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Title

Ulises Perez Oral History Interview and Transcript

Date

July 5, 2025

Extant

44 minute interview and 1 transcript

Abstract

The audio recording of this oral history includes Doris Malkmus interviewing Ulises Perez interpreted by Humberto Cruz Guardarrama. In the interview, Perez describes his extensive Pentecostal missionary work in Venezuela, his struggles to reconcile his homosexuality with his deep faith, his decision to attend a seminary in Texas, marriage, and eventual divorce to live openly as a gay man. He described finding MCC when he and his partner married and opening a Spanish-speaking church he calls La Casa de Todos in the Resurrection MCC Church in Houston, Texas.

Biographical

Ulises Perez was born in Caracas, Venezuela on June 19, 1966, to a Catholic family. In his youth he began attending a Pentecostal church and felt drawn to a life of religious service, helping people to find solace in God. He was an active missionary in Venezuelan cities, countryside towns, and the Indigenous communities in the Amazon.

His attraction to men was not a factor in his religious activities, although he heard a persistent message that homosexual behavior was condemned by God.

He joined the Venezuelan Air Force in 1981 and served for more than ten years. In 1991, his life was threatened by severe kidney disease. He was unmarried, had no children and close to death he reflected on his life. Attending a Pentecostal church service, he experienced a moment of faith after which his kidney began healing. Equally unexpected, he received a scholarship to attend the private, evangelical, non-denominational theological center Tell My People. This non-profit school was established to train Spanish-speaking religious leaders; it drew students from around the world. At the time, Perez had no money, no visa, and no way to

travel to the United States and only a vague sense of being called by God to the work of ministry. As money, a visa, and travel funds fell miraculously into place within months, by October 1991, he re-dedicated his life to ministry and moved to Harlingen, Texas, to begin biblical training.

Feeling called by God, he pursued religious education credentials for work in the United States. This required beginning with an American GED (1998). Over the next years, he aligned himself with social norms, married and fathered a child, but experienced increasing dissonance between his Pentecostal position on homosexuality and his own truth. During the process of separation and divorce, he met his current husband in 2008.

Unable to reconcile his life as a homosexual with religion, he avoided all church attendance. When he and his husband were married in an MCC church, Ulises began moving back toward ministry. He enrolled in graduate work in religious studies that broadened his Pentecostal perspective and allowed him to reconcile homosexuality and biblical teachings. In 2017, he began an independent, Spanish-speaking religious service held in the MCC church open to everyone. The congregation includes families, straights and gays. He will complete his master's degree in fall 2025 and be eligible for ordination in MCC. He remains close to friends in the local Pentecostal community by agreeing to not discuss differences about homosexuality.

This biography was written by Doris Malkmus from the interview with Ulises Perez in 2025.

Scope and Content

The audio recording of this oral history includes Doris Malkmus interviewing Ulises Perez interpreted by Humberto Cruz Guardarrama. In the interview, Perez describes his extensive Pentecostal missionary work in Venezuela, his struggles to reconcile his homosexuality with his deep faith, his decision to attend a seminary in Texas, marriage, and eventual divorce to live openly as a gay man. He described finding MCC when he and his partner married and opening a Spanish-speaking church he calls La Casa de Todos in the Resurrection MCC Church in Houston, Texas.

This interview was conducted by Dr. Doris Malkmus as LGBTQ-RAN archivist as part of a series of oral histories at the MCC General Conference in 2025.

Access

Open to all researchers at <https://lgbtqreligiousarchives.org/oral-histories/ulises-perez>.

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Languages

Collection material is in Spanish and English

Cite as

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Digital finding aid created by Doris Malkmus, 2025

Tags

Metropolitan Community Church, United Pentecostal Church, missionary, Houston, Texas,
Venezuela