



VOLUME 1 • ISSUE 3 • FEBRUARY 2011

The Mission of Harvest 2020 is to plant, nurture, and harvest new faith communities so persons will commit to be disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

■ TRAINING OUR LEADERS

## Hispanic Ministries Emphasize Mentoring

On August 20–21 of 2010, a group of Hispanic leaders, including laity, clergy, and staff, met with consultants from the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM)—National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry to engage in strategic planning for Hispanic ministries. One of the goals for the first year was to conduct a training session on mentoring with young people. This training event took place on November 7, 2010, at El Mesias UMC in Elgin. A group of young leaders and Hispanic clergy met to learn about spiritual mentoring.

Arnold Rivera, the Northern Illinois Conference Lay Leader, led the training event in Spanish and English. He shared examples and experiences about mentoring and about how mentor/mentee relationships have played a large and important role in his life: “As a 10-year-old child, my ‘Big Brothers’ mentor showed me that there was so much more to our city than the few blocks of my neighborhood. As a college student, my mentors helped me to focus on my long-term educational goals.



*My spiritual mentors modeled a strong Christian faith in their lives. They didn't just talk the talk; they walked the walk. They lived their faith, and I saw what a difference it made for a Christian to start and end the day with the Lord in prayer and with His word, studying the Bible. They guided me, not only into greater involvement in my church life, but into a deeper relationship with my Savior.*

Most importantly, however, my spiritual mentors modeled a strong Christian faith in their lives. They didn't just talk the talk; they walked the

walk. They lived their faith, and I saw what a difference it made for a Christian to start and end the day with the

*Continued on next page*

HARVEST 2020

## Core Values for the Harvest

CORE VALUE 1

**The Gospel Changes Everything**  
[MARK 10: 27]

At the heart of our faith, at the core of our being is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

CORE VALUE 2

**Outward Facing Community**  
[MATTHEW 28: 16–20]

The mission of the church is to care for those who are not yet members!

CORE VALUE 3

**Social Healing**  
[ROMANS 15: 1–2]

The gospel calls us to the root of our social problems, our sin and prejudice. To honor God is to restore human dignity.

CORE VALUE 4

**Abundance Versus Scarcity**  
[I CORINTHIANS 9: 6–15]

The resources are in God's hand, when we rely on God and live out a faithful vision of our mission.

CORE VALUE 5

**United Methodist Movement**  
[ACTS 2: 40–47]

The work of Harvest 2020 is to remember our past and recapture the vital, vibrant energy of kingdom building for God's future.

*We encourage you to read the full text of the 5 Core Values:*  
[www.umcnic.org/harvest\\_2020.php](http://www.umcnic.org/harvest_2020.php)



■ TRAINING OUR LEADERS

# From Starbucks Manager to Church Planter

By Brittany Isaacs

I used to manage a Starbucks in the heart of the Lincoln Park neighborhood. Families and their children came by daily. Students used the store for study space. One family in particular came by very regularly on Saturdays and Sundays. Each of the four children would get a chocolate milk while the parents preferred something with more caffeine. The children's faces would light up when they entered the store. One day after church, I stopped by the store to check in. Standing out front was the family, dad standing with the two girls on bicycles and one of the boys on his skate board, all impatiently looking toward the porch. On the porch was the mom standing next to Bobby who was sitting with his arms and legs wrapped around the pole and tears streaming down his face. I overheard the mom saying, "Bobby, we've already had Starbucks today. One time is enough." Sobbing, he cried, "But I'm still thirsty!"

I know a lot of thirsty people, and they



would never think to quench their thirst in a traditional church. Like Bobby, they try to quench their thirst in places like Starbucks. I have a vision for a church that will boldly proclaim God's love for all and offer people the living water that can only be found in Jesus Christ. God is doing great things through Harvest 2020, and I am glad to be participating in the Institute for Congregational Development that is working to produce the next set of church planters. Through discernment I have identified a call to plant a church. My prayer is that it will be a church that brings living water to all who thirst. ☩

**Note:** *The Institute for Congregational Development meets monthly with required attendance, comprehensive reading assignments, and presentations by leading experts in the field of congregational development from across the United States. This demanding institute offers participants tools and resources based on successful models and the latest trends in church development. Brittany is working in conjunction with the director of Congregational Development and Redevelopment and the Northwestern District Strategy Team on potential sites for her ministry.*

*I know a lot of thirsty people, and they would never think to quench their thirst in a traditional church... I have a vision for a church that will boldly proclaim God's love for all and offer people the living water that can only be found in Jesus Christ.*

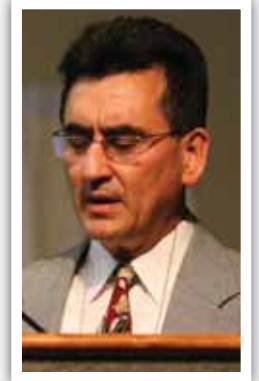
## Hispanic Ministries Emphasize Mentoring

*Continued from front page*

Lord in prayer and with His word, studying the Bible. They guided me, not only into greater involvement in my church life, but into a deeper relationship with my Savior."

