



Center for Neighborhood Enterprise

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Statement by Robert L. Woodson, Sr. President, Center for Neighborhood Enterprise

Pastor Freddie Garcia, 1938-2009

Freddie Garcia, founder of Victory Fellowship, was once a broken drug addict who became a man of God. Through his wisdom, his actions, and his commitment he reached thousands if not millions of people with his witness to the power of redemption. As we mourn his death we also celebrate his life, a life of humility, total service, personal denial, and steadfast dedication to what Christ compels us to do. Jesus never said come to me and I will give you salvation. Instead, what he did was say "come to me and do as I do." Freddie Garcia's life is a stellar example of someone who has been faithful to that principle.

Through his leadership, Victory Fellowship, with headquarters in San Antonio, Texas, became the moral center of the faith-based movement. Victory was the place where our grassroots leaders sent the worst cases—people that no one could reach who were drug and alcohol-addicted. Victory always opened its doors and brought about miraculous transformations. And Victory has been a source of inspiration to all of the thousands of grassroots leaders who are part of our Center for Neighborhood Enterprise network.

Our hearts are heavy at the loss of this humble but towering figure, but we rejoice that he is free of pain and that we have been touched by this wonderful man of God. Some background information follows:

Pastor Freddie Garcia and Victory Fellowship

Victory Fellowship founder Freddie Garcia was a hard-core drug addict and criminal who was in despair when he found redemption through a Teen Challenge program. Cured of his addiction and filled with a desire to help other addicts, he and his wife Ninfa returned to his hometown of San Antonio to open a ministry in a tiny house in the barrio. The faith-based Victory Fellowship of San Antonio has treated and freed more than 14,000 men and women from drug and alcohol addiction over the past four decades. Victory's success rates typically are 60, 70, and even 80% for the graduates of the program. Pastor Freddie and Ninfa Garcia's story is told in their book *Outcry in the Barrio*.

More than just a substance abuse program, Victory Fellowship teaches its participants a new and better way of life, instilling virtues of responsibility, consideration for others, and a desire for self-sufficiency. Through Victory's training program, recovered substance abusers have established more than 70 satellite centers in the U.S. Southwest, Latin America, Cuba, and several countries in Europe. Victory Fellowship also has street, jail and prison ministries, drop-in centers in public housing, interventions in gang warfare, and programs for at-risk children.

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