

barnabas journal

newsletter of Hispanic Leadership Initiative

August, 2017

Leaders for a Broken World

by Gene Bowman, Executive Director

Ahh, remember the “good old days” when life was slower-paced, and we all sat around the dinner table as a family and talked about our day?

Then the transistor and the integrated circuit were invented, and our lives, and conversations, changed forever!

Many want to blame technology for the ills that we face in our world today. However, the author of Ecclesiastes states, “there is nothing new under the sun.” In fact, the Apostle Paul writes to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:2-4, “People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving,

slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.” Man, sounds a lot like our world today!

Being a leader today, in just about any capacity or vocation, is challenging. But being a leader in God’s church, and having to confront all of the brokenness in our world today, is impossible without His grace and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul instructs Timothy not only to do the work of preaching the gospel, but also to equip other leaders who will carry on the work. In 2 Timothy 2:2, he says, “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.” In other words, keep the multiplication of leaders going!

This is not classroom, this is real life. Caring for women who are abused or battered, lending a non-judgmental ear to men who constantly look over their shoulder in fear because they are undocumented, or comforting a person grieving over the loss of a loved one, this is reality for many who lead a congregation in the Hispanic world. And this is where the gospel is needed most.

Technology has certainly changed our world dramatically. Yet the “next big thing” will not remove the brokenness. Broken families. Broken marriages. Broken dreams. Broken promises.

HLI partners with local churches and ministries in preparing the next generation of leaders by teaching them to be culturally-aware, strong in God’s word, and vehicles of Christ’s love. Brokenness abounds, but the ointment of the gospel brings renewal and new life in Christ.

MARTINEZ INTERNS WITH CROSTOWN



Jose Martinez recently graduated from El Paso Community College (EPCC) and will begin studies at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) this month. Through a connection with Jeff White's work at EPCC, Jose discovered a summer internship opportunity with LTN member CrossTown Ministries in Las Cruces, NM, and was accepted to this internship.

Throughout the summer, Jose has been learning how to make connections among Crosstown and the churches of Las Cruces and to coordinate events and volunteers. This will be good training for Jose, as he plans to serve as an Inter-Varsity intern at UTEP this fall.

EVA CASTILLO IN JUAREZ



As you may imagine, being in Juarez, Mexico for six weeks had many highs and lows, and even culture-shock. After the three weeks of English camps, and another week for a medical missions team at Iglesia Cristiana del Sur (ICS), I was able to join the Pastor and his wife on regular house visits, discipleship, and follow-up with contacts from the English camps.

During the first week, I saw a woman receive Christ through one of the English camps. She apparently had professed faith in Christ twice before in her past, the first time with a prophecy that God would give her a blessing. However, she was discouraged when she didn't receive that blessing, and her faith wilted. Two weeks after receiving Christ, I was pleasantly surprised to see that she had brought a sixteen-year-old girl to church, and even more so after learning that this girl was her estranged daughter, D (standing in the back in the picture above).

D was raised by her mother's sister, as her mom wasn't able to care for her as a baby. Estranged from her mom, abused by her relatives, and lied to about her mother's love, she was left to believe her aunt's lies and grew to hate her mother. I had only met her at church a few days after she had escaped from her aunt. She shared that after contacting each other, she and her mom had planned her escape. She is now living safely with her mom, though working through some terrors from her past. I noticed D still clutches people's hands like a frightened little girl needing reassurance or security.

My time in Mexico tested my cultural aptitude. Although transitioning to a country with different cultural practices has its challenges, I am glad to see that I was beginning to adjust to Mexico. I believe that God has pricked my heart for Mexican missions, so please join me in praying for discernment as I begin to seek God's guidance on details during the next ten months of my apprenticeship.

CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE!

Our HLI website has undergone an "extreme makeover," with more information about the HLI ministry and more ways you can participate with us!

hlipca.com

LTN REVS UP

HLI's Leadership Training Network continues to develop, mature, and gain momentum. We see interconnections among LTN members growing, and are discovering ways to help each member become effective trainers of new leaders.

CASTLEBERRY AT UTSA

Curtis Castleberry, HLI's first Apprentice, has been named as the new Reformed University Fellowship minister for the University of Texas San Antonio campus, and will begin ministry there this fall.

Leadership Development happens through the ordinary course of life. The people we meet and develop as future leaders for Christ's church come from a wide range of spiritual backgrounds. Sometimes, we encounter people just starting out on the road of Christianity and others we meet are already bringing fellow pilgrims along the way. One analogy we often use is that of a pilot flying an airplane. Some future leaders are at the place where they just need a little encouragement to get in the cockpit. "Yes! We can start a Bible study together!" Or, "Yes! I'm confident you can start preparing for licensure for the ministry!" And then there are others who've never heard of an airplane. They may have never heard of the gospel of grace. One student I started meeting with didn't even believe in the trinity at first! However, most people we encounter are somewhere in between. For this reason, leadership development is not primarily about curriculums and programs but about meeting people in the ordinary course of life. I have found this requires hospitality and personal discipleship.

Over the last year, hospitality has turned out to be a strategic ministry. It has enabled me to cast a wide net and develop relationships with people I didn't know. When we have college students over for dinner, games, and a devotion, there are often one or two new people who show up. Hospitality, even if it's just dessert and playing cards, grows "convivencia" - a sense of community. And where there is convivencia, you begin to develop "confianza" - trust - which is the most fundamental building block to effective discipleship.

Effective discipleship takes different forms, but fundamentally challenges people in their doctrine and their life. This is why it takes trust. You are challenging people in what they believe and how they live. One guy I disciple has an inquisitive mind for theology and has been enjoying discussing the [New City Catechism](#). I tried the same thing with another young man, and he didn't like it. So we started reading [Knowing God](#) by J.I. Packer which he has been reading thoroughly and this has challenged him in some of his presuppositions. Another guy was formerly a deist, and we started reading [Mere Christianity](#) and meditating on the nature of Jesus in John 1:1-18. One student and I read [Honest Evangelism](#) and he immediately set out to put it into practice by starting Bible studies at the community college. All the while, I'm subtly helping them shape their theology, often an implicitly works-based religion, towards the gospel-saturated doctrines of grace. At the same time this creates the perfect opportunity to address life issues. Sometimes forcefully dealing with anger or sexual sin. Other times I've gently encouraged them in depression, or insecurity, because they've not had fathers in their lives. Taken together, this is the plain and simple way that I work to prepare leaders. After all, Paul's emphasis to Timothy and to Titus was to keep watch over themselves and the teaching. In order to prepare leaders, this must be our concern.

Effective Discipleship

by Jeff White

Román Gonzalez at WTS

Román Gonzalez is from Monterrey, Mexico, and came to the U.S. five years ago to study at the Rio Grande Bible Institute in Edinburg, TX (near McAllen), from which he graduated last May with a Bachelor's degree in Biblical Studies.

Román has a true passion for sharing the gospel, playing the guitar and singing, and leading worship. His desire is to become a pastor in the PCA. He has been attending Grace PCA in McAllen, TX, for the past several years and has been under the mentorship of Pastor Tom McKeon for the past year. He has passed through the Hispanic communities around the church meeting many folks and sharing the Gospel as God opens the door. He has also assisted with worship at Grace, leading the praise team and leading Bible studies.

This past May, Román enrolled at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, to earn a Master of Divinity degree. His desire is to return to the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas to serve as a pastor of a PCA church.



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