

Joyful Hearts ACROSS RUGGED TERRAIN

When the Venezuelan border closed shortly before hundreds of Piaroa pastors and leaders planned to travel to a conference, alternate plans had to be made. We routed attendees to a remote river crossing and then bussed them in with multiple trips over a rough, four-hour ride, and not without a few challenges and breakdowns. At last, we started the conference with music and preaching.

“The air was so full of the Holy Spirit, you could reach out and touch Him. God is faithful.” —Russell

Tribal Leaders and Pastors Unite for Conference

By Alethia Stendal

Colombia

I'd heard for years about my dad's work on the Venezuelan border with tribal groups—of Bibles being smuggled, and of radio stations and lives touched. But now I saw it for myself at the annual Piaroa conference.

Traveling to the Conference

My husband, Stevie, wanted to film my dad (Russell Stendal) at work. So, we packed up my camera, our eight-month-old baby girl, our six- and eight-year-old boys, and flew out there.

From Bogotá, it's a three-day drive over harsh, unpaved roads. I flew with my parents, Tim Walker (missionary to the Piaroa), and Fercho (our sound engineer). At the airport, the Sikuaní Native chief greeted us. From there, it was still a three-hour drive on rough roads through breathtaking landscapes to the tribe's headquarters.

More than 450 people came from 88 communities, representing over 50,000 natives. Cattle had been brought for food, and wooden posts with roofs were set up for hammocks. Our CampWater systems provided safe drinking water, and stacks of books, Bibles, and Galcom radios were ready to distribute.



Alethia and Russell

Heartfelt Worship and Sermons

Tim Walker—who had translated the New Testament into their language and lived among the Piaroa for ten years—gave moving messages in fluent Piaroa. My dad and mom also spoke with translation.



Many attendees had canoed for days, followed by long rides on traditional buses called chivas. Our mission paid transportation costs and provided gas for motorcycles. Despite meager possessions, they are a vibrant, joyful people. Their beautiful music, mostly self-composed, is filled with the joy of the Lord.

At the end of the conference, the chief declared to the people, "I promise to serve you and the Lord for the rest of my life. You are always welcome here."

Continuing the Mission

We are now back in Bogotá, raising our family, working in film production, and building water purification systems for the mission. Stevie is planning a seminar with the Piaroa to train young men about water purification plants. We desire to continue the work wherever the Lord sends us, for the work is great, and the laborers are few.

Thank you supporting this conference and continuing to support the Lord's work in Colombia and Venezuela.



The Parish of the Pines Movie Is Now Available to Stream!

theparishofthepinesmovie.com

Bible Distribution Increases Faith and Literacy

Venezuela

"Miguel," a devoted Venezuelan missionary, distributes Jubilee Bibles and trains others in missionary work. Despite dangerous circumstances, including being kidnapped twice by terrorists in Latin America, Miguel remains steadfast. During one capture, his prayers for his captors led to his release when they realized his

faith. He is part of a network spreading Bibles across Venezuela and Colombia, witnessing the Gospel's transformative power. When Customs officials saw these Bibles were free, they waived shipping fees.

With help from Russell Stendal and Tim Walker, these Bibles, printed affordably in Colombia, are used in Venezuelan schools and indigenous communities to teach children how to read. "We believe the Gospel will change Venezuela," Miguel says, urging others to join this mission.