

Luis Palau Gospel Festival Impacts Tens of Thousands of Venezuelans

Three weeks of worldwide evangelistic television programming culminated Saturday at Juventud Libre, a lively open-air festival in Barquisimeto, Venezuela. An estimated 45,000 people converged at the city's bicentennial fairgrounds, forming a crowd so large it swelled into nearby streets.

Popular recording artists, including Latin Grammy winner Mónica Rodríguez and Latin Grammy nominee Tercer Cielo, joined with world evangelist Luis Palau to reach thousands of individuals in person with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ. Across the crowd, people of all ages raised their hands into the air, united in expressing their surrender to Christ and reveling in their newfound hope.

Approximately 4,000 response cards were received, each representing an individual who made a decision to either follow Jesus Christ or reconcile their relationship with Him. Cards are being sorted and distributed to local churches in order to connect new believers with a local congregation and begin the follow-up and discipleship process.

The theme for the festival, which was largely aimed at the younger generation, was "Venezuela, Abre Tu Corazón a la Esperanza" (Venezuela, Open Your Heart to Hope). The theme reflected festival organizer Gabriel Blanco's desire to see the generation transformed by entering into a relationship with Jesus Christ, living a life influenced by biblical morals and discovering hope in the midst of uncertain circumstances.

For the youth-focused event, Barquisimeto was an ideal location. Its vibrant cultural traditions and abundance of educational opportunities make the city something of a

destination for young people. In order to spread the word about the festival, Palau was interviewed by a number of the city's prominent media outlets, both print media and television.

Throughout the week prior to the festival, Palau spoke at a number of other gatherings, including a conference for pastors and their wives with more than 3,000 people in attendance. He also shared the Good News at a dinner for businessmen and professionals, where 126 influential leaders came to faith in Jesus Christ.

The festival marked the culmination of a three-week worldwide evangelistic campaign through Enlace Television. The campaign began with a festival in Naples, Italy, on June 14 and 15, in which Palau proclaimed the gospel in a historic effort among Italian evangelical churches. The festival was broadcast in more than 40 nations in both Spanish and Italian. Past Palau festivals then were aired for three weeks, leading up to a live feed of Juventud Libre, including a local broadcast on more than 700 channels in Venezuela.

While the local churches begin the follow-up process, Palau and the team turn their attention to upcoming campaigns in Cornwall, England; Manado, Indonesia; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and Beijing, China; which will be led by Andrew Palau as the evangelist.