



A TALE OF TWO CITIES

(And in between)

Acts Alive in Colombia

Andrew R. Shelly

Looking over lot plans for Ibague church. A. R. Shelly is in the center.

“And the Word of God increased. . . .”

“And the number of churches multiplied. . . .”

THINK OF THE roll call of cities in the book of Acts: Antioch, Jerusalem, Corinth, Ephesus, Derbe, and many more.

And frequently we have references such as “and all the region round about.”

Recently I listened to Bud Collier in a recording of the book of Acts in Today's English Version. What an inspiration that is!

What is Acts all about? It is the story of dedicated Christians serving under the power of the Holy Spirit! They were willing to pay the price—any price! As one listens to the first half of the book of Acts, one is simply astounded at the price the early Christians paid for the spread of the gospel. Think of Peter, Stephen, and James. “They bore in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus.”

Slowly the centuries roll along. The place names are different, but the power is the same!

Not long ago dedicated Christians in Colombia were persecuted for their faith. While the dramatic aspect of the persecutions is history, a large number of Christians go on in deep dedication to Christ.

BOGOTA

After a visit to Bogota in 1960, I reported that the estimated population of the capital city of Colombia was one million. Now it is two million. The city has grown enormously.

At that time it was my privilege to meet with a group of Christians in Bogota. Gerald Stucky met with the scattered Christians in Bogota once a month. The feasibility of beginning a congregation in Bogota was discussed at length, and the group was enthusiastically in favor of going forward in establishing a congregation.

Upon my return I strongly recommended that a church be started in Bogota. In discussing this matter with the Board of Missions, we concluded that an experienced pastor should be secured for the Bogota work.

It has been recognized in Colombia, and in other parts of the world, that favorable factors are converging on this city which are providing the greatest opportunities for evangelism in the history of Colombia. God has prepared a harvest!

In connection with the General Conference sessions in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in 1962, Howard and Marlene Habegger, then pastor of the church at Lansdale, Pennsylvania, were accepted for service in Bogota. They left for language school in Costa Rica that fall. In the fall of 1963 they went to Bogota. Services were soon begun. In May 1964 a charter service was held which formally inaugurated the new congregation. Twenty-seven individuals signed the charter document. These ranged in age from about sixteen to sixty-five years.

