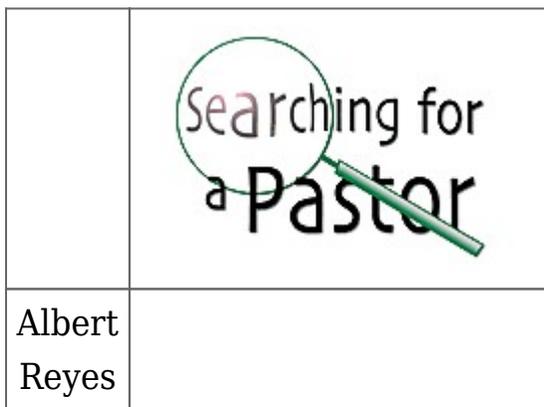


Reyes offers suggestions for dealing with pastor shortage in Hispanic congregations_110804

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Reyes offers suggestions for dealing with pastor shortage in Hispanic congregations

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

One Hispanic Texas Baptist congregation out of six lacks a pastor, but Albert Reyes refuses to believe it's because God isn't calling enough people into ministry.

“I don't think that there is a shortage of Hispanic ministers who are being called at this time,” said Reyes, president of Baptist University of the Americas in San Antonio.

Paying the pastor can be a challenge for some churches, he acknowledged, but most Hispanic pastors are bivocational.

“And this is something that should be affirmed and celebrated,” he added.

The key to solving the pastor shortage in Hispanic churches is discovering and nurturing leaders, both among youth and among new converts, Reyes insisted.

“I am not aware of a BGCT strategy for leadership development that addresses the growing need for Hispanic ministry leaders other than its current focus on Baptist University of the Americas,” said Reyes, current BGCT first vice president and expected nominee for state convention president.

He noted his institution has 185 ministry students enrolled at its San Antonio campus and more than 500 in Baptist Bible institutes in Texas, Alabama and Mexico this semester.

Did you know...?

The average tenure of a pastor in a Texas Baptist church is 3 years, 3 months.

*Source: BGCT
Minister/Church
Relations Office*

“I strongly believe that the BGCT will make a wise investment in the future

by planning now how to develop Hispanic ministry leaders for the next 10 years.”

Baptist University of the Americas and the BGCT Strategic Evangelism Center's ethnic evangelism office have planned a youth leadership summit for Hispanic young people who feel called into ministry, he noted.

He also hopes all BGCT-affiliated schools will focus attention on developing young Hispanic ministry leaders.

“Youth ministers are another strategic resource for identifying emerging leaders,” Reyes noted.

“One of the best things the BGCT can do is to gather Hispanic youth ministers and leaders together to create strategies for identifying, affirming and equipping emerging Hispanic ministry leaders.”

Reyes also wants to challenge churches to call out leaders from among their own congregations, looking particularly at the potential of new Christians.

“I believe that the leaders are found in the harvest,” he said.

“As we invigorate our evangelistic and church-planting efforts, we will find that the harvest holds many who could serve as ministry leaders given the calling, training and education.”

Pointing to his own experience, Reyes advises Hispanic congregations: “The next pastor of your church may not know the Lord right now. ... After all, I came out of the harvest, too.”

in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.