

Amarillo boy begins relationship with Christ because of CD effort

May 26, 2010

AMARILLO—When members from Iglesia Bautista Fuente Viva delivered a multimedia compact disc containing Scripture to homes near their church in early May, they wanted to bring encouragement to their neighbors and share about the hope of Christ.

Little did they know that only a few hours later, 10-year-old Manuel Gonzalez's life would be changed forever from the message he heard on the [Texas Hope 2010](#) CD.

✘ After the group stopped by his home, Gonzalez asked his grandmother if he could watch the multimedia disk. He went to another room, popped it into the DVD player and began to watch testimony after testimony of people who have been changed by the love of Christ.

"After seven minutes passed, he came back," Pastor Fredy Pavez said.

"And he came to (his grandmother) with a big smile and crying and said, 'I just accepted Jesus Christ.' The next day, the grandma shared with us that he is so excited. He has been letting everyone know in his class at school what he did."

The next Sunday, Gonzalez and his family came to the church and began to get involved. Then, a couple of weeks later, Gonzalez was baptized. Several students and teachers he told about his relationship with Jesus were present at the baptism.

Iglesia Bautista Fuente Viva is one of 14 Amarillo churches engaging their neighbors and distributing CDs that include the Gospel of John and an option to download the New Testament in more than 300 languages.

The churches are working together to pray for the lost, care for the hurting and hungry in the state and share the gospel where all Texans can respond to the hope of Christ.

“Our hope is that those CDs will touch the lives of those and that they will believe that Jesus is the way to the truth and the life,” Pavez said. “Our main goal is to give the word away so they will know truth. And it is a great time for those who have never been involved in evangelism before, going door-to-door. Maybe God will touch the lives of many, and we will have new ministers.”

To help the city become aware of the initiative, the churches led by a team of pastors and members from area congregations and [Amarillo Area Baptist Association](#) purchased ads about the Texas Hope 2010 CD in the local newspaper and monthly city magazine, as well as on cable television in April, making residents aware a church soon would be at their door to offer a CD and a helping hand.

The association divided Amarillo by mail-carrier routes so churches could adopt specific areas in the city for CD delivery. Many of the churches are going door-to-door in their area to meet the residents and deliver the CD, while other churches that may have more difficulty with this task have opted to mail the CDs to their designated area. Some churches started delivery during April, while other churches deliver CDs during summer outreach programs. Through the effort, more than 60,000 CDs will be delivered to Amarillo residents.

Bryan Houser, director of missions at the Amarillo Area Baptist Association, said his desire for churches as they get involved in the effort is that they

will be renewed in their vision for taking the hope of Christ to the city.

“We are hoping that we can get the gospel out and reach people who have not been reached any other way,” Houser said. “The goal is primarily an evangelistic effort. “Secondly, we hope to see a vision for churches to reach people that they don’t normally think about sharing the gospel with each week. You can have any method, but if you don’t use it, it won’t work. This is a method that will help churches get involved.”

For some churches, the CD came as the next step to continue outreach efforts already being carried out by the church. Bykota Baptist Church is using the CD to continue on with a prayer effort members held in the neighborhood around the church the past couple of months. Each Tuesday night, members went door-to-door, street-by-street to meet residents and to ask for prayer requests and ways they can be a help to them.

“I’ve been excited since the beginning, and I’m ready to see it get to the streets and not just in our hands,” said Chris Moore, pastor of [Bykota Baptist Church](#) . “I hope it changes lives.”

To follow up on the prayer effort, the church is taking 750 CDs back to the same homes. The church has two teams that will deliver CDs and one team that will be prayer support, praying for the CD effort and requests mentioned and following up on the visits with cards and phone calls. Many neighbors have now become more open to the church through the effort, Moore said, and he is seeing renewal in church members as they participate in reaching out to their community.

“More than anything it has made a difference in the members that are involved,” he said. “They realize how easy it is to get out and share their faith.”

As people understand the love of Christ, Moore hopes that they will accept him and then get involved in a church where they can be discipled. To

further this vision, Bykota Baptist Church began a basic Christian beliefs class on Sunday nights to help people in the area who are seeking to know more about Christ or desiring to learn how to mature in their faith.

