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A DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS OF SOUTHERN BAPTIST
MISSIONS AMONG HISPANICS IN KENTUCKY

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Jonathan Paul Young
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A DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS OF SOUTHERN BAPTIST
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Jonathan Paul Young

Read and Approved by:

M. David Sills (Chair)

Adam W. Greenway

James D. Chancellor

Date _____

To Brooke,
the love of my life

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PREFACE

Without the help of several individuals, the following dissertation would not be possible. I want to express a special thanks to Dr. Sills for his careful supervision during the writing phase of this dissertation. I also want to thank my wife, who supported me through “thick and thin.” To our children, Abby and Eli, you can have your daddy back. I love you! I want to thank my parents and in-laws for their consummate support. *Nuevo Amanecer, gracias por su paciencia y amor.* To Hispanic Baptists in Kentucky, *gracias por me haber aceptado a mi y mi familia. ¡Que Dios les bendiga ricamente!* To God be the glory!

Jonathan Paul Young

Louisville, Kentucky

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The Immigration Act of 1965 rapidly changed the face of the United States' population.¹ Prior to 1965, most immigrants came directly from Europe. Since that date, immigration has been dominated by great influxes of people from Latin America and Asia. Nearly all of the United States reflects this reality to varying degrees. The Commonwealth of Kentucky is no exception.

In 1998, the media department of the Kentucky Baptist Convention produced a fifteen-minute video entitled *When the World Comes to You*.² The world has come to the U.S. and to the Bluegrass State. The video was produced to encourage Kentucky Baptists to engage a specific part of the world population in their midst, Hispanics.³ In 2007, an estimated 45.5 million Hispanics lived in the United States.⁴ From 1970 to 2007 the nation's Hispanic population increased 374 percent. According to 2010 Census figures,

¹Oscar Romo, *American Mosaic: Church Planting in Ethnic America* (Nashville: Broadman, 1993), 43.

²Bill Mackey, "Partners in the Mission: Hispanic Ministry," *Western Recorder*, October 27, 1998.

³The video provides a sketch of Hispanic ministries from across the state. It also suggests how Kentucky Baptists can be involved through prayer—by supporting existing ministries and by being personally involved in ministry.

⁴U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Facts for Features: Hispanic Heritage Month, 2008*, http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features (accessed January 28, 2013).

the Hispanic population grew another 43 percent between 2000 and 2010.⁵ The growth has been calculated to be four times the nation's 9.7 percent growth rate.⁶ Though immigration is still steadily occurring today, immigration of Hispanics to the United States has declined over the past several years. In fact, Asian immigration has recently surpassed that of Latino immigration to the U.S.⁷ Although there is less Hispanic immigration today, the Latino community, currently estimated at 52 million people, is still projected to grow steadily due mainly to birthrates.

Numerical growth for the Kentucky Hispanic population mirrors national increases. For example, in 1990, 21,984 Hispanics lived in the Commonwealth.⁸ The number swelled to 59,939 by 2000.⁹ In 2010, an estimated 135,000 Hispanics made Kentucky their home.¹⁰ The numerical growth of Hispanics in Kentucky is one of the fastest for its demographic classification. All indications point to the reality that Hispanics are here to stay.

Purpose

The population growth of ethnic and language groups has forever changed the face of ministry in Kentucky. Simply put, “they” can no longer be ignored. Hispanics

⁵U.S. Bureau of the Census, “2010 Census Shows Nation's Hispanic Population Grew Four Times Faster Than Total U.S. Population,” <http://2010.census.gov/news/releases/operations/cb11-cn146.html> (accessed May 31, 2012).

⁶Ibid.

⁷“The Rise of Asian Americans,” <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/06/19/the-rise-of-asian-americans> (accessed July 8, 2012).

⁸U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1990 Census of Population: General Population Characteristics: Kentucky*, www.census.gov/prod/cen1990/cp1/cp-1-19.pdf (accessed January 28, 2013).

⁹“Profiles of General Demographic Characteristics Issued May 2001,” U.S. Bureau of the Census, http://www2.census_2000/datasets/demographic_profile/Kentucky/2kh21.pdf (accessed September 22, 2010).

¹⁰U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Kentucky*, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/21000.html> (accessed May 31, 2012).

within the Commonwealth's borders represent a large part of that change. From 1990 to 2000, the Hispanic Baptist work in Kentucky grew from one ministry to more than sixty.¹¹ How did these ministries start? Who were the key players? What implications does this history have for Kentucky Baptists and Southern Baptists? The history is largely undocumented and left to the memories of the early faithful ministers, missionaries, and laypeople who sought to reach these newcomers with the gospel of Jesus Christ. This dissertation will seek to trace and document the history of Kentucky Southern Baptist missions to and with Hispanics in Kentucky.

The history of Kentucky Southern Baptists will be outlined through the lenses of the six regional Hispanic ministries found within the state: Central Region, South Central, Bluegrass Hispanic, South Western, Southern Kentucky, and Graves County.¹² An analysis of these regions will provide not only a picture of how Baptist Hispanic ministries formed, but supply a synchronic presentation of their present conditions.

Kentucky Southern Baptist ministry among Hispanics began within the city, but focus shifted quickly to rural areas where local farmers recruited migrants. When this shift occurred, several Hispanic regional ministries began to form. As some of the regions took shape, Hispanic ministry evolved, along with the changing dynamics of the Hispanic community, into a year-round ministry. Later, Hispanic ministry changed once again, as many Latinos already living in the Commonwealth began to look for stable employment in Kentucky cities such as Louisville, Lexington, Bowling Green, and Covington. At this point, missions efforts among Hispanics in Kentucky shifted from

¹¹Carlos De la Barra, "The Church Planting Strategy of the Kentucky Baptist Convention in the Hispanic Community in Kentucky: Analysis and Recommendations" (D.Min. project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005), 5.

¹²As the regional ministries are addressed in turn, other significant Hispanic ministries will be highlighted.

social ministry and evangelism to one of church planting. These same shifts took place to varying degrees in every region of the Commonwealth.

Before these regional ministries can be discussed in full, some historical antecedents should be discussed briefly. The historical record of Kentucky Baptists is nearly devoid of all mention of ministry to and among Hispanics within the state. A major reason for this phenomenon is that Hispanic ministry is relatively new in the Commonwealth. Kentucky Baptist historian J. Duane Bolin covers the years 1925-2000 and makes, at most, two inconsequential references to Kentucky Baptist involvement with Hispanics in the U.S.¹³ The first refers to Kentucky Baptist involvement with Cuban refugees in Florida. Bolin notes, “As early as 1969 Kentucky Baptists extended emergency aid for Cuban refugees flooding into Miami following the Bay of Pigs fiasco.”¹⁴ Bolin’s second reference to Hispanics is directly related to Hispanic ministry led by Baptists within the Commonwealth. By 1978, an estimated nine thousand Spanish-speaking individuals were residing in all of Kentucky. Because the majority of those Hispanics resided in Louisville, St. Matthews Baptist Church of Louisville took the initiative to open their doors to this ethnic minority.¹⁵ This work began in 1979 underneath the leadership of SBTS doctoral student Claude Mariottini and marked the first “major effort” by the Kentucky Baptist Convention (KBC) to reach a non-English language group.¹⁶ Mary Royals Driskill maintains that this work continued well into the

¹³Other histories covering Kentucky Baptist History make no mention of ministry to Hispanics. See Frank Masters, *A History of Baptists in Kentucky* (Louisville: Kentucky Baptist Historical Society, 1953); Leo Taylor Crismon, *Baptists in Kentucky 1776-1976* (Middletown, KY: Kentucky Baptist Convention, 1975); and Ada Boone Brown, *Golden Remembrances of Woman’s Missionary Union of Kentucky* (Louisville: Woman’s Missionary Union, 1953). The *Western Recorder* begins to make periodic mention of ministry among Hispanics around the 1980s.

