



# Pioneering Planters

By Paul Olver

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Montevideo is the capital city and cultural center of the small and proudly non-religious country of Uruguay. More than half of the country's population live in greater Montevideo, known as the most secular city in Latin America.

Into this context, Mike and Andrea Green set out from Michigan and New York as pioneering church planters. They ministered in Argentina and Uruguay for three years, learning the language and culture, before moving to Montevideo two years ago. They went with only a few tenuous contacts, believing Jesus weeps over the city of Montevideo as He wept over Jerusalem.

The Greens have studied Community Church Planting (CCP) materials in Spanish and English. They participated in a training seminar with CCP founder Bruce Bennett as well as a week-long CCP Summit with 40 other church planters from 12 Latin American countries. After the CCP Summit, Andrea wrote: "I am convinced the upper room was not a one-time event in history but that the Spirit of Jesus desires to empower over and over and over again. This week will be written in our history books as the impulse of the Spirit sending out His church to Latin America."

Building upon the CCP principals, Mike and Andrea began seeking ways to engage people and get involved in the community. They discovered people with a hunger for spiritual things but disillusionment with the man-made structures of the Church. Despite the barriers, Andrea has developed contacts through an exercise club; Mike has made friends through his passion for American football – an oddity in a culture where soccer is king! As Andrea sat in the stands watching Mike play, she met the coach's wife, a medical doctor, who invited them to their home. They have begun discipling this couple along with some of their other contacts. They are also sharing the CCP vision with existing believers and training a core team for the work of planting churches and transforming society.

Mike says, "Our goal is to start a grassroots movement to multiply new disciples, leaders, and groups to reach this urban area for Christ. We believe God has a harvest of new disciples in Uruguay. We are not content with less than a quarter of Uruguayans knowing who Jesus is and what He did to redeem them. Uruguayans need healthy churches, so they can know Jesus."