

Bivocational pastor enjoys coaching Hispanic pastors as BGCT consultant_53104

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SAN ANGELO—Robert Cuellar enjoys coaching almost as much as he enjoys his role as pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista in San Angelo.

Cuellar isn't teaching Little Leaguers how to hit an inside pitch. He's coaching pastors, teaching them the inside scoop about resources available through the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Cuellar is a part-time consultant with the convention, working with more than 30 Hispanic congregations in Concho Valley, Brady, Coleman, Runnels, Brown, Comanche and San Saba associations.

For the last 10 years, he has been pastor of the San Angelo church where he grew up.

The BGCT has two other part-time consultants with regional responsibilities, as well as a full-time regional Hispanic consultant and a full-time Hispanic youth consultant with statewide responsibilities.

“Our concept is centered around the word 'paraclete,'" Cuellar explained. “It means 'to walk alongside.' That's what we do—walk alongside these pastors or church leaders in churches where there is no pastor.”

As a part of his efforts, he has preached funerals, counseled with pastors about their struggles and encouraged them to become more active in receiving associational and state-level training.

One of his primary duties has been helping churches secure computers to help them in ministry.

With a large church of his own to shepherd, Cuellar tends to this far-flung flock of pastors primarily on Fridays and Saturdays, when he and his wife make visits to check on them.

Cuellar also has organized Saturday lunches for training, fellowship and marriage enrichment events for the primarily bivocational pastors.

“We have this opportunity to bring the office out of the Baptist Building in Dallas and out into the field. I have really enjoyed building these relationships with the pastors and directors of missions,” he said.

He acknowledged that not every pastor felt included before his ministry began.

“The pastor who felt alone and abandoned—that's the one I really want to reach,” Cuellar said.

He said his relationship with the pastors has deepened over time.

“At first, it was: 'I need this. Can you get it for me?' Now, it's more, 'Let's pray about this,'" he said.

Cuellar recalled that the first pastor he called on didn't believe his church was large enough for the state convention to care about it. Cuellar

convinced him to give him a chance. The pastor made a small request, Cuellar made it happen, “and I've had a friend ever since,” he said.

Since many of the pastors are bivocational and in widely scattered small communities, their ability to meet and discuss issues with other pastors is severely limited. Cuellar often is that listening ear they need.

“I give them not only camaraderie, but they also know that someone who doesn't have to be there is there for them. That is a very encouraging thing,” he said.

Cuellar not only makes the pastors aware of resources the BGCT has for them, he also keeps the convention office aware of what is happening in the churches.

“I've let them know about funerals and other things. Just the gesture of sending flowers is so encouraging to these pastors who often don't get a lot of encouragement,” he said.

“I am so glad to be a part of this ministry that I find to be so rich.”

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