

Pastora Aida Reyes

- 14:12:59:22 [Mickey Youmans]: Audio rolling.
- 14:13:00:21 [Eric Darling]: Yep. And on you. Excellent.
- 14:13:06:07 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: I need to put this off.
- 14:13:07:23 [Eric Darling]: Okay. Just wait for Mickey to settle. He'll be a second. Okay. Good. Tom.
- 14:13:19:00 [Tom Kohler]: Well, thank you for being with us this afternoon. We appreciate it.
- 14:13:21:14 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Thank you for having me.
- 14:13:23:03 [Tom Kohler]: Absolutely. If you don't mind, would you share your full name, say it, and then also spell it please?
- 14:13:29:14 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: My name is Aida Reyes and the spelling is A-I-D-A R-E-Y-E-S.
- 14:13:36:15 [Tom Kohler]: And up.
- 14:13:39:12 [Eric Darling]: Is that her phone? Is that your phone? Yeah.
- 14:13:41:05 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: I putting off. Sorry. It's off.
- 14:13:46:08 [Eric Darling]: That's fine.
- 14:13:46:15 [Tom Kohler]: We'll just go again.
- 14:13:49:09 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Okay. Sorry.
- 14:13:50:02 [Tom Kohler]: Good afternoon. How are you?
- 14:13:51:18 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Good.
- 14:13:52:05 [Tom Kohler]: Good. Would you mind saying, saying your name and also spelling your name?
- 14:13:56:19 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: My name is Aida Reyes and spelling A-I-D-A R-E-Y-E-S.
- 14:14:03:01 [Tom Kohler]: And your preferred pronoun?
- 14:14:04:22 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: She.

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- 14:14:08:13 [Tom Kohler]: Great. If you don't mind, would you talk a little bit about where you were born and if you were not born in Savannah, would you talk a bit about how you wound up being here in our city with us?
- 14:14:18:11 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: I, I'm from Puerto Rico. I came to Orlando to live long time ago where I moved from Orlando to Savannah in 2011. And I came here for a purpose.
- 14:14:33:00 [Tom Kohler]: What is that purpose?
- 14:14:34:12 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: The purpose is to build a church.
- 14:14:38:13 [Tom Kohler]: And we're gonna talk about that today. Would you tell us the name of your congregation please?
- 14:14:43:13 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Is "Amanecer de Fe y Gloria" in Spanish, and is Faith of Glory Church.
- 14:14:49:18 [Tom Kohler]: And would you talk a bit about your congregation, where you are in the process of, of, of establishing your congregation?
- 14:14:57:10 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: We established a congregation in 2015. It's been nine years now. And we came from, my husband came and he passed away last year. He came to build a church here and we starting growing and growing. And our purpose is to let people know that Jesus is the center and core of of faith.
- 14:15:23:18 [Tom Kohler]: And do you have a, a, a building or a place or where do, where do you, where do you worship?
- 14:15:28:15 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: We are in the 1711 Dean Forest Road right now. We are renting a place. We bought a land and we are planning to find a place where we can meet the needs of the Savannah people and also to grow as a church.
- 14:15:46:20 [Tom Kohler]: It sounds very exciting.
- 14:15:48:09 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Thank you.
- 14:15:48:23 [Tom Kohler]: How many people, how many people do you consider to be part of your congregation?
- 14:15:53:18 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: We have like 300 people already.
- 14:15:56:22 [Tom Kohler]: And if I looked out into your congregation, would I see a lot of gray hair? Would I see a lot of young people? What would I see if I looked out into your congregation.
- 14:16:04:14 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: You will see all nations right there from every country. And we had old people as a young people.

