

COLOMBIA



LOCATION

Cucuta, Colombia

LOCAL PARTNER

A VBC Missionary

DATES

June 6-13

ESTIMATED COST

\$2,975

TEAM LEADER

Chris Olson

WHY THERE?

Due to the current social/political environment within Venezuela, the local population faces severe challenges in daily life. Access to food, medicine, hygiene supplies, and other general essentials is difficult to find. Hyperinflation in Venezuela's economy further magnifies these hardships. Since 2016, the overall inflation rate has increased to 53,798,500% (per Wikipedia). Vast numbers of people continue to leave the country. Access to Bible schools or seminaries to develop Christian leaders is nearly non-existent.

Understandably, the people and leaders of local churches are struggling. The pastors and their wives have seen it as their mission to stay and continue their ministries, as best they can, in the country of their birth—all this despite the hardships they face due to lack of physical and spiritual support. Our opportunity to offer training and encouragement to these couples is invaluable and will impact their entire congregations.

US citizens cannot enter Venezuela, so we will meet with the Venezuelan pastors just over the border in Colombia.

WHAT WILL WE DO?

The over-arching goal is to provide encouragement to the Andean churches in Venezuela. We will seek to do this by strengthening and refreshing their pastors and pastors' wives through a time of teaching, prayer, fellowship, and physical/tangible support and encouragement.

- We will facilitate small group follow up discussions with the pastors and wives, helping them process what was taught in large group settings. .
- They also need a lot of love and encouragement, so building friendships and "pouring into them" is an enormous blessing to them.
- We will have some practical service time, serving people who are crossing the border from Venezuela and need food and help.

WHO SHOULD COME?

- Those who are able to handle the Word of God.
- People to facilitate discussion groups (Spanish speakers preferred)
- Additional roles that we could use: medical professional, dentist
- Age Range: 30-60 years of age. Open to exceptions

TRAVEL

Fly from Chicago to Cucuta with stops in Miami or Houston as well as Bogota. Approximately 14-16 hours of travel broken into 3 segments with layovers. Jet lag is not a problem, since there is only a one-hour time difference from Chicago. We will leave on a Saturday and return the following Saturday.

LODGING

Modern hotel with hot water and air conditioning.

GENERAL INFO

The area is humid and warm, but our accommodations are in a very nice conference facility.

Cucuta, Colombia, is the border point where Venezuelans can pass between the two countries. It is a modern city of 1 million people. 600 thousand of Cucuta's population is made up of Venezuelan immigrants. In other words, Cucuta holds the largest mass migration of people exiting a desperate situation.

Pastors and their wives from within Venezuela will journey across the border to our conference. (Approximately 20-30 people total will be invited, with 15 churches represented.)

Our VBC missionary is already working with some of these pastors, equipping and training them biblically. He will be our large group leader. Our Team Leader, Chris Olson, grew up in the country of Venezuela and is familiar with the setting and people we will be serving.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Special training:

- Our VBC missionary will train the team with his style of teaching and evangelism.
- Special history and cultural training will be done by Chris Olson.
- Spanish language skills would be very helpful as that is the primary language. There are individuals who can translate, if needed.

SECURITY

Security is good overall, however we are at a crossing point where people that are desperately looking for aid, help, and hope, are pouring out of one country into the next.

Health and Immunizations:

Make sure you are up-to-date on routine vaccines. These vaccines include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine, varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, polio vaccine, and your yearly flu shot.

Your healthcare professional may recommend Hepatitis A, Typhoid, and/or Measles vaccines.

Contracting Dengue fever is possible in Colombia, which is transmitted by mosquito bites.

PRAYER POINTS

Pray for the pastors and their wives who would be attending.

- Safety in their travels and in the logistics of their border crossing.
- That their churches would be refreshed by their pastors in their training and time away.
- That the pastors and wives would feel they are a part of a larger body of believers that are praying for them and standing with them in these hard times.

Prayer for our team

- That we would make a God-centered impact in both a spiritual battle ground as well as a humanitarian battle ground.

“We must be global Christians with a global vision because our God is a global God.”

John R.W. Stott



Meeting with Pastors