¹⁴James Duane Bolin, *Kentucky Baptists 1925-2000: A Story of Cooperation* (Brentwood, TN: Southern Baptist Historical Society, 2000), 211.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 243.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 242.

1980s mostly under the leadership of Ludwing Villamizar.¹⁷ The Hispanic Mission at St. Matthews Baptist continued well into the 1990s under the leadership of Pedro Sayago. Former member, Tony Aja, maintains that the St. Matthews Baptist Hispanic Mission “suffered for lack of purpose.”¹⁸ Another former member of this church, Carlos De la Barra, hinted that the church had little outward missiological thrust and was comprised mostly of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBTS) students of Latin American origins.¹⁹ By 1998, this mission was led by pastor Jesus Pacheco.²⁰ The church constituted and adopted the name La Iglesia Bautista Nueva Jerusalén, bought their own building off of Bardstown Road and effectively moved out of their first home.

As early as 1986, Kentucky Baptist leaders were sounding a call to action in non-English language ministry work. SBTS professor Donoso Escobar, a native of Nicaragua, told state language ministry leaders, “Most Kentucky Baptists lack a ‘general awareness’ of the needs of non-English speaking people in Kentucky the world has come to our doorsteps and it’s time to discover home missions in Kentucky.”²¹ Though an estimated 49,000 people within the state of Kentucky spoke a primary language other than English, only 24 percent of those resided in Kentucky’s major cities.²² Escobar cited nine specific Baptist associations within the Commonwealth of Kentucky “that had

¹⁷Mary Royals Driskill, “Dios te ama” (God loves you): News for Hispanic ears,” *Western Recorder*, October 11, 1988.

¹⁸Tony Aja, “Ethnic Language Ministry in Kentucky: Assessment and Strategy for the Future,” Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, Kentucky, 1992.

¹⁹Carlos De la Barra, interview by author, Louisville, KY, November 1, 2012.

²⁰Grundy Janes, “Outline of Hispanic Work in Kentucky: August 1997 to August 2003,” Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, 2003.

²¹Patrick Cole, “Professor Calls for More Awareness of Language Ministry,” *Western Recorder*, February 4, 1986.

²²Ibid.

sufficient ethnic population to become involved in language ministries [H]e urged the language workers to seek greater language involvement from associations.”²³ In time, more Baptist leaders turned their attention to the necessity of targeting language groups in Kentucky. By 1995, the KBC planned to “establish 400 new churches, 40 of those being language congregations.”²⁴

In 1989, Antonio Aja, a former member of the St. Matthews Hispanic Mission, was hired as a part-time Ethnic/Language Consultant at the Kentucky Baptist Convention.²⁵ Aja was the first Hispanic Baptist missionary to Hispanics. His tenure lasted only a few years but left a lasting impact. Around this period, Kentucky Baptists anticipated “10,000 migrant farm workers to come for the harvest months in 1992, up nearly 7,000 workers just from the year prior.”²⁶ At the same time, opportunities to minister to refugees from all over the world began to present themselves to Baptists of the Commonwealth as Southeast Asians, Cubans and Eastern Europeans arrived steadily.²⁷ During this time period, Americana Apartments, located in South Louisville, provided a representative profile of the immigrant influx that was flooding into Louisville.²⁸ Aja and others like Edgar Mansilla were well aware of the relatively new immigrant and refugee presence in Kentucky as evidenced by their participation in ministries at Fourth Avenue Baptist Church in Louisville among Hispanics and Koreans as well as the attention he gave to the Americana Apartment complex.²⁹

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Marv Knox, “Language Missions ‘Ripe for Harvest’ Across Kentucky,” *Western Recorder*, August 4, 1992.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Aja, “Ethnic Language Ministry in Kentucky.”

As a response to the influx of Latino migrant workers in rural Kentucky, the Henry County Migrant Seasonal Ministry was formed in 1989-90.³⁰ This ministry represents one of the most successful first attempts of Kentucky Southern Baptists to evangelize unreached Hispanics with the gospel in Kentucky.³¹ The Henry County Migrant Seasonal Ministry began under the leadership of two SBTS students, Jaime Delgado and Lucy Aleman, along with Tony Aja, in collaboration with Baptists of Henry County.³² As Hispanics began to arrive in Shelby County to work in the tobacco and horse farm industries, Tony Aja shifted part of his focus there. Hispanic ministries also formed at Churchill Downs and Turfway Park racetrack during the same time period.³³

Aja had several ministry recruits who would serve as major catalysts in future Baptist missions' endeavors to Hispanics in Kentucky. The first was Jesus Pacheco, a native of Venezuela. The second was Carlos De la Barra, a Chilean. The ministries of both of these men will be discussed in the history of each geographical region with which they were associated. As of the year 2000, there were six full-time Hispanic missionaries serving in the state and two full-time pastors at Iglesia Bautista Nueva Jerusalén and First Baptist Oak Grove near Hopkinsville.³⁴

²⁹Knox, "Language Missions," 2.

³⁰Ken Walker, "Departing Director of Missions Hopes to Serve Again," *Western Recorder*, July 22, 1997.

³¹Tony Aja, "Ethnic-Language Consultant Kentucky Baptist Convention," Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, January 28, 1992. According to this report, Fourth Avenue Baptist, Beechmont Baptist, Victory Memorial Baptist, Churchill Downs, Elkhorn Baptist Association, and Red Hill Baptist were involved in ministry among Hispanics during this time period.

³²Tony Aja, "List of New Units," Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, January 1, 1991.

³³Bill Mackey, "Hispanic Ministry," *Western Recorder*, October 27, 1998.

³⁴Ken Walker, "Hispanic Ministries Continue to Grow throughout Kentucky," *Western Recorder*, May 30, 2000.