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- 14:16:12:23 [Tom Kohler]: Very nice. And then let me ask, are there, are there ways that your congregation has begun to respond to some of the needs that it sees out, out in the larger community?
- 14:16:28:21 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Well, we believe that we are the hands and feet of the Lord and we're here to help people no matter what situation they are. We, our faith is great as God make the sacrifice. So we have to do the same. So we are here to conquer Savannah, helping others no matter where they live or where they are or what country they come from. But we
- 14:16:57:10 are here to span the kingdom of God.
- 14:17:01:13 [Tom Kohler]: How many different languages are spoken inside your congregation?
- 14:17:06:09 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Well, we are bilingual church first and we have many countries from Honduras, Venezuela, Ecuador, Puerto Rico, and many others.
- 14:17:18:20 [Tom Kohler]: And do you have specific examples of the way that as a congregation or the way that individual people within your congregation reach out and assist others in the larger community?
- 14:17:29:19 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes. We help the community in many ways. We going to the places and houses in Savannah and we give supplies, school supplies, we give toys at Christmas. We also celebrate with the Heritage Festival here in Savannah. We also being helping with safe shelter in Savannah. And we also do every other month activities outside where we let
- 14:18:01:01 the people know that we are here as a church to help. Also, we have a radio, and the radio we bring people from the communi... community to talk about the activities and things they do to spread the word here in Savannah.
- 14:18:16:23 [Tom Kohler]: So you have your own radio station or your own radio show?
- 14:18:20:12 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: We have a radio show that is through the internet.
- 14:18:23:19 [Tom Kohler]: I see, I see.
- 14:18:25:15 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: And we place that in Facebook. I see. And in other, in other areas.
- 14:18:31:01 [Tom Kohler]: So you're one of these modern churches?
- 14:18:33:05 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes.
- 14:18:34:02 [Tom Kohler]: Facebook, internet,

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- 14:18:35:18 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes. We use all platforms to, of the media to be able to reach people. Yes.
- 14:18:42:23 [Tom Kohler]: You mentioned going to people's homes.
- 14:18:44:22 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes.
- 14:18:45:15 [Tom Kohler]: Talk more about that please.
- 14:18:47:19 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Well, every month or every two months we organize as a church and we pray before we go. And then we go to some places close to the church where we know they have a need. And also we going after church, we bring music, we praise, we pray for people and we give supplies that they may need as food, toys or supplies for school. And
- 14:19:19:11 sometimes what we do is we ask what they need and we try to supply it. Our goal is to have a closet with food and other supplies that meet the community need and we can help them.
- 14:19:36:02 [Tom Kohler]: Are we talking about five houses or 50 houses or?
- 14:19:40:03 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: No, we talking about the community.
- 14:19:42:21 [Tom Kohler]: The community. How do you find out who's in need?
- 14:19:47:08 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: I used to go and talk to the people on the center, you know, the house or the center of the neighborhood. And like that we let them know that what they need or how we can help them. Now what we do is we make flyers, we put in order in the media and we going into the places.
- 14:20:10:07 [Tom Kohler]: So you are door to door?
- 14:20:10:13 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: To door to door. We knock on the door. When they open, we talk to them, we ask if we can pray and we can give some supplies to them. And with their welcome we supply those needs.
- 14:20:22:12 [Tom Kohler]: Would every house you go to be a Spanish speaking house or are you offering this to people who speak Spanish as well as pe as well as people who are English speaking Americans or, or does it matter?
- 14:20:38:07 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: As our churches bilingual, we believe that we are one in Jesus Christ, one body, one unity. So we supply anybody.
- 14:20:49:14 [Tom Kohler]: Where does the money come from to do all this?
- 14:20:52:09 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: The money come from because the church give the tithes and offerings and we believe that the tithes are biblical and those mo that money, we use it to supply the needs of the community.

