

## Relating to and Integrating with Our Hispanic Communities

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### Why is This Important to Us?

- ◆ Because they are people who have not heard of Jesus, coming in among us.
- ◆ It is an important opportunity to grasp hold of and talk to immigrants coming to our country that might be here for only a short while then going on to other places.
- ◆ A transient population that comes and goes and needs help. Usually coming from a culture of poverty. It is a mission field that has come to our doorstep and we must open the door and meet their spiritual and sometimes, economic needs.
- ◆ God commands us to make disciples of all nations (from Matthew 28:19-20). God has set them and the exact place where they are to be and the time for them to be there (from Acts 17: 26-27). This nation has come to us. He has brought the mission field to us. We cannot ignore the job.
- ◆ What do we do when members of our congregations don't want to embrace this task?
- ◆ Bible study on this issue, discuss it openly during Sunday School and adult classes, talk about it, get it out on the table.
- ◆ What if you have a small or elderly congregation that is having a hard time embracing this mission field? Get them involved by having a dinner and serving people. We fear what we do not understand.
- ◆ Hispanics are a culture not a race. Hispanics are Mexican, Cuban, Honduran, and Panamanian. Learn about them and their culture.
- ◆ Most are unchurched even though they say they are Catholic they are 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> generation unchurched and don't know about Jesus.
- ◆ Areas of Kansas are becoming heavily populated Dodge City is 70% Hispanic, Garden City and Liberal are 80% and Kansas City has a growing population.
- ◆ When neighborhoods change and the church doesn't embrace the new neighbors, it dies.
- ◆ When our ancestors came here, they clustered in communities and were assimilated into what is now America. We are indeed the melting pot. It is our turn and our opportunity now.

### **Assets on Which to Build**

- ◆ Mission Field- Approach it as a mission field right here at our doorstep.
- ◆ Network with other churches to pool resources.
- ◆ Team up- Even team up with schools
- ◆ Find out what worked with other churches and what has failed.
- ◆ Meet regularly at district and state levels to get workable program written down.
- ◆ Lobby our representatives to keep the mission field open. We do need laws for immigration, but don't make Christians criminals for helping the poor and needy

### **Other Discussion of Significance**

- ◆ Culture of Poverty – These people think and act in a way that the middle class does not. It is a great collide of cultures. We come in, sit down and are quiet. They come in and are noisy.
- ◆ The poor live for the minute, the middle class plans for the future. The mentality of poverty must be retaught.
- ◆ The children are fast learners of American culture and often control the family because they translate for parents. Parents must learn English and take control of their families. This also teaches the family to value education when Mom and Dad learn English in a class setting.
- ◆ Most immigrants are coming here illiterate, unable to read Spanish or English or write either. As we have an opportunity to educate, we can put Christ in the picture.

### **Recommendations**

- ◆ How do you establish a relationship with the parents? They drop their kids off and leave.
  - Develop the same way you would for any neighbor dropping off kids
  - Be visible so they recognize you when you do approach them
  - Provide ESL classes with sitters
  - Hand out bi-lingual VBS materials available from CPH. They are producing special packets that kids can take home.
- ◆ ESL: Have 2 classes a week, one morning and one evening. You don't need to speak Spanish to hold ESL classes. One church used a professional teacher, one uses a computer lab with Rosetto Stone computer program (about \$200) and 6 computers (donated) networked together. Signs are put up at Wal-Mart they say (you want a better life? You've got to learn English" free ESL classes, call....) One church uses computers, had 2 previously failed program attempts before deciding on computers; they are less labor intensive method of providing instruction.