

GAMBOA UNION CHURCH
Pastor Bill Wilbur Gamboa, Panama
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JANUARY 2015 A SAD FUNERAL I sat sadly at the front of the church on Thursday, January 8, as the large number of Indigenous people entered. They were made up of the Wounaan and Embera tribes living up the Chagres River from Gamboa awaiting the entrance of a small coffin.

Just a few days ago, a fifteen year boy got seriously sick and within three days he died at the hospital. The autopsy would soon reveal that Eionel Ismade had been poisoned. One of his parents was Embera and the other Wounaan which caused many relatives from both tribes to come to the funeral. There was only a guess as to what caused his death, but many connected it with some conflict with gang members from another area.

I have been the pastor here for thirty-eight years but I never saw so many Indigenous people from two tribes and villages gather together. Although they look alike, have many of the same customs and live nearby, they have two different languages and do not have much to do with each other. We have prayed for many years about these differences.

Basically all of the Wounaan village of 35 people are connected with our church, none or very little of the Embera are involved. This funeral brought all of these people together... about seventy-five present.

David Tracy from YWAM, Ricardo our church chairman and translator, Fina Fahy who has ministered among the Indigenous for thirty-five years and I led the service. All messages were anointed by the Holy Spirit and we sensed God at work in their lives.

I spoke in a stronger word than normal for a funeral as I challenged the young people to make good choices and good friends and not be involved with gangs. I told them that I speak to guys from gangs every week at the prison and most end up in prison or getting killed. I closed by leading all to forgive one another and to receive Christ as their Savior.

We prayed during the following days that God would bring many of the new people back to church the following Sunday. I was pleased to see the parents of the deceased boy return that Sunday. The family and relatives came after the service for prayer.

Here was a divine appointment: to take the evil of this event and use it to bring glory to God in the lives of the Indigenous people of Panama. We are thankful that we have had the contact with the Indigenous over the years and have desired to share the Lord with them.

Thank you for praying for us. We just never know what can happen at any moment and we want to share Christ and "seize the moment."

We are grateful for your support for the mission here. Deductible gifts can be made out to: GAMBOA UNION MINISTRIES and sent to Mrs. Syd Corbett; 231 SE 45th Terrace; Ocala, Fl 34471

'Til all have heard, Pastor Bill