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- 14:21:08:23 [Tom Kohler]: And then how, how do you, I'm I'm, I'm guessing here a little bit. I'm guessing you must meet people that are in deep need?
- 14:21:24:05 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Well, after so many things that happens in the community, I said two weeks or a month ago about the water and all that. We help with supplies. But also before that time we help because some people from other countries come with needs. Many people sometimes doesn't have papers to be able to work. So we supply their needs.
- 14:21:52:21 [Tom Kohler]: And when you say you supply their needs, you would help them...?
- 14:21:56:21 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: With maybe mattress, pillows, blankets, clothes, food.
- 14:22:05:05 [Tom Kohler]: What if somebody had a legal problem?
- 14:22:07:10 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: No, they have a legal problem. We can find a person that can help them in the community and we refer them to them. We don't do that.
- 14:22:20:16 [Tom Kohler]: Sorry. And then other, you mentioned a couple of other ways that you, you congregationally, you make sure to be involved. Let's talk about the other ways that you're involved more deeply, please.
- 14:22:32:05 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes. Well we involve in like, we bring the word of the Bible to another churches and we are in helping another missionary place here. It's called (???) They help people here with toys and supplies also. So we are partner with them and also we bring people from Savannah to another countries like Honduras and Venezuela to have
- 14:23:05:17 another ones. But the concentration is here in Savannah first and then we going out.
- 14:23:14:04 [Tom Kohler]: Gracious and then.... Interesting. Are there, are there other congregations that would be primarily English-speaking congregations that you partner with? This idea of sort of an interfaith connect and how does all that work?
- 14:23:32:21 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes.
- 14:23:33:00 [Tom Kohler]: For you?
- 14:23:33:12 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: We help back the churches. Yes. We, we've been in Savannah, I forgot the name now. The pastor I think is named Richie. We been there. We bring the word God and we are in a relationship with them. And also as I I say before, I used to work in Compassion Church and I, I was there for seven years to learn how the community work. And I used to help the pastor as the community.

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- 14:24:03:13 [Tom Kohler]: Who was the pastor there?
- 14:24:05:23 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Now? It was Cam, but that's a senior pastor, but now it's another pastor. But I used to work for Steve Angel.
- 14:24:18:15 [Tom Kohler]: And this is Cam Huxford, who had been at Compassion Church for 40 years?
- 14:24:18:22 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Many years. Yes.
- 14:24:20:06 [Tom Kohler]: Right, right. And then when I, again, I want look out into your congregation if I may?
- 14:24:26:09 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes.
- 14:24:26:19 [Tom Kohler]: Tell me the people in your congregation, what kind of jobs do they have? How do they fit into our, into our community?
- 14:24:36:12 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Okay. They have different jobs. We have people that are office business. We have people that are accountants, people that works in the banks, people that works in the warehouses, people that are just in the houses and people that they do another labor's work.
- 14:25:01:05 [Tom Kohler]: So really it's everybody?
- 14:25:02:21 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yeah. We have different nations there.
- 14:25:06:14 [Tom Kohler]: I know that in many churches, food is important.
- 14:25:10:13 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes.
- 14:25:12:01 [Tom Kohler]: Is that true in your congregation as well?
- 14:25:14:16 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: We supply food when they need it. That's one of the goal that we have to have like a closet with food and not only for the congregation, for the people outside. Because I think, and we believe that we are a congregation not just four, four walls. We need to get out from there and help the community. That's what Jesus will be do what Jesus do.
- 14:25:40:07 [Tom Kohler]: If things go really well over the next five years or the next 10 years, what's your vision of what you would like to be doing?
- 14:25:50:06 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Well our vision is to glorify God first, be the hands of hands and feet of God and conquer Savannah for Christ.
- 14:26:00:13 [Tom Kohler]: How will that look? What will that look like?

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- 14:26:02:23 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: That will be looking, helping the community, knowing what is the principle of God and helping them with the needs. I think when people have needs they look up and we can help them in any way. Not only maybe with supplies, but with spiritual belief.
- 14:26:26:05 [Tom Kohler]: What's the hardest thing you have to do?
- 14:26:30:07 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Oh, you make me cry now. My husband.
- 14:26:38:04 [Tom Kohler]: Yes. You've had to...
- 14:26:41:08 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: He just passed away.
- 14:26:42:05 [Tom Kohler]: Yes.
- 14:26:42:19 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: In May.
- 14:26:43:17 [Tom Kohler]: And he was the pastor?
- 14:26:45:16 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: He's he was the pastor.
- 14:26:47:03 [Tom Kohler]: You have had to take his place?
- 14:26:48:16 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Exactly. Yeah.
- 14:26:54:22 [Tom Kohler]: And the strength that you have found to do that?
- 14:26:58:03 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: I'm a, I, I'm a strength person, hard person, believing person. And I have a lot of faith.
- 14:27:13:05 [Tom Kohler]: The congregation, they fully support you as a woman?
- 14:27:18:03 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes, they support me. We only don't have one church here. We have four churches.
- 14:27:26:02 [Tom Kohler]: You have four churches?
- 14:27:29:00 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: In different places.
- 14:27:30:07 [Tom Kohler]: I see. Why have we not known about you until now?
- 14:27:37:03 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: I don't know. God time. God time is perfect.
- 14:27:45:01 [Tom Kohler]: Are there other things that you would like us to know? It's clear that the, as I see it, the way you think about yourself, and if I say this wrong, you tell me the way you think about what you're doing is that you are led by God and you are the hands and feet of God and that your mission is to tend to people that are close to you in the

