

Radio Ministry Reaches Colombian Drug Zones

Drug trafficking brings an estimated \$6 billion into Colombia each year. The country's government is fighting against it, but still the market continues.

One aspect that greatly affects the lives of thousands of people in Colombia is the constant conflict between the government and the FARC, a guerrilla movement that has proclaimed itself as a socialist anti-imperialist organization. To fund their terrorist activities, they get as much as \$2 million a day in illicit drug proceeds. Some FARC units in southern Colombia are reported to be directly involved in drug trafficking activities such as controlling local cocaine base markets.

Regions controlled by this guerrilla group would be the last place you'd expect to find Christians, and Spanish World Ministries has found that the terrorist group likes it that way.

"There is one specific [region] that is called Guaviare," says Daniel Sandoval, with Spanish World Ministries. "This terrorist group has increased the planting, processing and trading of cocaine. Of course, the lack of government programs, the lack of transportation, medical services, and, above all, the control of the Guerilla over this place makes this region a difficult missionary field—either for nationals or for foreign missionary organizations."

The terrorist group in this area considers Christian activity suspicious, Sandoval says.

"If any Christian organization pretends to reach the small towns in this region of Guaviare, the guerilla movement will consider them spies sent by the DEA, or informants for the

government,” explains Sandoval. “The question is: Should the people from Guaviare die without having the opportunity to hear about Christ? We’re talking about a population of about 25,000 people.”

Sandoval adds, “Of course, we know the answer: they need to hear about Christ.”

How to do this in an area so hostile—not to mention dangerous—to believers, though? Spanish World Ministries has found a way. They are transcending all boundaries through an unlikely medium: radio.

God has used radio to transform hearts in these hard-to-reach areas in a number of ways. For instance, one man involved in planting and harvesting marijuana and the coca plant and in processing cocaine was injured on the job. As he sat there bleeding, waiting for someone to come to his aid, he turned on the radio. A Spanish World broadcast “happened” to be playing.

After hearing about sin and Christ’s forgiveness, the man immediately surrendered his life. In fact, he even burned his plantation. When he explained the reasoning to his workers, all of them accepted Christ as their Savior as well. And it all stemmed from one radio broadcast.

Spanish World Ministries has been able to break down barriers in Colombia and has also become an encouragement to Colombians in difficult times. During the recent flooding that killed over 400 people and affected 3 million total, the ministry’s broadcasts provided the peace of Christ to many.

“In the midst of these difficult situations, our programs represented a great blessing for many people that needed desperately to hear words of hope and encouragement,” says Sandoval.