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CSBC Church Starting

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Church Starting Group, 678 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno, CA 93710, 559.229.9533 x. 263, www.csbc.com

2008 Russian Mission Trip

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 The Bay Area has a PowerPlant
- 3 From Navy SEAL to Pastor
- 4 It was Friday Evening ...

“Young men and women are being saved not only from addiction, but from being spiritually lost.”

In conjunction with California Southern Baptist Convention’s partnership with Russia, Joe De Leon, church starting group leader, went with a group of Californians to St. Petersburg for a two-week mission effort. The group built a dorm to be used by individuals who are breaking the chains of addiction.

As a former missionary to Russia, De Leon and his wife, Gloria, are familiar with many needs there.

De Leon was instrumental in starting the first “Pastor/Church Planter Schools” in Russia in the winter of 1994; 23 students graduated the first year.

By the end of 2001, Southern Baptists had trained more than 300 men and about 100 women to work in church planting in Russia. These men started hundreds of churches both during and after their training. The classes met in more than 15 locations in Russia, from Moscow to Murmansk and east to Siberia.

Today there is another opportunity to train men and women in ministry by using seven drug rehabilitation centers in the St. Petersburg area.

Young men and women are being saved not only from addiction, but from being spiritually lost. Their lives are changing from worthlessness and helplessness to invaluable usefulness in Kingdom work as they attend the Pastor/Church Planter School to prepare for ministry.

Click below for details on the Russia ‘08 mission trip.

[Russia Mission Trip 2008](#)

[Mission Trip Pictures and Podcast](#)

Contact us at Russia08@joedeleon.com



*Pictured is a group of church leaders who were once the worthless and helpless of Russia, but are now committed believers who preach the Gospel.
Eighteen of the 21 are former drug addicts.*

The Bay Area has a PowerPlant

By Howard Burkhart

PowerPlant is an exciting milestone in our church planting efforts in the Bay Area. Six teams of students and their adult leaders converged on Vallejo to spend a week working with six of our newest church plants. These 75 people have come from as far away as North Carolina and Arizona, as well as California. They will be leading a Spanish Vacation Bible

School, hanging 2,500 door hangers, distributing a couple hundred plants to businesses and individuals, doing survey work in Oakland and doing other outreach events.

PowerPlant is led by five college students traveling the country. Many of these college leaders will be going to seminary and will become church planters.

Pray these students will have a fantastic experience and that the planters will be able to have effective follow-up. Pray for God's leading in the lives of these students.

We are already signed up to be a 2009 PowerPlant city! Pray for us as we plan and work with the planters for next year. Pray that God will start working in the students who will come and serve here in 2009.

Thank you for praying for our church planting work in the Bay Area. We are truly seeing God's movement and more churches being planted. God continues to show us new opportunities to reach people groups currently not reached.



PowerPlant is a new student mission's initiative of the North American Mission Board. At a PowerPlant event, participants are taught evangelism skills and church planting principles. They work alongside church planters on ministry teams that are involved in survey work, VBS, sports camps, servant evangelism and more. To learn more about PowerPlant [click here](#).

"Many of these college leaders will be going to seminary and will become church planters." Howard Burkhart



From Navy SEAL to Pastor

By Gunner Hanson

Not all church planters in California start from scratch in building a congregation. Some take on a church that is in need of a restart. One such pastor is Gunnar Hanson.

“I was called to restart Valley Baptist Church in Valley Center ([Valley Baptist website](#)) on March 20, 2007. Over the last year, God has done amazing things through a variety of means to bring health back to the church,” Gunnar Hanson declared.

“One such event occurred on July 15 this year as my friend, Kevin Davis, told me that Hugh Hewitt was searching for Navy SEALs to compete against his producer on the new “Toy Story” ride — I qualified and received two free tickets to Disneyland! Hugh Hewitt was intrigued by my life path and blessed me by interviewing me on his nationally syndicated radio show.”

(Listen to Hugh Hewitt’s interview with Pastor Gunnar Hanson at [Click here](#). You’ll find the interview about 19 minutes into the program. This link is used with permission.)

Hanson came to know Christ while serving as a U.S. Navy SEAL in San Diego. After military duty, he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in biblical studies and a Master of Divinity degree from Southern California Seminary. Currently he is pursuing a Doctor of Ministry degree from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Hewitt is a law professor and broadcast journalist whose nationally syndicated radio show is heard by more than 2 million listeners in more than 120 cities across the United States weekly. He is a graduate of Harvard College and the University of Michigan Law School. Since 1995 he has taught constitutional law at Chapman University Law School.



Gunner, Anna, and Grace Hanson

“Over the last year, God has done amazing things through a variety of means ...” Gunnar Hanson

It was Friday evening ...

By Marian Engelland

Marian is a multi-housing network church planter in the Bay Area. She and her husband Ryan work hard to bring the Message to those who are in need of our Lord.

It was Friday evening, June 20. Twenty-five or 30 adults sat behind tables in a brightly-lit room at the local community center in the heart of the Canal District of San Rafael, a neighborhood that is more than 70% Latino.

“So, who are you?” Jose blurted out, at the end of the English class at the local community center, before the 15-minute talk about Jesus began.

Joe said, “We’re disciples of Christ.”

“Jehovah’s Witnesses?” Jose inquired.

“No,” Joe answered, looking around at the faces of the 25 men and women who had chosen to stay for the optional Bible study. “We’re Christians, but we welcome anyone to stay, whether you are Jehovah’s Witness, Catholic, Evangelical Christian....”

Almost every person that had come to the three levels of English classes stayed for the optional Bible study. Joe spent the next 15 minutes talking about Jesus and why He came to Earth. After the devotional Jose remained, wanting to talk: “I am from a traditional Catholic family and I’ve heard a lot of things, but not what you’ve been talking about. I want to hear more.”

The summer continues. It is again Friday evening, but a month has passed. It is July 18. Jose again stays after English class for the 15-minute talk about Jesus. He is seeking, wanting to know more about Jesus and the Christian faith. He stays to talk to two different English teachers.

Jose says, “I believe in a Supreme Creator God, but I am not sure who is right, and I’m not closing the door on anyone, whether it’s Mormons, Catholics, Buddhists or Christians.” Ross, one of the English teachers, says, “Why don’t you try an experiment? Pray to the Supreme Creator God and ask Him, ‘Who are you? I want to know the truth.’ And see what He says. I know my God, and He promises to answer all who seek to know Him.”

Other students lingered afterwards, wanting to talk. Several expressed an interest in wanting to get together at other times. On Sunday, July 20, two students showed up at Picante Restaurant in the Canal, where a small group meets to share about their lives, encourage and pray for one another, and study the Bible. Some have dubbed the Sunday morning meetings, “Picante Church” because that is what they are to one another: a group committed to helping each other love, follow and obey Jesus. The two newcomers, Eduardo and Inardo, are not yet believers, but they listen intently as Jorge shares how Jesus touched His life and rescued him from the pit of despair, almost one year earlier.

God is working in the Canal District. He is responding to the prayers of His people who have cried out to Him for this neighborhood. He is making disciples and building His church.