

Telling missionary stories for a visual society; LAM missionary touched by what he sees in the camera's eye

By Kenneth D. MacHarg
LAM News Service

Miami, FL (LAMNS)—“Missionaries have stories that need to be told and we want to do that for them through the video medium,” says Dave Summerill, a videographer for the Miami-based Latin America Mission. “We’ve produced videos for ministries that work with kids living on the street, living under bridges and in sewers. We produced them about kids at 17 years old who have never had the chance to go to school.”

To date, Dave has participated in the production of over 20 videos that tell the story of missionaries and Christian agencies throughout Latin America.

While he has been a Christian since accepting Jesus Christ as his savior at the age of nine, the Port Orchard, Washington native entered missionary work less than a decade ago. For twenty years his family operated a professional photography business, helping the Chamber of Commerce, taking portraits, working with weddings and other civic affairs. “We hired high school students to work at our studio, offered a scholarship to the outstanding high school vocational photography student, and helped out in classes,” Dave remembers. Dave’s late father, Peter, taught art at the South Kitsap High School in Port Orchard for 28 years.

It took a mission trip to Haiti in 1989 to turn Dave in a completely different direction. “I took over 700 exposures and came back convinced that God wanted to use me in missions somewhere,” he reflects. “God wanted me to use my love for photography to accomplish great things for Him.”

In 1993, Dave and his wife Janice began raising support to work full-time in the communications field. They moved to Miami in 1995 and have been involved in video production for the Latin America Mission.

“We live in a very visual society,” Dave explains. “Our senses expect to be bombarded by things visually. That’s why I think it is so important to create video stories about ministries making a difference in the world.”

Dave says that the videos he produces for the mission are used for evangelism, support raising, training, promotion and general awareness.

“Dave has done a marvelous job in showing what the mission does through the medium of video,” says David Befus, LAM president. “He has provided an invaluable service to missionaries and associate ministries.” Dr. Befus also praises Dave’s work in taping orientation seminars and other presentations at the mission’s headquarters for educational purposes and distribution to missionaries on the field.

Dave is visibly touched by many of the portraits he creates with his camera as he travels around Latin America for the mission. “One of the most vivid memories I have from Haiti



was during one brief stop in our van,” Dave remembers. “A woman came through our open windows. She was saying ‘please take my baby.’ She knew that even though she would have to give up her baby, at least it may have had a chance of survival with one of us Americans.”

As part of his media ministry, Dave has also traveled to Costa Rica and Mexico. Among his favorite videos that he has produced for LAM is one about Camp Savegre in Costa Rica. “It was a wild video, aimed at youth and reflecting the ministry with Costa Rican young people,” he says. Camp Savegre provides a Christian experience for over 1,000 young people each year. A free catalog of LAM videos is available from the mission’s office.

Dave and Janice live in Miami with three of their four children, Craig, Kaitlyn and Lindsey. An older daughter, Briana, was recently married. Outside of his ministry with LAM, Dave is active in Kendall Presbyterian Church and coached a boy’s volleyball team at Westminster Christian School this past year.

Along with all of LAM’s missionaries, Dave and Janice must raise all of their salary support funds to continue in ministry. Those interested in being a part of their prayer and support team may contact them through the mission at Box 57-7900, Miami, Florida 33152.

The Latin America Mission works in partnership with churches and Christian agencies throughout Latin America and supports missionaries and projects in many Latin countries as well as in Spain. LAM is seeking to place new missionaries throughout the region. The U.S. headquarters can be reached at Latin America Mission, Box 52-7900, Miami Springs, FL 33152, by e-mail at info@lam.org, or by calling 1-800-275-8410. The mission’s web site may be found at <http://www.lam.org>. LAM’s Canadian office is at 3075 Ridgeway Drive, Unit 14, Mississauga, ON L5L 5M6.

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