In 1995, Central Hispanic Ministry was birthed in Oldham, Henry, and Shelby counties as the first regional Hispanic ministry in Kentucky geared towards reaching Hispanic migrant workers with the gospel of Jesus Christ.³⁵ This ministry, nearly twenty years old, is currently a collaborative effort of the Baptist associations of Oldham-Trimble, Whites Run, Shelby County, Henry County, and Franklin County. Jesus and Marcela Pacheco were called as the first missionaries to this region. Since its inception, a capable line of missionaries has manned this region. The Hispanic churches and missions in this region are Iglesia Bautista Nuevo Amanecer in LaGrange, Iglesia Bautista Alfa y Omega in Shelbyville, La Misión Bautista de Simpsonville in Simpsonville, Iglesia Bautista Pan de Vida in Frankfort, La Misión Bautista Montañas de Bendicion in Wheately, and Primera Iglesia Bautista, in Carrollton. In 2012, efforts were made to start new Hispanic works in Jeffersontown, Lawrenceburg, Oldham County, Milton and Madison, Indiana.³⁶

The South Central Hispanic Region was formed in 1996 as a direct result of the influence of Annette Story, a Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) participant and member of Pleasant View Baptist Church in Waynesburg, who took notice of migrant workers walking alongside a well-traveled road in her county.³⁷ Since that time, Ken Roberts, a former Independent Baptist missionary to Mexico, has manned the position of regional missionary to the area. The South Central Region is comprised of the Baptist associations of Freedom, Wayne County, Russell County, Pulaski County, Lincoln County, Casey County and Rockcastle. Among the works in this region are Iglesia

³⁵Pam Cobb, "History of Henry County (Kentucky) Baptist Association Migrant Ministry," Cobb's personal collection, Rockford, IL, September 10, 2010.

³⁶I serve as Ethnic Strategist of Central Region Hispanic and am currently facilitating the planting of these new Hispanic works.

³⁷"Chain Reaction: Hispanic Ministries," Kentucky Baptist Convention 2011, <http://www.kybaptist.org/kbc.nsf/pages/EBO-2011-Hispanic.html> (accessed May 30, 2012).

Bautista Jesús Es Luz del Mundo in Albany, Iglesia Bautista Príncipe de Paz in Monticello, Iglesia Bautista Faro de Salvación in Somerset, Iglesia Bautista Caminando con Jesús in Russell Springs, Iglesia Bautista La Fe in Liberty, Iglesia Bautista La Historia de Jesús in Waynesburg, and Iglesia Bautista Dios Vivo in Mt. Vernon.

The third Hispanic region to be organized was the Bluegrass Hispanic Region. It was formed in 1998 as Mercer and South District Baptist Associations, along with Chaplin Baptist church, partnered with the North American Mission Board and the Kentucky Baptist Convention.³⁸ Carlos and Christiana De la Barra were called as its original missionaries. Initially, this regional ministry was incorporated as Mercer, Nelson, Central and South District Hispanic Ministries and was later renamed Bluegrass Hispanic Ministry Incorporated.³⁹ This region is comprised of eleven churches and ten missions. Some of these works are Iglesia Bautista de Getsemení in Louisville, Iglesia Bautista Ebenezer in Georgetown, El Buen Pastor in Harrodsburg, Iglesia Bautista de Bardstown, Iglesia Bautista Emanuel in Danville, and Iglesia Bautista Amigo Fiel in Lebanon, in addition to works in Beechland, Junction City, Lancaster, Richmond, and London.⁴⁰ Job Juarez has served as the regional missionary for this region since De la Barra's departure in 2007.

In the Lexington area, Elkhorn Baptist Association was originally a member of Bluegrass Hispanic Ministry, but eventually decided to work independently. There are within the Lexington area several Hispanic ministries of interest. Micki Davis Robison served as Director of International Ministries for this association.⁴¹ She dedicated much

³⁸De La Barra, "The Church Planting Strategy," 40.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰"List of Hispanic Churches in Kentucky," Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville.

⁴¹*When the World Comes to You: Hispanic Ministries in Kentucky*, DVD, Kentucky Baptist Convention (Louisville: Kentucky Baptist Convention, 1998).

time to reaching out to Latino migrant workers in the Lexington area by meeting social needs and sharing the gospel with them.⁴² Juan C’de Baca, a graduate of Southern Seminary, is pastor of First Baptist Church of Lexington. Under C’de Baca’s leadership, First Baptist began to intentionally incorporate Hispanics into their church life in 1998.⁴³ Today, the church is comprised of a majority Hispanic membership.⁴⁴ Around the same time, Kentucky Baptists in Paris (Bourbon County) began work in a summer migrant ministry. Anglo volunteers from Elkhorn Baptist Association churches primarily manned the ministry. By and large, the scope of the ministry was holistic. Participants worked to provide food, English classes, Spanish-language worship, transportation, interpreters, and counseling to Hispanic migrant workers.⁴⁵ At this time, Pedro Sayago served as church planter of Elkhorn Baptist Association.⁴⁶ Within Elkhorn Baptist Association there are Hispanic missions and churches in Georgetown, Versailles, Lexington, Nicholasville, Winchester, and Mount Sterling. Notable leaders who have ministered in this area somewhat recently are Clemente and Twyla Hernandez and Claudio Toro. Elkhorn Baptist Association has boasted one high-impact Hispanic church housed at Cardinal Valley Baptist in Lexington led by Toro. High impact churches are “defined by the KBC as congregations that have the resources and vision to reach a five-year attendance goal

⁴²Another ministry of note connected with Elkhorn Baptist Association is that of Amigos Ministerio. This ministry began as an ecumenical effort on behalf of several churches in this area. It eventually became solely a Baptist ministry.

⁴³Ken Walker, “Anglo Church Crosses Race Barrier to Hire Hispanic Pastor,” *Western Recorder*, January 27, 1998.

⁴⁴Ray Van Camp, “Elkhorn Baptist Association Summary of Ethnic Work July 2011,” Ray Van Camp’s Archives, Lexington, Kentucky, July 2011.

⁴⁵Mackey, “Partners in the Mission.”

⁴⁶Ibid.

of 250.”⁴⁷ High impact churches “receive special support and additional funds through the KBC as they seek to reach the unchurched or dechurched.”⁴⁸

The Southwest Hispanic region was the fourth to form. This Hispanic region is comprised of the Baptist associations of Little River, Christian County, Logan Todd and Gasper River.⁴⁹ Jorge Garcia is the missionary or ethnic strategist, for the region, a position he has held since the inception of the ministry. The South Western Hispanic Region has the distinction of having the first constituted Hispanic church in Kentucky, Iglesia Bautista La Roca Eterna de Oak Grove, which organized in 1996.⁵⁰ Though this region boasts the first constituted church, they never officially incorporated into a Hispanic regional ministry.⁵¹

Southwest Hispanic Region started in Christian County as a ministry focused on Hispanic migrant workers and Hispanic military personnel. Former International Mission Board (IMB) career missionary to Peru, Larry Baker, served as Director of Missions of Christian County Baptist Association from 1992-2004. Hispanic migrant and military ministry had its beginnings in this association under Baker’s leadership. Jorge Garcia was initially called to this association as a church planter and eventually took on a larger role as a NAMB-appointed Hispanic regional missionary in 2002.⁵²

⁴⁷Dannah Prather, “Hispanics in Kentucky: State Offering Helps Meet Ministry Needs,” *Western Recorder*, September 12, 2006.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹“Map of Regional Hispanic Regions,” Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, 2010.

⁵⁰“Meet the Staff,” Christian County Baptist Association, <http://www.christiancountybaptist.org/id3.html> (accessed September 20, 2012).