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- 14:28:15:20 community. And it sounds like some of that has to do with helping people survive, literally survive. And some of it has to do with helping people thrive. And that when that happens close to you, then you'll also be able to do that in other parts of the world.
- 14:28:44:04 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes.
- 14:28:44:14 [Tom Kohler]: And move back and forth.
- 14:28:46:10 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes.
- 14:28:47:02 [Tom Kohler]: But right now it's building this here in this community, in your community within the larger community.
- 14:28:55:06 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes sir. That's, that's our vision to conquer Savannah for Christ first and goes to another cities. I just came from a pastor conference in Colombia. I've been disciple to be a Christ unity of the church. And there are many, many nations there. And we are planning to conquer all cities for Jesus Christ.
- 14:29:24:06 [Tom Kohler]: Are there other things you would like to make sure that we know about who you are and about your congregation and about the way you reach out in the community? Or do you feel like we've been able to ask you the, the, the questions that you want us to, to give you a chance to say what you want to say?
- 14:29:46:18 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes. I think you asked me the right questions. Like you said before, how we don't know about you it because maybe we don't have the opportunity to express or we was maybe really busy inside church, but now we figured out that we had to spread the word. We had to go out, conquer Savannah for Christ. And we are being seen so many people drowning for many situations and sad because they don't know Jesus
- 14:30:20:17 Christ.
- 14:30:23:07 [Tom Kohler]: Have you ever walked into a jail or a prison?
- 14:30:26:17 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: I would like to. I would like to. I would love to. And I don't know many people here, so I don't know how to get in there, but I would love to. I would love to. And send people there. Yes.
- 14:30:45:20 [Tom Kohler]: Well, thank you very much. You've been extremely clear and I think you've offered us your message in such a nice, pure way that it'll be easy for people to understand. And that's not always been what's happened. Some people come and it's just, they've got, I don't know, they're not able to really say what they're really trying to do and how
- 14:31:15:03 they're doing it. And you've been beautifully able to do that.

Pastora Aida Reyes

- 14:31:18:20 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Thank you sir.
- 14:31:19:22 [Tom Kohler]: No, thank you.
- 14:31:20:02 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Thank you for the opportunity.
- 14:31:21:18 [Tom Kohler]: Absolutely. Now where, do you have a business card?
- 14:31:26:14 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes, I do.
- 14:31:27:10 [Tom Kohler]: Could we have a couple of those?
- 14:31:29:00 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes, of course.
- 14:31:29:15 [Eric Darling]: Where you stand? I have just one question.
- 14:31:31:02 [Tom Kohler]: Oh, I beg your pardon?
- 14:31:32:00 [Eric Darling]: If you don't mind? Now Aida, if you don't mind and you can tell Tom, not me, but would you just explain what brought you to Savannah? Why did you come here from Orlando and what was it about Savannah that...
- 14:31:43:15 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes. You wanted to be in Savannah and then not just to be here but to spend the time that it took at Compassion Church that it took for you to branch out and build your own church? Oh, you want me to reflect...
- 14:31:54:14 [Eric Darling]: I wanna hear the story.
- 14:31:55:19 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes. Okay. So I came to Savannah in 2011. I came to Savannah because I was really ill and then they had to do some surgeries on my back. My daughter used to live here because he was, he, she's married to a soldier. So I came here and after my surgery I was looking for a church because I had to be in church. So I went to Compassion Church and then I worked there and apply. They gave me the job and I worked for them for seven years. That gave me the
- 14:32:28:20 opportunity to learn many, many areas, budget, how the pastor works and how they reach the community and all that. And I'm glad they gimme the opportunity because God goes before us open doors. So after that I went to to New York to visit my daughter and I got sick again from my back. So they had to do another surgery. So I stay there and there I went to the church
- 14:33:01:18 to visit. That was like close to my daughter, like 15 minutes away. So that pastor is my pastor now. I met him and through that church I met my husband.
- 14:33:15:10 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: And then my husband had two churches in Massachusetts. Then he moved to Savannah. We get married and my husband passed away last year. And I'm in front of the churches. We have also church in South Carolina.

