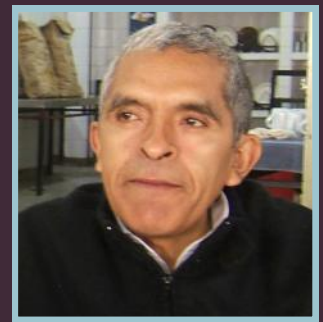




**The**  
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**ONE PICTURE WORTH A  
 THOUSAND WORDS!  
 CHURCHES??**



It was really a lousy picture. The perspective was off and the kitchen bodega was in the background. I cannot even remember who took the picture. But it's what we call in Spanish a recuerdo, a remembrance. I wanted to remember the scene, and the conversation.

I had to crop, cut and paste it in order to use it here. I was just getting to know Rodrigo Espinosa, the superintendent of Assemblies of God of Peru. During the coffee break at the international Christian education conference he and I sat talking with a group of friends. He waited for the rest to leave and with unusual candor decided to tell me about his dream. He believed that God was asking him to do something great, for which he had no resources with which to accomplish the task. What was the vision God had given him? To plant 200 new churches in Lima, Peru. Among his colleagues, he found no one who could capture the vision God was giving him. At that time, the Bible institutes had no real interest in preparing their students to plant new churches. What was he to do? During our conversation, the Spirit convinced me his vision came from the Lord and I was hooked. This is the kind of project for which our ministry exists—enabling national leaders to impact major cities.

The first trips we made to study the feasibility of the project, it seemed as though the very forces of darkness had combined their weapons to prevent this vision from ever becoming a reality. However, the data I gathered indicated that 400 churches were needed to meet the needs of that city's ten million youthful inhabitants—sixty percent born in the last forty years and more than one third under the age of fifteen. They lived in a city of spiritual darkness devoid of true knowledge the good news about Jesus. But more than demographic research was needed. Other pastors and leaders had to catch Rodrigo's vision to see what God was seeing in their city; to know that with the Lord's help it was possible. But as always happens when God has spoken God provides a way.





## CHURCH & CITY: RESOURCES FOR URBAN CHURCH PLANTING

I received an invitation to speak at the national church growth convention. A little bit of research and great help from a network of friends, brought together a plan that just might make the vision possible. We attended a convention and made the presentation—"Growing through Multiplication." Again we met the executive committee. District Superintendents requested a meeting where Juan Carlos Melo of Ecuador and I presented resources, a possible training plan, and answered their questions. As a result the executive committee and the general presbytery decided against planting 200 churches in Lima. **The vision was too small.** Instead, they felt it was necessary to use the assembled resources for a greater impact nationwide. Their vision became training 2000 church members as church planters to plant the congregations in every province of the nation.

We are now 11 months beyond that national convention. The report I received today tells me that, at this point, under the direction of the 22 District Superintendents and their teams, there are 1250 men and women receiving training as church planters in every region of the nation. The report continues that by year's end that number will increase by another thousand. All of which means that before the end of the year 2012, we will see more than 2000 church planters graduate having initiated a congregation with a nucleus of at least 20-25 people they have brought into the family of God. The impact on the national church is incalculable.

Most of these church planters are beginning ministry with little or no theological training. The next stage, that of equipping the pastors of these new workers to mentor their progress and to supervise the growth of the embryonic church into self-sustaining viability has arrived at a point of crisis. At this point materials to meet this need are non-existent in the context of Latin America. In order to meet the need, new training materials must be in place by March 1, 2012. That is the assignment that has been given Vicki and me. We are working with a unique network of experienced church planters and leaders to create this resource as our part in this exploding church planting movement. Will you pray with us for this incredibly critical project. The mentoring materials will be available in several languages and distributed without cost through the internet.

This story is now being repeated in seven countries in Latin America where national leaders have caught the vision and have adapted the tools to their specific contexts. What an incredible adventure it is to be allowed to participate in what Jesus is doing through his church in Latin America. Today.



**JERRY & VICKI BROWN MISSIONARIES TO URBAN LATIN AMERICA**

4121 S. FREMONT AVE, STE 120, #209, Springfield, MO 65804 [www.thebrownsreport.net](http://www.thebrownsreport.net)