⁵¹Even though this ministry never officially incorporated into an Hispanic region, the scope of the ministry carried out in this area reached across several associational boundaries with the intent of reaching Hispanics with the gospel.

⁵²“Events,” Christian County Baptist Association, <http://www.christiancountybaptist.org> (accessed September 20, 2012).

Southern Kentucky Hispanic Region is the product of the collaborative efforts of the Baptist associations of Lynn, East Lynn, Russell Creek, Monroe, and Liberty.⁵³ Severns Valley Association of Baptists, where the first Baptist church in Kentucky was formed in 1781, once formed part of this ministry, but eventually withdrew. This region of Kentucky has reached out to Hispanics since 1998. Bill Mackey made note of this Hispanic ministry as early as 1998, reporting that Horse Cave Baptist Church, located in Hart County, conducted a “Hispanic Fiesta” with 250 people in attendance.⁵⁴ Horse Cave Baptist further reported, “during the migrant season they had 140 attending, with 75 professions of faith.”⁵⁵ The Southern Kentucky Hispanic Region organized in 2000, making it the fifth such ministry to form in the state of Kentucky.⁵⁶ This region has been led and served by several capable missionaries in its brief history: John Torres (2001-2005), Rolando Muniz (2006-2007) and Heriberto Torres (2007to present).⁵⁷ Today, churches, missions, and Bible studies are being conducted in Cave City (El Faro), Campbellsville (Iglesia Bautista), Greenburg (Iglesia Bautista El Buen Pastor), Columbia, Tomkinsville (Iglesia Hispana), Glasgow (Iglesia Bautista Emanuel) and Edmonton.⁵⁸

The sixth Hispanic region to form in Kentucky is found in the western portion of the Commonwealth. The West Hispanic Region was at one point comprised of the Baptist associations of Blood River, Graves County, and West Union.⁵⁹ As of 2012,

⁵³“Map of Regional Hispanic Ministries.”

⁵⁴Mackey, “Partners in the Mission,” 4.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶“Southern Kentucky Hispanic Ministry,” Horse Cave Baptist Church, http://www.horsecavebaptist_church.com/ (accessed June 6, 2012).

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸“Map of Regional Hispanic Ministries.”

⁵⁹Ibid.

Antonio Santos has served as the regional strategist for this area.⁶⁰ From as early as September 1999, David Winfrey reported that Guillermo and Pilar Rolando had been brought from Springdale, Arkansas, to work in the Western Kentucky city of Paducah.⁶¹ The Kentucky Baptist publication noted that they “were supported by the Eliza Broadus offering for state missions and local Baptist associations.”⁶² Around the same time, state Ethnic/Language consultant for the KBC, Grundy Janes, reported, “There are about 50 Hispanic Baptist missions across the state with new works constantly springing up . . . the latest is an outreach at Lone Oak First Baptist Church to permanent residents in the Paducah area.”⁶³ Other Hispanic ministries of note from this area were housed at Oscar Baptist Church of West Union Baptist Association and that of Hardin Baptist Church of Blood River Baptist Association.⁶⁴

Overall, in the late nineties Baptists noted changes in the Hispanic populations. Tony Hough, former Kentucky Baptist Convention employee, stated that there were approximately “200 migrant workers coming into the state in 1987 and 24,000 in 1998 . . . with 10 percent staying and finding work in horse farming and poultry processing.”⁶⁵ Hough continued, “Hispanic work will continue to grow I don’t think it will collapse unless the agricultural base collapses.”⁶⁶ Although the agricultural base continues to diminish in Kentucky, Hispanic ministry continues to thrive. This region has had

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹David Winfrey, “Eliza Broadus Offering Assists Hispanic Ministry,” *Western Recorder*, September 14, 1999.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴*When the World Comes to You.*

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

churches, missions, and Bible studies in Benton, Murray, Mayfield, Paducah, Wickliffe, Bardwell, Clinton, and Hickman.⁶⁷

As the Hispanic regional ministries formed, there was little strategic continuity statewide. Most missionaries were working long hours in isolation. For that reason, the Hispanic Council was formed in 1999.⁶⁸ The council was made up of Hispanic regional missionaries, KBC language consultant, Grundy Janes, and other key supporters in Kentucky Baptist life.⁶⁹ The purpose of the council was to unite Hispanic regional missionaries under one strategy and to plan together for kingdom growth. The impact of this council could be felt across the state. In 2000, the focus of Hispanic ministry changed drastically from social ministry that was evangelistically driven to one focused primarily on church planting.⁷⁰ The impetus behind this shift can easily be traced to the influence of the statewide Hispanic council. In 2004, the council planned the first statewide pastors' luncheon at Highland Baptist Church of Louisville.⁷¹ In 2006, this twenty-five member panel worked to develop a "10 year strategy for church starting, evangelism, and other Hispanic ministry The council's 10 year ministry goals included: baptizing 2,500 new Christians, planting 50 Hispanic churches, and planting five high impact churches."⁷²

⁶⁷"Map of Regional Hispanic Ministries."

⁶⁸De la Barra, "The Church Planting Strategy," 42.

⁶⁹The original council was made up of Carlos De la Barra (Missionary of Bluegrass Hispanic Region), Jorge Garcia (Missionary of Graves County and Christian County Hispanic Region), Grundy Janes (Language Ministry Consultant of the KBC), Jesus Pacheco (Missionary of Central Hispanic Region), Ken Roberts (Missionary of South Central Hispanic Region), John Torres (Missionary of Southern Kentucky Hispanic Region), Gus Reyes (Missionary Service Corps worker in Bowling Green), and Ray Van Camp (Church Planting Strategist for Elkhorn Baptist Association). Information taken from *Hispanic Council*, CD-ROM (personal archives of Ray Van Camp, 2004).

⁷⁰Ken Walker, "Leaders Dedicate First Hispanic Mission in Bowling Green," *Western Recorder*, November 21, 2006.

⁷¹De la Barra, "The Church Planting Strategy," 43.

The Kentucky Baptist Hispanic Council also addressed other needs, which had emerged from within the growing Hispanic Kentucky Baptist community. The need for trained Hispanic pastors was and is an ever-present need. Gus Reyes, who worked both in Northern and Western Kentucky among Hispanics on two separate missionary tours, stated, “Scarce pastoral leadership for Hispanics is another challenge.”⁷³ Former KBC worker Larry Baker also stated that there exists a “leadership vacuum” in Hispanic ministry in the state of Kentucky. Baker added, “The greatest challenge facing Hispanic ministries in Kentucky is the lack of trained Bible teachers, pastors, deacons and other ministry leaders Many members of Hispanic Baptist churches are new Christians.”⁷⁴ Baker continues and states that “KBC leaders have a two pronged strategy to the meet the need for more leaders.”⁷⁵ The two-pronged strategy centered on a partnership with the Florida Baptist Convention and the formation of the Hispanic Baptist Bible Institute in 2005.⁷⁶ Many see the Hispanic Baptist Bible Institute as emblematic of a transition in Hispanic ministry “from migrant-oriented ministries to stable churches designed to serve long-term residents.”⁷⁷

Nearly thirty years ago, there was one Hispanic mission that was mostly a fellowship geared towards meeting the needs of Latino seminary students. Today, the Hispanic work in Kentucky continues to mature. In 2008, the KBC named Carlos De la Barra as Ethnic Associate and in 2010 named him Director of Multiethnic Missions and

⁷²Prather, “Hispanics in Kentucky,” 3.

