

generous living sacrificially giving

by Linda Jones, CBFNC Missions Coordinator

“It’s hard,” states **Javier Benitez**, pastor of *Iglesia Bautista Misionera Roca Fuerte* and leader coach of the CBFNC Hispanic Network. “At this time in our churches, there is a lot of fear for the future because of immigration issues. In the past, the IRS gave us a

number and people have bought houses using that number. If they’re deported, they lose everything. It’s hard to encourage the families to keep faith and have hope. Boys and girls who came to the U.S. when they were children are now teenagers. They have no papers. It affects everything. And yet when I present a need, they give. God has enough mercy for us. You can put your trust and faith in God. God always has enough mercy for each person.” In spite of the hardships, *Companerismo Cristiano Emanuel* (the CBFNC Hispanic Network), exemplifies sacrificial giving. Together, they have donated \$17,000 to buy land in Nicaragua for a new church start, supported a pastor in Costa Rica for two years, and supported three churches in Mexico.

Rev. Daniel Sostaita, pastor of *Iglesia Cristiana Sin Fronteras*, explains, “I strive to show the needs of the world and the community. We talk about the duty to give, in which there is more joy in giving than receiving. With very little, we can change the destiny of many lives. It’s a difficult task to work with the immigrant community. We see their low wages, labor instability, and first-generation problems.” Regardless, they have reached out to their community working with *Mi Casa*, an organization that provides legal aid and other services; Faith Action’s ID program; and the Hispanic League on community projects. They participate in a foodbank on the last Friday of each month, organize four health fairs each year, and work closely with the South Side Clinic. Last year, *Sin Fronteras* gave away school supplies to 137 families. Once a year for 8 weeks, educational classes are held for parents of high schoolers. The church also organizes a soccer camp for a week in the summer. The whole community is offered clothes, soup, and fruit in October at Neighbors Day and meals at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Daniel states, “In the midst of difficulties, we grow and give. I am always looking for resources to support all the programs to the community.”

With a heart and a calling for the many Hispanics immigrating to the U.S., **Pastor Pablo Hernandez** and family relocated from Honduras to North Carolina with a Religious Visa sponsored by CBFNC. Pablo is pastor to *Primera Iglesia De Sanford* and provides leadership to *Companerismo Cristiano Emanuel*. Through sermons and Bible study, *Primera Iglesia* dedicates a month or two each year emphasizing the need to give back to the church and community, both financially and with time. This congregation helps those unable to work, laid off, sick, or those with emergency needs for food or money. Their building is shared for funerals with anyone in the community and financial help is given for the funeral expenses. Annually, the community is invited to hear guest speakers teach about nutrition and financial topics. In the summer, the men’s group works on homes of the elderly in the community, both members and non-members. Help is given with immigration status, reference letters of character, and legal fees. At the end of this summer, the church is planning a conference for young adults, led by paralegal church members, which is designed to address confusion over Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a two-year renewable immigration work program.

I give thanks for these healthy, generous churches that model sacrificial giving for all of us!

