

# Making Hispanic Ministry The Priority!



## Greetings from CHM Director David Byrne



What does it mean to have a truly integrated church? For some, that seems like an easy question; the integrated church has all races and cultures together in a common organization. The reality is probably not so simple. When groups of people come together, the dynamic is much different than if an individual joins. The individual can adapt as an outsider coming in to become part of the existing body while accepting its culture and ways of doing things. Often we assume that the church culture is God's culture, but if you've traveled to another country and worshiped with believers there, you are aware of the differences. In fact, if you've visited the church up the street in your own community, you should be aware that they don't worship like you are used to—even that culture is different. So a truly integrated church will have to incorporate a structure that validates and accepts each cultural group in its fold. That is certainly not an easy task. That kind of an organization must not only be open to diversity, but *actively* seek to open itself up in practical ways that will share real decision-making power with all participating groups while honoring Christ together. In David Boyd's book, "You don't have to Cross the Ocean to Reach the World," he makes a compelling case that the multi-ethnic church is God's way of doing world missions rather than simply sending people out from a mono-cultural base. In any case, we need to make incorporating people from many cultures into our churches a priority and to call each believer to outreach.

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**Amilcar Sosa** (right) is the pastor of the Bell Friends Church near Los Angeles and Hispanic Ministry Coordinator for EFCSW.

### What encourages you lately with Southwest's Hispanic ministries?

By God's mercy we have gone forward with more churches. Right now we have some new areas where we're working and, thanks to God, we have accepted the goal of having 40 churches by the end of the next 5 years.

There have been some real strides and currently we are working in Fresno, Hesperia, Midway City, and Santa Maria which is a blessing for us. We can now say that there are some 15 churches and congregations. Some are small groups or cells that will later form into churches. So we are pleased with this.

Also, as far as the institute (Bible Institute for Hispanic Leadership) is concerned, we are in the three states where we are developing ministries: California is where we've always had the institute and later a center was started in Nevada and now, we thank God that we are in Arizona as well.



**Pastor Amilcar Sosa**

## Instituto ALMA News

Instituto ALMA



Our online class on Pastoral Counseling is nearly complete and is in its early testing phase as is the class "Secrets to Growth in the Church" that has been redeveloped for the Internet.

With plans for development of two new classes later this year, Jerry Clarkson is pushing to make the "Instituto ALMA" the place for Spanish-language Christian leadership training.

Look for us now on Facebook for information and updates.



The Hispanic Friends Pastors Ministerial Alliance met for their national meeting at the Las Vegas, NV church in late April. With good fellowship (and great food prepared by the church women) significant progress was made

organizationally and in planning for the October conference in Bell, CA.

(See details under the News and Prayer)

### Share with me about English Speaking Americans, how can they help with the Hispanic ministries as co-laborers in Christ?

Well, really I believe this is the same in all the different areas where there are "Anglos." Here in our situation they have always been very open. The main example is when a church that has an "Anglo" ministry opens its doors so that Hispanics can go and open a Hispanic ministry there as well. The clearest example of that (for us right now) is Garden Grove. Two years ago we began a work there with our "Anglo" brethren who have been very open and have helped the group a great deal so that the church is being strengthened in Garden Grove. They are very attentive if the group needs to use the sound system or some other use of the facilities. Now, among the groups I mentioned, Midway City is another long-time "Anglo" church that also has the vision to open a Hispanic work. They have really involved themselves in all that we can do with child and adult evangelism or in sharing resources and in loaning the facilities. So they have been of great help.

—For more of this phone interview or to read the original Spanish, please see our online newsletter.

## News and Prayer:

☞ The Next North American Hispanic Friends conference will be held at the Bell Friends Church in Bell, California (Los Angeles). Mark the dates for the 14-17th of October and pray that our theme of "Unity: the Calling/Challenge of Friends" will bear fruit in cooperative and supportive ministries.

☞ Pray as the summer season brings Hispanic Ministry involvement in Yearly Meetings and conferences. Pray too that the political rhetoric against Hispanic immigrants in the U.S. will not affect the church's commitment to bless and to love in Jesus' name.

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