



FUNDAMENTAL BAPTIST MISSIONS INTERNATIONAL

September 2025

THE NIGHTMARE

Fernando Orieta was a thief. Since his birth, he had only known a meager existence in a broken, dysfunctional family with an alcoholic father, a fearful mother, and four older siblings. Drunkenness and strife shared their one-room living space. Tea and bread sustained their lives.

When Fernando was ten, his father, wounded in a drunken accident, died, leaving the family so destitute that all of the older siblings dropped out of school and worked just to help the family survive. Fernando, often left alone, met "friends" on the street who introduced him to drugs—booze, pills, cocaine, marijuana, and even sniffing glue.

By age fourteen, he was hooked! He dropped out of school and funded his addictions by helping his "friends" plan robberies at houses, schools, and businesses. During an altercation with a rival gang, Fernando wounded the son of a policeman so badly that he almost died. Fernando's mother was forced to move to prevent Fernando's capture.

At fifteen, Fernando went back to school to please his mother, but his life was a nightmare. He sold drugs to his classmates, drank and partied on weekends, and even tried to steal a car with the occupants inside. One night, he was so high on drugs that he remembered nothing but traveling from nightclub to nightclub, until he woke up to find himself lying on a street corner with a friend who was covered in blood. Many times, when he found his mother on her knees crying and praying for him, he would rage violently at her. By age eighteen, he was so angry at God and so empty of hope that he wanted to take his own life.

One day, the pastor from his mother's Baptist church asked if he could borrow an expensive set of lights to use them for a visiting evangelistic group scheduled to perform in many neighborhoods of the city. "Only if I operate them," was Fernando's reply. Amazingly, he stayed sober for the entire week, while the group included him as if he were one of their performers. "For the first time in my life," Fernando remembered, "I felt loved and accepted."

On Friday, the elderly missionary's wife talked to Fernando. She told him the Devil was killing him, and he was going straight to Hell; but Jesus died for him, wanted to forgive him, and wanted to give him a new life. When Fernando prayed for forgiveness, he sobbed uncontrollably. He told God he had no idea how to quit his addictions. God would have to do it!

And God did! Fernando got baptized, cut his hair, and began to grow in Christ. He participated in everything at church. Six years later, God gave him a Godly wife and, in time, added four Godly children to the home. "I never thought that God would change and bless someone like me by giving me this beautiful family. I am deeply grateful!"

LOCAL CHURCHES MULTIPLYING LOCAL CHURCHES

SERVING AT
507 State Street
Hammond, IN 46320
219.228.2850 | fbmi.org

SERVING UNDER
First Baptist Church
219.932.0711
fbchammond.com

SERVING WITH
Hyles-Anderson College
219.365.4031
hylesanderson.edu

For the past eleven years, Fernando has assisted Missionary Larry Owens in San Miguel, Argentina. His dedication, intelligence, and superb organizational skills are evident as he directs the church's bus ministry, camps, and conferences. In July 2025, Fernando organized a youth outreach that drew 800 teenagers, 500 of whom were unsaved. Fernando and his helpers prayed and spent weeks canvassing the city, visiting every school, and standing in the piazzas announcing the conference with megaphones.

La Luz Latina, CRI's Spanish radio network, announced the event. The station director, Fabio Betancourth, and Pastor Troy Masterson of Bible Baptist Church in Bradenton, Florida, were the guest speakers. The moving of the Holy Spirit was palpable. Hundreds of teens were saved.

Twenty years have passed. Fernando has proved his faith is genuine. His children follow in his steps, running bus routes on their own and participating in the music of the church. His wife is an ever-faithful helpmeet. In the midst of all of the blessings, Fernando never forgets where he came from: "My life was a nightmare until God woke me up!"

George Zarris
Christian Radio International