⁷³Ken Walker, “MSC Couple See State’s Hispanic Population as Mission Field,” *Western Recorder*, November 12, 2002.

⁷⁴Prather, 3.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ken Walker, “Hispanic School a Ministry Milestone, Leaders Say,” *Western Recorder*, January 3, 2006.

Ministries Department, a show of support for ethnic ministry in Kentucky. As of 2008, approximately seventy Hispanic ministries existed with a total membership of 1,041, an average Sunday worship attendance of 1,387, and an average Sunday School attendance of 604.⁷⁸ The majority of the ministries are found within the six Hispanic regions. De la Barra desires the number of works to triple to over 200 over the coming years. He states, “It is a really hard goal but we need to do more We are not reaching more than three or five percent of the Hispanic population.”⁷⁹ Ken Walker noted in 2008 that there were 147 reported baptisms among Kentucky Hispanic Baptists, implying that Hispanic Baptist churches averaged about seven members per baptism.⁸⁰ When compared with the much lower Southern Baptist Convention’s 42:1 member-to-baptism ratio, it definitely serves as a bright spot in Kentucky Baptist statistics.⁸¹ It is clear, however, that there is still more work to be done.

Oscar Romo, a Southern Baptist spokesman and longtime language ministry leader of the Home Mission Board, asserts that “Southern Baptist historians have traditionally overlooked ethnic Southern Baptists in the life of the denomination.”⁸² Whether or not this statement is conjectural is difficult to determine. Whether or not it applies to Kentucky also depends on one’s perspective. What is clear is that the work that has been done among Hispanics and other ethnicities must be remembered, celebrated, and documented as part of the rich history of Kentucky Baptists.

⁷⁸Ken Walker, “Growing Hispanic Ministries in Kentucky Reveal New Level of Maturity,” *Western Recorder*, July 1, 2008.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid., 3.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²As cited in the foreword to Joshua Grijalva, *Ethnic Baptist History* (Miami: META, 1993), 3.

Definitions

Before delving into the background and methodology of this dissertation, it is necessary to define a few key terms. The following terms are of particular interest: *Latino/Hispanic*, *migrant workers*, *migrant seasonal ministry*, *mission*, *missions* and *church*. These terms can be defined differently depending on one's theological background and methodological presuppositions.

Which term is more appropriate when referring to our target group: *Hispanic* or *Latino*?⁸³ Both of these terms are generalizations that describe a similar group of people. Within the United States and within this paper, the two terms are used interchangeably.⁸⁴ Both terms are used to refer to a heterogeneous people with direct or indirect ties to Latin America or with the Spanish-speaking world who usually, but not always, speak Spanish. Most members of this linguistic group in the U.S. prefer to identify themselves through their nationality of origin.⁸⁵

The terms *migrant workers*, *seasonal migrant ministry*, *mission*, *missions*, and *church* should also be defined, as they will be used throughout this dissertation. First, *migrant workers* move from place to place within a state or within several states in season with crops. Their lifestyles are generally transient. Though migrant workers still arrive in Kentucky, especially in rural areas, migrant work in Kentucky is diminishing. Second, *seasonal migrant ministry* is a ministry that seeks to reach seasonal migrant workers with the gospel as they move through a particular area.⁸⁶ Seasonal migrant

⁸³The majority of Hispanics in Kentucky are from Mexico (62 percent). The next largest nationality is from the Caribbean. The nationality distribution in Kentucky is similar to the U.S. as a whole. See "Kentucky," Pew Research Center, <http://www.pewhispanic.org> (accessed September 27, 2012).

⁸⁴Some within the Latino/Hispanic community prefer one term over the other. The term "Hispanic" carries connotations of connection with Spain, while "Latino" ties this people more closely with Latin America.

⁸⁵Manuel Ortiz, *Hispanic Challenge: Opportunities Confronting the Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 24.

ministry in Kentucky was, at one point, a vital missions enterprise. As the demand for migrant workers decreases in the Commonwealth, so does the need for seasonal migrant ministry.

Third, a *mission*, as used in this paper, is “an organized year-round ministry with Bible study and worship services, looking forward toward becoming a church.”⁸⁷ Many Hispanic ministries in Kentucky that have formed as preaching points or missions are highly dependent on the more established Anglo churches, while others have made significant strides towards a more autonomous existence. Fourth, *missions*, as viewed by the author, is the church’s principle duty and activity to carry and proclaim the gospel message where it has not been named in a way that is intelligible to the receptor culture. Missions is more than traversing geographical boundaries. Missions includes, but is not limited to, crossing cultural and linguistic barriers. In the mind of the author, missions must include responsible follow-up and thorough discipleship of new believers.

Fifth, for the purposes of this research, a *church* is essentially defined as “an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in faith and fellowship of the gospel.”⁸⁸ A church observes

the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. . . . Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scriptures.⁸⁹

The ten guidelines provided by the IMB provide further explanation on what defines a church.

⁸⁶De la Barra, “The Church Planting Strategy,” 42.

⁸⁷Ibid., 43.

⁸⁸“Definition of a Church,” International Mission Board, <http://www.imb.org/main/news/details.asp?LanguageID=1709&StoryID=3838> (accessed June 10, 2012).

⁸⁹Ibid.

Background

My interest in the history of Southern Baptist missions among Hispanics in Kentucky began when I unassumingly entered into it in 2000. In July of that year, my wife and I moved to Louisville to attend The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Both of us believed that the Lord had led us there in order to equip us to be missionaries for the international mission field. In January of 2001, we became members of a Hispanic Southern Baptist church, Iglesia Bautista Nueva Jerusalén. Both my wife and I sensed that we would eventually end up in a Spanish-speaking country and thought that it would be wise to get a head start on culture and language acquisition. For this reason we joined this particular church that, in time, became our church family.

Nueva Jerusalén was one of the first Hispanic Baptist churches in Louisville to purchase their own building. It was at this church that I learned about the diversity of Latino culture. It was at this church that I learned about the specific needs of a Hispanic Baptist church found within the broader cultural and ecclesiastical landscape of a Southern state, such as Kentucky. It was at this church that I learned to speak Spanish fluently, mainly through observation and participation, even as I wrestled with both Greek and Hebrew at seminary. It was at this church that I truly learned to minister, not only in the Hispanic context, but in general. It was at this church that I preached my first sermon in Spanish. I served at Nueva Jerusalén as volunteer minister to youth for almost four years.

