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CSBC Church Starting

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California Hispanic Church Planting

By Anthony Ahaev

The Hispanic population in California continues to grow. Experts in the Census Bureau office report that 13,000,000-plus Hispanics reside in the Golden State.

Hispanics are very diverse. They come from Mexico, down south to Argentina, Spain, Puerto Rico and some islands in the Atlantic. The language is the unifying factor, though they are culturally diverse.

Religiously most are Roman Catholic, but they are very open to the Gospel and to attending non-Catholic services. The traditional religious barrier no longer exists as they transition geographically to California. Generally, former pressures and influences are removed.

California seems to be a very attractive state for Hispanic immigration and CSBC is eager to welcome them and to incorporate them into any of our 320 Spanish-language churches. For this reason, the Golden State has five full-time church planting strategists and five part-time pastor consultants assigned to be catalysts in starting new Hispanic churches.

Just as Hispanics are different and varied in culture and background, there are multiple ways to start Hispanic churches. However, to start a church is a divine and human effort. There is the "God part" and the "man part." God does not do anything apart from mankind, nor are men able to do anything apart from God. He brings the two together.

In most instances to have a successful church start we need a church planter led by God, to hear directly from God and to be assigned to a specific location. The local Southern Baptist association and the sponsor or sponsors come into play with moral, spiritual and when possible, financial support. Of course the language church starting team with all of its resources also comes alongside.

Every successful church start is enveloped with all the assistance possible from local forces and the state convention. Generally for all of these things to take place we must work hand in glove.

Church planting is attractive. Church planting is difficult and must only be undertaken by those who have a special call to the task.

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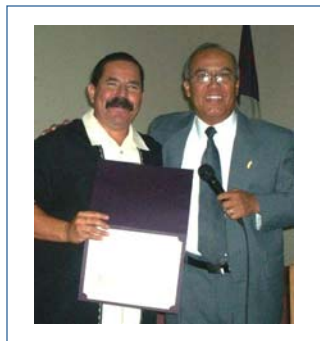
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"In most instances to have a successful church start we need a church planter led by God..."

New and newly affiliated congregations receive recognition

The Church Starting Group on behalf of California Southern Baptist Convention presents each new or newly affiliated congregation with a Certificate of Partnership. Below are the testimonies we have received from those who have presented certificates to our new churches.

Pastor Rodolfo Martinez, who works with Hispanics in the High Desert and Los Angeles areas as a Language Church Starting Team strategist, recently made presentations of the certificate.



Rodolfo Martinez presents a Certificate of Partnership to Pastor Tony Calvary

I had the opportunity to give the Certificate of Partnership to three of our new congregations.

The first was presented to Iglesia Bautista Hispana Emanuel of Claremont. They evangelize weekly and have an outreach event almost every month. The sponsoring church is Mountain View Baptist church. Ed Quisenberry is the sponsoring pastor.

The second was presented to Praise Chapel Church in Azusa during their morning worship service. They are a testimony and witness to English speaking Hispanics and use the facilities of Emmanuel Southern Baptist Church, Azusa. It was a wonderful worship service. Pastor Tony Calvary's daughter sang a song doing sign language. At the end of the pastor's message, he made an altar call asking the congregation to make a commitment to Jesus and to be faithful givers. One person received Jesus. The environment was very warm and the people were very friendly.

The third certificate was presented to Iglesia Cristiana Bautista Cornerstone of Rubidoux, Pastor Alejandro Rios. They are doing really well with an average attendance of 120. They were happy and surprised to receive recognition from California Southern Baptist Convention. This is a joyful and grateful church.

I had the opportunity to present at each location either verbally or with a PowerPoint presentation "Who are Southern Baptists," what the benefits and objectives of an association are and how the Cooperative Program works. I also presented information on the California Missions Offering, Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

Even though they are cooperating churches, many of the members and attendees are new believers and did not know about CP or Southern Baptists. If the pastor was new to California pastorate, I invited him and his wife to make plans to attend the New Pastors Orientation at the Ministry Resource Center.

Dennis Fredricks, Director of Missions of the Sacramento Association of Southern Baptist Churches, presented a certificate to Life Bridge in Folsom.

"The environment was very warm and the people were very friendly."

