

GLOBAL MISSION

Frontline

STORIES AND NEWS FROM OUR PIONEERS | VOLUME 16 • NUMBER 2

**Reaching Uruguay
for Jesus**



Matias Vigil, the face of the urban center of influence in Montevideo, always has a smile and friendly word for busy urbanites.



Located in South America, Uruguay has one of the largest urban populations in the world with more than 75 percent of its people living in cities. Like many countries, Uruguay is highly secular, yet after years of decline, the Adventist Church there is experiencing sizable growth, thanks, in part, to church planting and urban centers of influence.

Matias Vigil manages an urban center of influence on a busy street in Uruguay's capital city of Montevideo, where people who may never visit a traditional church are drawn to its friendly, informal atmosphere.

"Many of our guests don't attend church," says Matias, "but they still have needs, and they're still hungry for hope. Urban centers of influence are the perfect answer to reaching out to

them, because they focus on meeting people's needs and connecting them with God."

Matias and his team of volunteers offer free classes on topics of interest to the community, such as stress management, music and language lessons, health and wellness seminars, and Bible studies.

As the people feel loved, their lives are changing. Many of them have found hope in Jesus and are now reaching out to others.

Please pray for Matias as he reaches the unreached in Montevideo and for all our urban centers of influence around the world.



Friends of this urban center are learning to speak Portuguese, the language of Brazil, which borders their country.

Urban centers of influence

Because most of the world's population now live in cities, Global Mission is reaching out to urbanites with an unprecedented focus. One way we do this is by providing

start-up funds for urban centers of influence, wholistic ministry centers that connect the church to the needs of the community.

The concept for these centers comes from Ellen White, who had a vision to



The center offers free classes on a variety of topics of interest to people in the community.



Many of the center's guests enjoy studying the Bible.

“The ultimate goal of the urban centers is to connect people in the community to Adventist small groups and urban church planting initiatives,” says Gary Krause, director of the Office of Adventist Mission. “This is key. We’re not talking about just setting up more social service centers—as important as they are. Our care for the community is never conditional on people becoming Adventists—we’ll still mingle, show sympathy, and minister to needs even if people never show any interest in our beliefs. But it’s still our goal to lead people to Jesus and for them to become baptized members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.”

“establish in all our cities small plants which shall be centers of influence” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 115). She envisioned that these centers would include lifestyle education, treatment rooms, bookstores/reading rooms, restaurants, literature ministry, lectures, and instructions on preparing wholesome food.

Today’s urban centers of influence may

look different and offer some different services and ministries, but the principle remains the same—to connect with people’s needs.

If you would like to help start urban centers of influence, please visit Giving.AdventistMission.org, click Make a Gift, and select Centers of Influence (#9730)-GM in the Fund drop-down box. Thank you!



The center’s atmosphere is warm and friendly.



Matias places a high value on developing relationships. You can often see him praying with someone or simply lending a listening ear. "We try to be there for people," he says. "They become our friends, and we show them the love of God."

Urban centers of influence are staffed by local Adventist workers, Global Mission pioneers, and volunteers who partner with church departments, institutions, and lay organizations. They provide an ideal opportunity for every church member to become involved in outreach that suits their gifts and interests. For instance, a church businessperson may never preach an evangelistic sermon, but she could present seminars on managing finances. Young people can organize games and activities for community kids a few hours a week. The list goes on and on.

Urban centers of influence provide an opportunity for wholistic ministry, following the example of Jesus as outlined by Ellen White (see *Gospel Workers*, pp. 143, 144).

The Savior mingled among people as one who desired their good.

- 1. He showed sympathy.**
- 2. He ministered to people's needs.**
- 3. He won their confidence.**
- 4. He bade them "follow Me."**

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Christ's method in the world's great cities

Mingling
Showing sympathy
Ministering
to needs
Winning confidence
Bidding people
to follow
Jesus

Every dollar given to Global Mission goes directly to the front lines of mission, including big cities, reaching people who are still waiting to know Jesus.

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