Another influence that helped to fuel my desire to study the intricacies of Hispanics in the United States was my Master of Divinity studies at Southern Seminary. In one class, Introduction to Missiology, I was given a very simple assignment by Professor Mark Terry to write an ethnographic study on a given people group. He gave me permission to research a group with whom I was already becoming acquainted: Hispanics in North America. I began to sense a need to study seriously Hispanic

populations found not only in the United States but more particularly in Kentucky. In the course of researching this paper, I was exposed to authors such as Oscar Romo, Manuel Ortiz, Alex Montoya, Justo Gonzalez and Daniel Sanchez. These scholars helped to challenge, sharpen, and stretch what I was in the process of learning on the ministry field. Other missions' faculty at Southern Seminary helped to inform my perspective of intercultural missions within the U.S. Both Professors George Martin and David Sills have aided my understanding of missionary realities and missionary theory.

Upon graduation from Southern Seminary, I continued to serve in the Hispanic ministry context. I had the opportunity to help plant a Hispanic church as the lead planter. After serving in that capacity for over a year, I moved on to pastor a newly established Hispanic mission, Iglesia Bautista Nuevo Amanecer. For the past eight years, I have had the distinct privilege of leading Nuevo Amanecer to become a constituted, self-sustaining Southern Baptist church that has participated in missions endeavors in Kentucky and in the world.

Currently, I hold two positions within the Kentucky Hispanic Baptist ministry context: pastor of the aforementioned church, Nuevo Amanecer, and Ethnic Strategist for the Central Region Hispanic Ministry of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. As Ethnic Strategist for the Central Region Hispanic region, I have the opportunity to seek to plant Hispanic churches in a ten-county region of North Central Kentucky. I have also had the distinct privilege of overseeing and working with six established Hispanic churches and four new Hispanic church plants.

Finally, my desire to document the history of Southern Baptist missions among Hispanics in Kentucky has been further intensified through Ph.D. seminars in the area of missions, philosophy, history, and theology. In the History of Christians Missions seminar, taught by George Martin, I wrote an initial paper tracing the history of Southern Baptist Missions among Hispanics in Kentucky. This initial investigation confirmed the

need to document this story, because the more I investigated the topic, the more I realized that this account had not yet been put to paper and would be lost to the ensuing generation if a history were not written soon.

Limitations and Delimitations

I recognize that this study was limited by several factors. First, much of the information detailing Southern Baptist missions among Hispanics was available only as oral history in the minds of those who helped to reach Kentucky Hispanics with the gospel. Interviews played an integral role in my research and was be limited by the availability of the interviewees. Some interviewees did not have as much time as I would liked for them to have had for this project, as they were in the throes of ministry. A few of the key players who helped to advance the gospel message among Kentucky Hispanics are now deceased, including Luis Salazar and Rolando Muñiz. Others have moved on to other states, while others are well advanced in age.

In terms of delimitations, this study did not attempt to document all mission endeavors directed towards Hispanics in the United States. In fact, this analysis sought to provide a history of Southern Baptist missions among Hispanics in Kentucky. The reason for this delimitation is simple. The Hispanic population in Kentucky is relatively new and small compared to states with larger Hispanic populations such as Texas, California, Florida, and Arizona. On the one hand, the Hispanic population in Kentucky is relatively small, which facilitates the study of this people group as it relates to missions and ministry. On the other hand, it is still large enough to provide ministerial insight for states with both lesser and larger Hispanic populations. Secondly, I did not attempt to document every Hispanic preaching point, Bible study, mission, or church that has existed in the brief history of Southern Baptist missions among Hispanics in Kentucky. My research focused on a close examination of this history through the lenses of the six regional Hispanic ministries. It would be an impossible task to name, describe, and

appropriately honor every single Hispanic Baptist work that has existed in Kentucky. I took time to look at other significant Southern Baptist Hispanic ministries, such as the Hispanic Baptist Bible Institute, racetrack ministries, and some associational Hispanic ministries. Looking at the history of Kentucky through the lenses of the six regional ministries provided an appropriate framework, while supplying an accurate picture of the formation of Southern Baptist Hispanic ministries over the past thirty years. Lastly, though there are other Christian denominations at work with Hispanics in Kentucky, I set out to describe only Southern Baptist missions' endeavors.

Methodology

A study of the history of Southern Baptist missions among Hispanics in Kentucky should begin with those that have been involved from the initial stages to the present in this important work. The first method of research was interviews conducted with the key players in each of the six Hispanic regions. For example, I interviewed former and current missionaries, Directors of Missions, laypeople, pastors, and Kentucky Baptist Convention who have played a part in Hispanic ministry in Kentucky. As previously stated, oral histories from the interviewees served as primary resources, as no written history of Southern Baptist missions among Hispanics in Kentucky exists.

Second, archives from the KBC were explored. There are several filing cabinets at the KBC that contain basic records of past missionaries, strategists, church planters, and pastors who have served over the past twenty years in the Hispanic ministry context. This information included annual reports and funding requests made by church planters and missionaries who were sent to the KBC as well as the NAMB. In addition to investigating these archives, the minutes from the statewide Hispanic Council meetings from its inception to date were examined thoroughly to compile an accurate historical timeline. This council serves to unite the six regional ministries along with other key leaders across the state in planning, strategizing, and prayer. Along with these minutes, I

also obtained the minutes for the Hispanic Baptist Bible Institute Advisory Council that span from 2005 to 2012. The minutes from both of these councils represent a total of 84 documents, each several pages in length. The minutes have been obtained from the secretary of these meetings.

Third, archived data such as newsletters and meeting minutes from the six regional Hispanic ministries served as important historical documents. As I began to investigate this topic, I was pleasantly surprised to find out that most of the regional Hispanic ministries possessed archives that, if pieced together, would help to tell the story of Southern Baptist missions among Hispanics in the Commonwealth. Several regional Hispanic ministries, such as Central Region Hispanic, South Central Region, Bluegrass Region, and Southern Region graciously made available said resources. As I anticipated, many of the resources garnered from the regional ministries were not catalogued according to any set organizational system, but did provide valuable information when organized by the author of this dissertation.

Fourth, the *Western Recorder*, the weekly Kentucky Baptist publication, also proved to be an important source of information about the Southern Baptist missions among Hispanics. I have perused *Western Recorder* issues in various formats that date from 2012 back approximately thirty years, combing the periodical for gems of information pertaining to Hispanic ministry in Kentucky. The *Western Recorder* provided relevant information packaged for general Kentucky Baptist consumption and indeed proved itself to be an important resource in my research.

Finally, this research was balanced with current scholarship and literature dealing with missions and church planting as it pertains to the Hispanic ministry context in the United States. Over the past twelve years, I have amassed a fairly significant collection on this subject. Additional resources were easily accessed at James P. Boyce Centennial Library housed at Southern Seminary or through the inter-library loan system.

Though there is virtually nothing that has been written about Hispanics in Kentucky on an academic level, there are more than a few books and articles that have been published over the past twenty-five years about Hispanics in the United States that closely mirror the context of Southern Baptist missions to Hispanics in Kentucky.⁹⁰

⁹⁰Some examples of these types of books are as follows: Daniel R. Sanchez, *Hispanic Realities Impacting America: Implications for Evangelism and Missions* (Fort Worth: Church Starting Network, 2006); Ortiz, *The Hispanic Challenge*; Grijalva *Ethnic Baptist History*; Romo, *American Mosaic*; Alex D. Montoya, *Hispanic Ministry in North America* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987); Juan Francisco Martinez, *Walk with the People: Latino Ministry in the United States* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2008); The North American Mission Board, *Reaching Hispanics in North America: Helping You Understand and Engage One of God's Greatest Mission Fields* (Alpharetta, GA: Church Planting Resource Library, 2009); Justo L. González, *Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990).

