

# Hispanic senior adults urged to continue service

August 14, 2019

LEAKEY—Senior adults still have much to contribute to the kingdom of God, speakers reminded participants at Campamento Hispano Maranatha Para Adultos Mayores.

Hispanic senior adults from around the state and beyond gathered for the camp last week at Alto Frio Baptist Encampment.

Campamento Maranatha began in 2003 when Andrew Villarreal, who has been pastor of several Texas Baptist churches, thought Hispanic senior adults needed a camp focused exclusively on them.

This year's theme, "My Cup Overflows," came from Psalm 23:5 and was meant to encourage senior adults to continue serving in the church, said the camp's director Oscar Garcia.

## **'Still a lot to give'**

"Many times, when we get to 60 years old or older, we think, 'I am retired now, and it is time to rest,'" Garcia said. "But we want to remind them they still have a lot to give."

Edna Ramos, the camp's treasurer, pointed out growth opportunities that can occur after senior adults attend the camp, learn from the conferences and workshops, and then share what they learned with their churches back home.

"That is why we selected this theme, because we know there is still a lot for us to give," Garcia said.



With the theme titled, “My Cup Overflows,” Hispanic senior adults gathered last week at Alto Frio Baptist Camp in Leakey to connect with one another and encourage each other as they continue serving in their churches back home. (Photo provided by Campamento Maranatha)

Churches often focus just on young people, he noted. But while teenagers and young adults are an important part of the church, pastors should remember they have a group of senior adults who still want to serve and participate, he asserted.

When Garcia talks with pastors, he reminds them of the “knowledge and experience” they could find among senior adults.

“Use us in our churches, use our talents and the knowledge we’ve gained through the years,” Garcia said. “Remember, you can count on us.”

Since 2003, the camp has grown, not only bringing together people from around Texas, but also attracting senior adults from as far away as Florida and California. Guests from Mexico and Guatemala also participate every year to meet other senior adults.

Just as summer camps make an impact on the lives of teenagers, Campamento Maranatha brings together people who will establish strong friendships, Garcia said. Sometimes, those even develop into a marriage, he added.

A new workshop this year aimed at supporting widowers in a new stage of life, he said.

Ministry done contextually highlights the importance of knowing the difficulties and needs of each person in order to connect with them, Garcia insisted. At Campamento Maranatha, the context of the ministry is Hispanic senior adults who still hope to serve the church, he explained.

“We understand the things we can no longer do, but we also clearly see we still have a lot to give,” Garcia said.