these are gooder."

L. P., San Mateo,  
California

I really want to thank those at Headquarters for the tremendous articles in the July *GOOD NEWS*. They have really helped me in a time of some of the most severe trials I've had since being in God's Work. I will continue to read them often to keep those principles alive and firm in mind. Again, thank you.

B. M., St. Louis Park,  
Minnesota