CHAPTER 2

CENTRAL AND SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONS

Squire Boone, the brother of Daniel Boone, has been credited with being the first Baptist preacher to enter into what is now known as the state of Kentucky and with performing the first wedding there on August 7, 1776.¹ Squire Boone is also recognized with settling briefly within what is now known as Shelby County, Kentucky. In fact, in the heart of downtown Shelbyville, lies a historical marker that reads “Squire Boone Station 1780.”

In the same general vicinity, 210 years later, Baptists can find another historical marker of a different sort. Both Henry County and Shelby County are the birthplaces of missions among Hispanics in Kentucky. From these initial counties, missions among Hispanics then expanded across multiple other counties, which came to be known as the Central Region. The historical account of the Central Region Hispanic Ministry will be explored first in this chapter, followed by the origins of the South Central Hispanic Ministry.

Central Region

The first Baptist Hispanic regional ministry to form in Kentucky was Central Region Hispanic. Originally, this ministry was comprised of two rural Baptist associations, Shelby Baptist Association and Henry County Baptist Association. When this region officially incorporated its charter members were the Shelby Baptist

¹Frank M. Masters, *A History of Baptists in Kentucky* (Louisville: Kentucky Baptist Historical Society, 1953), 1, 8, 10.

Association, Sulphur Fork Baptist Association (now known as Oldham-Trimble), White's Run Association, and the Henry County Baptist Association.² Franklin Baptist Association (1999), Owen County Baptist Association (2003), Ten-Mile Baptist Association (2003), and Long Run Baptist Association (2003) would join later, as they recognized the need to pool resources to reach Hispanic migrant workers.³

Pam Cobb served as the Director of Missions (DOM) for Henry County Baptist Association from 1988-1993.⁴ Cobb holds the distinction of being the only female director of missions in the history of the KBC. She helped to spearhead Henry County Baptist Association's outreach to Hispanic migrant farm workers. Early in her tenure, Cobb challenged the Baptist churches in her association to "be involved in some sort of ministry."⁵ In September of 1990, several tobacco farmers that were members of Franklinton Baptist Church approached Cobb to inform her of the migrant workers being brought to work in the tobacco fields. Cobb saw a ministry opportunity.

Though there were challenges in starting a ministry to "foreigners" in a rural context, a ministry to Hispanic migrant workers was soon launched at Franklinton Baptist Church.⁶ By 1990, SBTS students Jaime Delgado and Lucy Alleman were recruited to work with the migrants.⁷ As mentioned in the previous chapter, Tony Aja provided

²Rick Lucas, "Bylaws of Central Region Hispanic Ministry," David Minch's personal collection, Shelbyville, KY, January 27, 1997.

³Grundy Janes, "Outline of Hispanic Work in Kentucky: August 1997 to August 2003," Multiethnic Missions and Ministry Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, 2003. Owen County and Ten-Mile Baptist Associations' participation in this regional ministry has been extremely limited compared to other participating associations.

⁴Pam Cobb, interview by author, LaGrange, KY, August 20, 2010.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Pam Cobb, "History of Henry County (Kentucky) Baptist Association Migrant Ministry," Pam Cobb's personal collection, Rockford, IL, September 10, 2010.

⁷Ibid.

assistance, consultation, and supervision for this ministry as the Ethnic-Language Consultant from what was then known as the KBC Direct Missions Department.⁸ Delgado taught a Sunday-School class in Spanish and interpreted from English to Spanish during worship services.⁹ Due to the influx of migrants to the northern portion of Henry County, Campbellsburg Baptist Church was chosen as the second site for migrant ministry in July 1991.¹⁰ By July 1992, the Shelby Baptist Association (SBA) led by DOMs Gene Milby and David Minch of the SBA Mission Development Council, launched a migrant ministry of their own with Jesús Pacheco as the Hispanic minister.¹¹

In 1993, at Pleasureville Baptist Church, Thursday evening services were attempted with little success. Thursday evenings were more accommodating to Anglo volunteer workers' schedules than those of the migrant workers.¹² As reported in the 1993 Henry County Associational newsletter, the majority of the local church support for the migrant ministry came from Smithfield, Campbellsburg, Eminence, and Bethlehem Baptist Churches, with the pastors of these churches leading the way.¹³ By 1993, the proliferation of migrant workers in Kentucky led Cobb to write a resource manual for ministries with migrants and farmers.¹⁴ The manual was utilized statewide as an initial resource for ministry among Hispanics. Migrant workshops were planned in 1995 in

⁸Tony Aja, "List of New Units," Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, January 1, 1991.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹David Minch, "Shelby Baptist Association: Brief Hispanic History (1992-1996)," David Minch's personal collection, Shelbyville, KY, March 12, 1996.

¹²Cobb, interview by author.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Pam Cobb, *Resource Manual for Ministries with Migrants and Farmers* (Louisville: Kentucky Baptist Convention, 2003).

places that included Georgetown, Elizabethtown, and Owensboro and, in 1996, in Lexington, Hopkinsville, and Louisville. As late as 1999, workshops could be found in Carrollton, Sebree, Bardstown, and Glasgow, among others.¹⁵ In one such workshop held at Mallard Point Baptist Church in Georgetown, Mauricio Vargas served as the keynote speaker, Jesús Pacheco presented the speech, “Kentucky Needs: Now and Into the 21st Century,” and Berthina Cervantes presented “Networking: Migrant Communities and the Community at Large.”¹⁶

As mentioned previously, in 1995, the Central Region Hispanic Ministry was formed and then later incorporated with the state of Kentucky in 1997.¹⁷ It was the first Baptist ministry formed to reach across associational and county borders to Latinos in Kentucky. The same year, it employed Aja’s first ministry recruit, Jesús Pacheco, as its first regional strategist. The Home Mission Board, the KBC, partnering Baptist associations, and local Baptist churches came together to fund the position.¹⁸ The Central Region’s history and formation are directly tied to the migrant ministry in Henry County, which started in 1990, and the Shelbyville Migrant Seasonal Ministry, which began in April of 1992.¹⁹ In 1996, Henry County Baptist associational newsletters reported that the migrant ministry in the Central Region area continued to mature.²⁰ Pacheco worked diligently, at times transporting up to thirty-five people to and from the worship services

¹⁵Grundy Janes, “Calendar of Migrant Workshops,” Multiethnic Missions and Ministries, Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, 1999.

¹⁶“1995 Migrant Ministries Workshop: Mallard Point Baptist Church, Georgetown, Kentucky,” Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, 1995.

¹⁷Jesús Pacheco, interview by author, LaGrange, KY, September 27, 2012.

