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April, 2017



# Building Momentum

by Gene Bowman, Executive Director

There were no parades, no speeches, no breaking of champagne bottles upon the bow of a ship. Just a quiet retreat in the middle of March, in the Hill Country of Texas.

You may remember that last April we shared with you about the power of multiplication and our hope to engage many PCA churches and ministries in participating with us in the preparation of Hispanic men and women for leadership in our churches.

In August, we told you of our plans to dedicate our October retreat to the purpose of brainstorming how we might work together, how we will identify potential candidates for

preparation, and how we will prepare them together.

Finally, in December, we shared with you the fruits of our October retreat, and how God has been cementing strong relationships among those who attended, allowing us to formally begin what we are now calling the HLI Leadership Training Network (LTN).

So now, one year after we began talking about multiplication, we are beginning to see how God has been moving in our midst, confirming His call for us to partner with others in this preparation effort, and multiplying our efforts.

As I mentioned earlier, our LTN launch retreat in March was quiet and relaxing. But the men who attended, representing a pilot group of seven PCA churches and ministries, were filled with the excitement of working with one another in this effort, and the anticipation of how God will use us collectively to prepare Hispanic leaders for His church.

Over the next several months, I plan to visit each church and ministry to understand the unique gifts and talents that each church and ministry has, and how we can multiply those gifts through inter-connectivity, mutual prayer, and the sharing of resources.



New City East Lake Women's Retreat



Retreats.

Retreats take a lot of planning. Perhaps especially when they are for women... add bilingual and multi-generational factors to the mix and that translates into a bunch of meetings. The last two months I had the pleasure of helping New City East Lake plan our first "retiro de mujeres," or women's retreat. Our theme was based on Philippians 4:4, "**regocijar siempre en el Señor,**" or "**rejoicing in the Lord always.**"

If the month of March had one particular theme for me, it was this: spiritual gifts are given for the

edification of the body. Although our women's retreat was great, I actually enjoyed the meetings with one particular friend before the retreat. Our meetings were to work on her testimony for the retreat as she asked for my help in preparation. She wanted to share in her heart language, Spanish, and I would translate for our English-hearing ladies. Her friendship during my time at New City East Lake has been a blessing. Not only have I enjoyed seeing the Lord continue to heal her past wounds, but also to see her fresh prayers, asking God to use her for his Kingdom.

Others and myself have been praying for God to develop her into a leader... and the morning before the retreat, this was the very thing she prayed for. She has a gentle and humble disposition, assumedly a redeemed outcome of her abuse-ridden past. Her reliance on

the Lord, her steadfast faith in Him, her wisdom and her discernment forged by trials... these are the qualities God has definitely bestowed her. I believe the Lord is developing her for strengthening his Kingdom and I will do all I can to serve her during my time at East Lake to help her realize this desire.



My job of encouraging young adult Hispanics toward ministry goes hand in hand with the necessity of constantly explaining the gospel of Jesus and the doctrines of grace. The two stories below are about Jezrael and Katherine, students I met through volunteering with InterVarsity at University of Texas at El Paso and El Paso Community College. Their stories highlight the regular cycle my job takes in explaining the gospel and encouraging students toward ministry.

### Jezrael

On most Friday afternoons, Jezrael and I meet at Planet Fitness to lift weights, and more importantly, to discuss the New City Catechism. Jezrael comes from a Mexican Pentecostal church, and talking through the catechism is beginning to broaden his theological worldview. On one occasion we started talking about the importance of always preaching about grace because it is God's grace in Jesus that is a much stronger motivator for Christian holiness.

After doing squats, he told me he hoped he has been called to preach. So, a few weeks later we met together and I helped him pick a passage for a sermon he would be preaching. We studied the passage and worked on interpreting it so we could be certain of its meaning. We outlined it in clear way based on the passage, and talked about applying it while remembering that the greatest motivation is to point to Jesus. As we finished, Jezrael felt energized and more equipped to preach the Bible and point to Jesus, not point the finger. He will be sharing at his home church's young adult group the week after Easter.

### Katherine

"How did I get it so wrong all these years?" Katherine said with tears of joy streaming down her face. Now in her early 20's, she was born in a nominal Mexican-American Catholic



Jezrael, Jeff, and Katherine

home, until her family switched to Mormonism when she was in middle school. Yet last fall she felt she recognized she needed to find a Bible study. In God's providence, I was passing out flyers at El Paso Community College the week she was praying to find a bible study. She started coming and was voraciously eating the scriptures.

A few weeks ago, I met with her and I asked her, "What is the gospel?" She replied, "Jesus' teaching, I guess." Kindly I explained to her that though that is true, the good news goes much deeper. I told her about the reality of her being adopted as a child of God when she trusted in Jesus - God's one and only son, with whom God was well pleased - and that though Jesus never sinned, he died the death we should have died. With great joy I said to her, "The gospel is that, when you trust in Jesus as your savior, he connects you to him and makes you his sister, and when God

looks at you he sees you through what Jesus has done and he says, 'you are my beloved daughter and I am well pleased with you.'"

As this sunk into her heart, she began crying, crying about how she had been confused and how she had been asking, "God are you pleased with me?"

Now with confidence in who she is in Christ, Katherine is planning to go on a short-term missions trip to Kenya with InterVarsity to tell others about this good news. You can read more of her story and financially support her for the trip at <http://mailchi.mp/5b4a/help-send-katherine-to-kenya>

The Hispanic harvest field is huge!  
Who will reap this harvest?

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**Tomorrow's Hispanic Leaders for Christ's Church**

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