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I had the privilege of presenting the Certificate of Partnership to Life Bridge at both Life Bridge on Saturday evening during their worship service and the original church, First Baptist Church, Folsom, on Sunday morning during their worship service. Pastor Scott Reeve received the certificate on behalf of the church.

I thanked them on behalf of the Sacramento Association of Southern Baptist Churches, California Southern Baptist Convention, and North American Mission Board for partnering together to reach men, women and children for Jesus Christ. I thanked them for contributing to the Cooperative Program, California Missions Offering, Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and how those funds helped start new churches and spread the gospel to the lost world. I reminded them that equally important was their personal commitment in starting a new church. The church responded very positively to the presentation.

Thomas Blackwell, African-American Church Starting Strategist serving in the Crescent Bay-West L.A., Los Angeles, and Long Beach Harbor areas presented certificates to several congregations.

I presented each church with their certificate and they were delighted. I visited City Lights in Long Beach and attended one of their worship services. I had a chance to share with them and encourage them to work with their leader, Brain Carter, to build a powerful ministry in Long Beach. I shared with them how important it was for them to support the Cooperative Program and Association so works like theirs can continue to grow. They were very excited and I could see hope in them for the future

I also made a presentation to Gospel Mission Missionary Baptist Church in Los Angeles during their Black History Month program with about 150 in attendance. They were very happy to receive the certificate.

I shared with them about giving to missions and Cooperative Program. It was a very good service. They have started a Spanish work which is looking good. They have a very nice facility with room to grow and Pastor Raymond Dennis has a mind to work.

"I had a chance to share with them and encourage them to work with their leader to build a powerful ministry..."

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These sites are ministries of American Bible Society.

Prayer news from John and Diane Worcester

By John Worcester

Short version of Prayer news

Ask God

- To build up the core group of workers and leaders at Mission Trails Church- in numbers and spiritual leadership
- For open and teachable people to respond to the weekly services
- To give us wisdom in laying the foundation of this new church

Thank God

- For the good response to the 3 summer monthly preview services
- For lives changed and baptisms of adults
- For Joey and Lisa White working with us to plant churches in San Diego County - they will be planting there own congregation in our system soon.
- For semester missionaries Marty Pike and Dana Morgan coming to help.
- For the love and support through the years by so many of you!

Thank you for praying for the 3rd Monthly Preview. About 150 people came, and many say they will be coming back once we start meeting weekly. Several have made commitments to Christ. We **baptized five adults** last night and others are getting close to committing to Christ. We had our first membership class this month and 12 have joined the church, about 10 others are pretty involved and serving but have not joined yet. **Our core group is still quite small, about 20, so please pray for workers and leaders to emerge quickly.**

We are beginning a new series on Faith in a Financial Crunch.

Faith to Cope with the Current Economy and Peace under Financial Pressure.

A lot needs to still come together, but much progress has been made. Pray for us this week as the work load is heavy and the spiritual warfare is intense. Please ask God for wisdom in laying the foundation of Mission Trails Church.

A couple of baptism stories:

One of those baptized was a middle aged lady with a **Jewish heritage**. She had never **been** involved in church or even been to a synagogue much. After we knocked on her door doing surveys, she showed up at our house on Sunday AM for our first Vintage Jesus Discovery Group.

After about six weeks of going through the Gospel of John, she began to believe and committed her life to Christ. She has been faithfully coming, learning and serving with the hospitality team.

Another gal **from China** was met on campus by the Hope Mission Group and came to our Preview Service. She began coming weekly to a home Bible study. She had never been to church before or exposed to the Bible. And after we gave her a Chinese Bible she quickly read through the New Testament and committed her life to Christ. At her baptism she asked if she could pray out loud in Chinese. Afterward she told me she did not know how to pray so she memorized the Lord's Prayer and prayed that. How cool is that? Her girlfriend friend from China also has come to Christ and was baptized.

Joey and Lisa White have been apprenticing as Sequential Church Planters and helping us get Mission Trails Church launched. They are praying about an area to start planting the next congregation that is connect to what we are doing here in San Diego. We are grateful that summer intern Marty Pike is returning to help us for the fall and Dana Morgan, from Arlington, TX is coming also. Please pray that this is a fruitful season for them in every way.

Please pray for the kingdom to expand and multiply here in San Diego.

Love to you all,

John and Diane Worcester

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