He pointed out that many people, if they seriously stopped to consider it, would realize that they had been both mentor and mentee at one point or another in their lives.

Arnold's emphasis was on spiritual mentoring. He took a biblical



approach and highlighted various mentoring relationships in the Bible, such as Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, Ruth and Naomi, Barnabas and Paul, Paul and Timothy, and Jesus with the Disciples. After examining these biblical relationships, Arnold moved on to stress that after identifying the individuals who need mentoring, the next step is to set a goal; the ultimate goal is, of course, to help the individuals grow in their spiritual lives.

He emphasized that one of the most important points to keep in mind in a mentoring relationship is the desired outcome. He focused on the importance of being committed to the relationship, and on the fact that prayer is critical.

We were left with a challenge to begin this process as a means of healthy discipleship. This is only one of the ways to develop new, young leaders in our congregations. Hispanic leaders within our denomination will continue to put into action many of the additional recommendations that grew out of the August 2010 strategic planning meeting for Hispanic ministries. ☩

## ■ NEW FAITH COMMUNITY

# A Vision of Transformation

*Gilberto Medina was appointed to El Divino Redentor (The Divine Redeemer) UMC almost ten years ago. It was a small congregation of committed persons seeking to grow and reach new people. They faced heavy financial challenges, low attendance, and dependence on the conference. The Holy Spirit moved, and the congregation grew. Then they had the opportunity to merge with Calvary UMC, located in the Jefferson Park neighborhood. This joining together allowed them to grow as they served both English- and Spanish-language communities. The church grew to a total membership of 258 with almost 170 persons in the Spanish-language service.*

*Rev. Gilberto Medina continues the story:*

## A Time for a New Vision

We had achieved most of what was possible in that locale. The building had been renovated and was full to capacity every Sunday in the Hispanic service. We celebrated two services on Sunday (one in English and one in Spanish) and one on Wednesday (Spanish).

In terms of space, worship services, programs, and staff, we were functioning at the limit of our resources. God had blessed us immensely. El Redentor del Calvario was healthy, strong, and economically self-sufficient. It was one of the largest Hispanic bilingual congregations of the Chicago Northwestern District and the NIC as a whole.

Reverend Medina reflects, "As a pastor, I felt that my God-given task had been accomplished at El Redentor del Calvario. It was time to celebrate what God had done and move toward new horizons."

## Vision: A New Church

The Holy Spirit was working in us (through the Annual Conference, Bishop, District Superintendent, District Strategy Team, Harvest 2002 Vision) to found a new Hispanic congregation in the city—not just a local congregation, but one of the NIC's first large regional Latino-Hispanic congregations in Chicago. With passion and commitment, I was willing to obey God and the vision of our Bishop. We believed this new congregation could become the first Hispanic UMC mega church in the NIC—a congregation with passionate Hispanic spirituality, local and international impact, and technology and ministry tools of the twenty-first century geared to the people of the twenty-first century. Metropolitan Chicago was the ideal locale.

## Transitional Period

According to the proposal, the new church start would be conceived as



a daughter church of El Redentor del Calvario with the current pastor being appointed to the new church. A new pastor would be appointed to the mother church. We are grateful to Redeemer of Calvary and their new pastor, Reverend Casey Fiut, for their support and prayers.

*In a place of banquet and feast, we decided to start doing exactly that: feasting in the glorious gospel of the kingdom.*

We started looking for a place of worship. After months of negotiations, the deal did not come to pass. However, our determination was unmoved. We developed a working relationship with a local banquet hall, 4242 N. Central Ave., Chicago. In a place of banquet and feast, we decided to start doing exactly that: feasting in the glorious gospel of the kingdom. We celebrated our first worship service in our new provisional space on Wed., Sept. 1, 2010. One hundred eighty people worshiped that day and heard the sermon "Welcome to Elim," a transitional place of rest and nourishment. On the first Sunday celebration on Sept. 5, 2010, we had 250 in attendance, who listened to the message "Welcome to the Banquet," and concluded the celebration with an actual banquet lunch. The atmosphere was thrilling, exciting, and joyous.