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- 14:33:35:15 [Tom Kohler]: You're a busy person.
- 14:33:36:23 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes, I'm a busy person.
- 14:33:38:11 [Tom Kohler]: You're a busy person.
- 14:33:39:06 [Eric Darling]: Where are the other two churches? You have? South Carolina. Here in Savannah. And where are the other two?
- 14:33:44:11 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: We have in South Carolina, here in Dean Forest Road into one in Worcester, and one in Lawrence, Massachusetts.
- 14:33:52:00 [Tom Kohler]: Those are all your churches? Yeah. And how often do you travel? How does that work?
- 14:33:56:10 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: I travel a lot, but I try to be, to prepare the church before I go anywhere. I just no disappear. I no going more than one week away from church, you know? And I have pastors. So they help..
- 14:34:13:16 [Tom Kohler]: In your congregation, do you have deacons? I mean how.
- 14:34:16:17 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes, we do.
- 14:34:17:06 [Tom Kohler]: How are you organized internally?
- 14:34:18:13 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes, we do. We have deacons and we have something maybe that we call govern... government, like deacons and all that. And we have everything in order. You know, we are, we have people to, to help. I don't get all the decisions. No. We have a community. Yes.
- 14:34:39:13 [Tom Kohler]: And you mentioned you bought a piece of, you've bought land?
- 14:34:42:05 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes, we did.
- 14:34:43:05 [Tom Kohler]: And where is that located again?
- 14:34:44:00 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: That is a Little Neck, close after the Compassion Church we have 12 acres.
- 14:34:52:19 [Tom Kohler]: Oh gosh. And your hope is to build up church?
- 14:34:57:02 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes.
- 14:34:58:02 [Tom Kohler]: A school?
- 14:34:59:05 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes. We want to buy, to build a church. We ha... we want to build a, like a building for youth because we believe that the youth is a generation and we want to build like a basketball court for the youth. And also, I don't know how you may be calling that a place where somebody die like a

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funeral, but it's not a funeral, it's a place that the community can have to, to say  
bye to the, to the families, something like

14:35:33:15 that. It's not a funeral but it's something similar. So if they don't have money, we  
can supply that for the community.

14:35:41:18 [Tom Kohler]: Interesting. You are a busy person.

14:35:46:22 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yeah. I like to be busy. Yeah.

14:35:48:19 [Tom Kohler]: With a mission.

14:35:49:22 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes.

14:35:50:07 [Tom Kohler]: Yeah, that's, God-given.

14:35:54:05 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yeah.

14:35:55:18 [Tom Kohler]: Well I really am glad that Melody connected us.

14:35:59:08 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Thank you.

14:35:59:19 [Tom Kohler]: And I certainly look forward to your business cards and you might  
be surprised I might show up at church someday just to see....

14:36:09:05 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Oh, come and visit us.

14:36:10:15 [Tom Kohler]: Just to see how this all works.

14:36:11:18 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Yes, of course. You can come. You are welcome to come.

14:36:16:09 [Eric Darling]: Thank you.

14:36:17:00 [Pastora Aida Reyes]: Thank you very much.

14:36:17:19 [Tom Kohler]: Thank you so much.

14:36:18:21 [Eric Darling]: Okay.