Victor Miller, minister of education at [Paramount Baptist Church](#) , said the church handed out 500 CDs to members in March, asking them to think of a specific co-worker, family member, neighbor or friend who they can give the CD to as a gift. The church also plans to deliver several thousand CDs to the neighborhood around the building during May.

“We want to continue to create awareness in every church member that they are part of the redemptive process and that God wants to use them to take the gospel to those in their sphere of influence,” Miller said. “Ultimately we hope that these people [who receive the CD] will be drawn into relationships with Christ.”

First Baptist Church also got involved with the distribution. The church cancelled the Sunday evening service on April 25 so that members could gather CDs and deliver them to the neighborhood around the church and to others in southwest Amarillo. The church prepared packets of 50 CDs for members to deliver to designate areas. While some members delivered more than 4,000 CDs, many others stayed behind at the church praying for the effort.

“Our hope as we go out is that we will be able to share the good news with those in our community and also through our efforts, be reminded not only of the benefit of sharing Christ but of the blessing we also gain,” said Robby Barrett, minister of education at the church.

For Nancy Hanning, a church member who participated in delivering CDs, the effort was a way to interact easily with residents, praying for them and planting gospel seeds in the process.

“I loved this ministry,” Hanning said. “Of all the ministries and the

outreaches and the evangelism programs we have had at church, I think this by far truly is the very best.... It is the least intimidating for those of us as family at First Baptist. The most timid of us can go out and do this, feeling like we are not imposing.”

Hanning also sees that God is going before the members, preparing residents’ hearts to hear the message of hope.

“God has opened people’s hearts,” she said. “I found people very receiving, open, welcoming and even very appreciative. With world events going on now, I just find that people are open. We couldn’t be in a better place, in a better time to do this. We are called to do this. He has asked us to do this. All of us are equipped to do this.”

City Church plans to deliver 10,000 CDs to households in northeast Amarillo in June through the church’s summer lunch program. About 700 volunteers come to the ministry each summer to help provide lunch to children in low-income areas of the city and to host kids’ clubs, sharing the hope of Christ in the process with those who attend. This summer, the volunteers will take the CDs to the families along with the meals.

“We are going to use them as an excuse to knock on the door and build a relationship with people we are not already reaching,” said Don Lane, pastor of [City Church](#) . “It is those kinds of efforts to challenge us to find the people who have been over looked.”

The church also plans to hand out the CDs at the church’s annual Jesus Loves You Festival, a family event held each summer that reaches out to the more than 15 language groups that live in the area around the church.

More than 60,000 CDs will be delivered to Amarillo residents as part of Texas Hope 2010. The CDs include the **Gospel of John** and an option to download the New Testament in more than 300 languages.

Lane sees the CD as a useful tool in sharing the gospel with the diverse language groups there because of the option to download the New Testament in so many languages, allowing them to hear the gospel in their native tongue.

“We are trying to obviously lead them to the Lord and disciple them,” Lane said. “When you talk about discipling multiple languages and cultures and in one church, that is not something that usually happens. The deeper that we dig in the neighborhood, we believe that it will be a real turning point in our church.”

Iglesia Bautista Fuente Viva also will hand out additional CDs while hosting 12 youth rallies at city parks this summer. The student ministry will host events including a cookout, bands and evangelistic dramas to attempt to engage area youth with the hope of Christ.

Pavez said that many of the church’s students were not interested in helping with these events and CD distribution until they heard about Gonzalez’s story, understanding that God can use any effort to bring someone into a relationship with Him.

“We have kids here that didn’t want to participate, but when they listened to his testimony last Sunday, everyone was ready to help. They saw that God touch the life of a 10-year-old so He can touch the lives of others,” Pavez said.

As the Amarillo churches have worked together to share the word of God with the city, the bond between the churches has strengthened, helping the churches catch a unified vision for God to work and transform the city.

“I think one of the best things is the relationship that has formed within the association— churches coming together for a joint effort in ways we might not typically come together to reach our city,” Moore said.

“My hope is that we are going to have a citywide revival as we come together as brothers and sisters in Christ and that in the days and years to come, we will continue to work together. I can see that God is ready to move in a major way throughout the city and I hope that He moves throughout the state.”

Other churches in the association outside of Amarillo have also been involved with the Texas Hope 2010 CD effort. Churches in Channing, Canyon, Hereford and Vega also are delivering CDs to homes in their cities, praying the gospel penetrates the hearts of those who hear.