This new launch used endowment money, personal offerings and Harvest 2020 support. The shared endowment money also undergirds the current growing ministry of Redeemer of Calvary under Reverend Casey Fiut.

## Current Reality: Transformación

Since our initial service, our Wednesday  
*Continued on next page*



*Continued from previous page*  
celebrations have averaged 150 people and Sunday worship, 250. During our initial four months as a congregation, we developed two special outreach weekends, with attendance in the mid-300s, and two citywide leadership events, with 450–60 in attendance. The excitement is evident. God has been faithful. Even without being chartered as an official UMC congregation, Transformación—as a mission site—is already one of the largest Hispanic UMC congregations in the conference.

Media ministry and technology are vital parts of Transformación DNA. Not only has technology been integrated into our worship experiences, but we are also engaged in a daily radio broadcast (Mon. to Fri. at noon on 850 AM), a weekly TV broadcast (Fri. at 10:00 P.M. on WJYS), and an internet Web TV channel (24/7 on <http://www.unored.com/streams/gmedina.php>). Our TV broadcast, *Transformación*, is also aired internationally in over 65 countries via two satellite networks (CDM and FCN) and numerous local TV stations in Argentina, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Colombia, Puerto Rico, and several U.S. cities. We have also integrated a translation ministry; the celebration/worship services are simultaneously translated into English

with personalized headphone sets.

We have developed a social outreach ministry that is impacting Chicago's *jornaleros*, free lance street workers, usually undocumented poor workers who are exposed every day to the dangers of abuse and neglect. Weekly Operación Transformación visits three spots in the city where jornaleros gather, and we provide them with food, clothing and one-to-one evangelism. The first fruits of this ministry are already integrated into our congregation.

Our children's ministry is active every Sunday morning. We also inaugurated an intercessory ministry that gathers to pray intensely every Friday night in a conference room in a local Christian bookstore. We are trying to do ministry creatively without the benefits of having a permanent place of worship and ministry.

We are in the midst of structuring a local school of leadership geared towards multiplication. We have developed leadership training and a congregational culture of hospitality, growth, and multiplication. Workshops and seminars



have been held emphasizing winning the lost, nurturing discipleship, and sending out new people as agents of change.

Our goal is to become a strong 500-member congregation by the end of 2011, with a permanent attendance of 300 on Wednesdays and 500–600 on Sundays.

#### **Invitation: A Permanent Place of Worship**

We are searching for a place of worship that fits the ministry and space needs for this new congregation. We believe God will provide the finances and ideal locale for the development of our permanent place of worship. We celebrate what God is doing in our midst and invite you to become a part of what God is doing in and through Transformación UMC. ◀

*'As a pastor, I felt that my God-given task had been accomplished at El Redentor del Calvario. It was time to celebrate what God had done and move toward new horizons.'*

—Reverend Gilberto Medina

## ■ OUTWARD FACING COMMUNITY

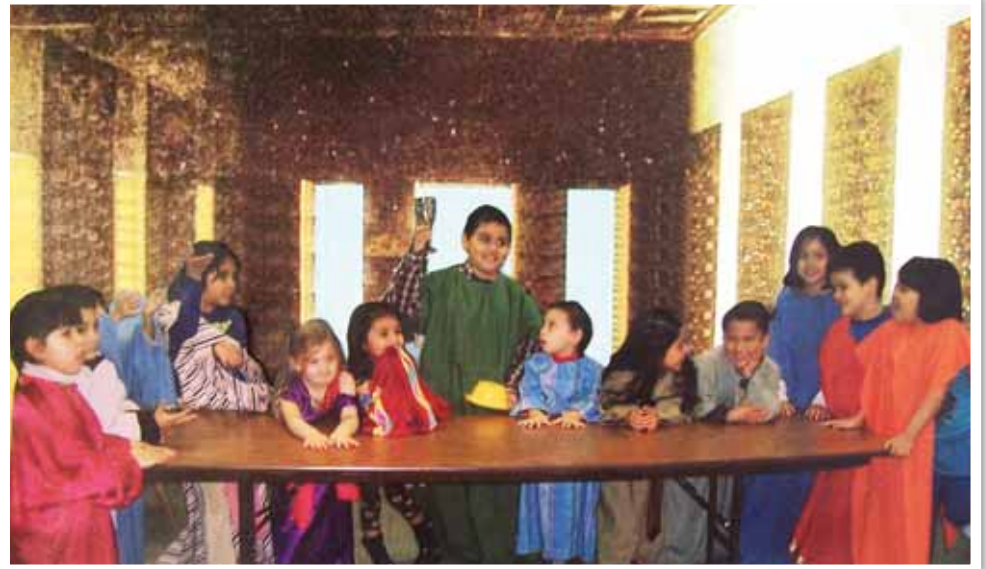
# Planting yields pride AND humility

Rev. Mario Mayer is in his first year as pastor of El Mesias UMC in Elgin. He tells about the church's culture of grow and divide in order to multiply:

Since its founding in 1980, it seems that El Mesias life reason has been to send servants to plant new Latino congregations in our Northern Illinois Conference. And we have mixed feelings about it—pride and humility. Pride, because we can see our members and leaders growing in their biblical knowledge and in their passion to serve Jesus and to prepare themselves to sow the Gospel seed in new places. Humility, because we are awed that God, in his mercy and wisdom, is using and equipping us for this great task. God is sending us on his behalf to be his hands and feet. God is calling us to share the Good News with those in our midst and beyond.

We saw one of the firstfruits in October 2010. After a time of Christian conversation and discernment, Rev. David Newhouse and his local leaders at Epworth UMC opened their congregation to embrace the ever-increasing Hispanic community in Elgin. Thus, La Luz de Cristo was officially welcomed at Epworth UMC as a new faith community (Harvest 2020 initiative reaching out to Latinos in the NIC). La Luz de Cristo is led by Pastor Ruben Rivera and his wife, Pastor Julissa Rivera. They came from El Mesias UMC. Both local pastors have received training through the Conference Academy for Faith Community Development. The new church grew out of the cell groups the Riveras started and their many home visits.

Another effort to develop a new Latino church is taking place in Carpentersville under the umbrella of Trinity UMC. There,



**ABOVE:** Children of La Luz de Cristo reenacting the Last Supper.

**BELOW RIGHT:** Children from La Luz de Cristo joined forces with the Epworth Sunday School to Bowl for Sheep, raising money to buy sheep for the Heifer Project.

El Bethel UMC is working hard to minister to the needs of the new flock, which draws from a Latino community that has been there for many years. Rev. David Sanchez, who was ordained in Mexico, is leading this new faith community that has grown by leaps and bounds. It is with so much promise and hope that we see a new church coming to life there, all to the glory and honor of God.

We continue to equip new servants who are attending classes at the Conference Academy for Faith Community Development and local workshops to prepare themselves to go and be planters of new churches. Members from El Mesias UMC are committed to reaching out and spreading the love and mercy of God wherever they are, wherever they are sent. Please continue to pray for these efforts to serve the Lord Jesus Christ and His cause to redeem the whole creation. ☩





*The Vision of Harvest 2020 is to plant 100 new faith communities within the Northern Illinois Conference, to grow healthy disciples in local churches, and to promote cooperation through cluster ministries.*

**New Faith Communities**

- Conference and District Strategy Teams
- Local congregations partnering and parenting
- Focus on Ethnic and Multicultural Starts

**Healthy Discipleship: SEED**

- Seek
- Engage
- Equip
- Deploy

**Cluster Ministries**

- Supporting each other
- Cooperating in Ministry
- Sharing resources

For digital or print copies of this publication or for more information about Harvest 2020, please visit [www.umcnic.org/harvest\\_2020.php](http://www.umcnic.org/harvest_2020.php)

Published by the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church

■ TRAINING OUR LEADERS

## Pastors Learning a Second Language

Many of us know that bilingual skills can open doors and enhance our life. Pastors are recognizing the value of bilingual skills in their ministries as well. In the fall of 2010, a small group of pastors on the Rockford District made a commitment to gather weekly and learn

Spanish. The class is taught by Rev. Enrique Gonzalez, pastor at Centennial UMC in Rockford. Using *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Learning Spanish*, the group meets every Thursday morning for two hours at Pecatonica UMC. Faithful participants are Rev. Julie Bunt (Freeport:

Trinity/Cedarville), Rev. Amy Poust (Pectonica), and Rev. Kent Svendsen (Forrester/Leaf River). They are joined by their District Superintendent, Rev. Ouk Yean Kim Jueng, already bilingual herself. These pastors are preparing themselves to lead the church into the future. *Muy bien!* ☩

■ NEW FAITH COMMUNITY

## New Communities Are Making a Difference

The office of Congregational Development and Redevelopment under the leadership of Rev. Martin Lee has announced that the first crop of new faith communities, launched only 18 months ago, has already had a positive effect on the average worship attendance in Northern Illinois Conference. National studies have shown that worship attendance in UMC churches in the U.S. has declined steadily throughout the last 25 years. However, the NIC new faith communities

launched in July, 2009, are already engaging approximately 1,500 people in worship each week. In

coming years we expect that trend to continue with each new crop of church plants. ☩