¹⁸“Hispanic Newsletter Shelby Baptist Association,” David Minch’s personal collection, Shelbyville, KY, June 23, 1994.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Cobb, “History of Henry County,” 2.

he led.²¹ César Cano was a member of one of the first families impacted by Pacheco's ministry in Shelbyville. Cano explained that Pacheco would pick up a group and drop them off at the worship site and then go for another load of people.²² He did all of that so that he could then preach the Word of God to them. After preaching, he would return each group just as he had brought them.

Hispanic outreach on a statewide and associational level started in rural rather than urban areas. One reason for this was that migrant workers simply could not enter unnoticed in smaller close-knit communities.²³ Migrant ministry continued to expand steadily across the state in rhythm with the influx of migrant workers. Baptist associations in the region perceived a great opportunity to reach the "others" in their midst, and many viewed this expansion of migrants as an opportunity to carry out "foreign missions at home."²⁴ The migrant ministries soon spread from Shelby County and Henry County to Oldham, Spencer, and Carroll counties.²⁵ Cobb served as the first chairperson of the ministry's governing council.²⁶ Initially, the principal office of this corporation was found in New Castle, Kentucky and later moved to the Baptist Ministry Center of the Oldham-Trimble Baptist Association in Ballardsville.²⁷

The key to the success of the Central Region Hispanic ministry was the ministry's willingness to collaborate. The KBC, local associations, local churches,

²¹Cobb, interview by author.

²²César Cano, interview by author, Louisville, KY, October 29, 2012.

²³Rick Lucas, interview by author, Crestwood, KY, September 13, 2010.

²⁴Minch, "Shelby Baptist Association: Brief."

²⁵Pacheco, interview by author.

²⁶Ken Walker, "Departing Director of Missions Hopes to Serve Again," *Western Recorder*, July 22, 1997.

²⁷Lucas, "Bylaws of Central Region Hispanic Ministry," 1.

pastors, and lay-people worked together to reach the foreigners in their midst with the gospel of Jesus Christ. According to Pacheco, within the Shelby County Baptist Association, “almost all Baptist churches worked together for the Kingdom, . . . churches provided food for the Hispanic group, Christmas parties and gifts for kids, and they helped man a clothes closet.”²⁸

Selfless lay-leaders and vocational ministers served as crucial partners in this ministry. Lay-leaders such as David Minch and Regina Miller (Regina Castillo) from Shelby Baptist Association, Harold Hughes from First Baptist of Carrollton, WMU groups from Whites Run associational churches, and Billy and Holly Fischer from Buckner Baptist were tremendous helps to the work, serving wherever there was a need in their respective areas.²⁹ Both Minch and Castillo still serve the Hispanic populations in Shelby County. The now deceased Harold Hughes of First Baptist Carrollton is another example of this level of servitude. Hughes was affectionately called “*abuelo*” or grandfather by the Hispanic congregants of Carrollton.³⁰ Hughes drove First Baptist of Carrollton’s van, transporting the Carrollton Hispanic members to regional and statewide Baptist events. Hughes hardly spoke a word of Spanish and most of the early members of the Hispanic mission spoke little English, but they understood and loved each other deeply. Rick Lucas, former DOM of the Oldham-Trimble Baptist Association, Chris White, pastor of First Baptist Church of Carrollton, and Tommy Purvis, current pastor of DeHaven Baptist Church of LaGrange, have all been exemplary, constant supporters of the Hispanic work, not only in the Central Region, but in Kentucky.³¹

²⁸Pacheco.

²⁹Bob Young, interview by author, LaGrange, KY, October 30, 2012.

³⁰At a Central Region meeting held on October 5, 2012, Pastor Francisco Llerena made this comment about Hughes. I knew Hughes personally as well.

³¹Lucas, interview by author.

The tireless efforts of the early missionaries and ministers in the Central Region Hispanic Ministry were of primary importance to its success. Since the Henry and Shelby County ministries had expanded into a regional concept, regional missionary Pacheco had to travel a great deal and often at his own expense. A brief examination of his weekly schedule shows his personal sense of commitment and sacrifice:

Sunday: conducted worship services in Shelbyville. The worship for that day was prefaced with English classes taught by local volunteers, followed by worship and a meal provided by Anglo churches in the area; Monday: conducted worship services to migrant workers at Churchill Downs; Tuesday: Buckner Baptist Bible Study; Wednesday: Spencer County for evangelism and home Bible studies; Thursday: Conducted worship service for migrant workers at Franklinton Baptist Church in Henry County. Due to the seasonal nature of this ministry, these worship services were generally held from August to December. A local lay pastor, Fernando Rojas, helped with this work. There were around 30 to 40 people in attendance; Friday: Recreational activities like soccer tournaments, movies, and other alternative social outlets were hosted at the Shelby County Associational Building.³²

Obviously, Pacheco and others sacrificed much to see this work take shape. Though he officially held a part-time position, his hours were more than full-time. Pacheco essentially worked without ceasing with little to no compensation for his time and effort. In fact, a report from Shelby Baptist Association reveals that Pacheco was paid roughly \$100.00 a week for his efforts in 1993, which increased over time as the financial support for the ministry increased.³³ In fact, in later years, Shelby Baptist Association generously supported Pacheco's ministry and his ministerial successors for years. The association even spent approximately \$200,000.00 to purchase and renovate a building for Hispanic use, in addition to providing a salary for their Hispanic pastor at the time, Amauri Ditz, while also contributing to Central Region's annual budget.³⁴

³²Ibid.

³³David Minch, "Shelby Baptist Association Migrant Ministry Program Newsletter," David Minch's personal collection, Shelbyville, KY, March 7, 1993.

³⁴David Minch, "Shelby Baptist Association Hispanic Ministry: Potential, Needs and Request for Support," David Minch's personal collection, Shelbyville, KY, March 29, 2002.

Pacheco's early ministry may not have been financially lucrative for him and his family, but it had a lasting impact. A church bulletin from La Mision Hispana Alfa y Omega reflects the efficacy of Pacheco's ministry in Shelby Baptist Association's migrant ministry. The bulletin, dated December 17, 1993, lists the candidates for baptism: Saul Mejia, Miguel González, Roberto González, Julio González, Fernando Rojas, César Cano, Pedro González, Lucia Milla, Maribel Donis, Esperanza Jaimes, Erla Quezada, and Oscar.³⁵ The baptismal service was held at Clay Village Baptist Church with special music provided by Pedro Sayago, pastor of the Hispanic mission of St. Matthews Baptist and Tony Aja of the KBC.³⁶ Miguel González, Roberto González, Fernando Rojas, César Cano, and Esperanza Jaimes were not only some of Pacheco's first ministry converts, but all of them continue to be involved in Hispanic ministry to this day. In fact, Cano presently pastors one of the largest Hispanic Baptist churches in the state of Kentucky, Iglesia Bautista Cooper Chapel.³⁷

The strategy in these rural areas was simple, possibly a reflection of KBC worker Aja's initial efforts.³⁸ The ministry was shaped by an evangelistic home visitation program coupled with a holistic ministry approach. Pacheco and some of his early recruits visited both tobacco and horse farms. He sought to start simple home Bible studies and worship experiences.³⁹ For example, one work in Oldham County was initially started from a home Bible study located in a trailer in the middle of what was

³⁵David Minch, "Misión Hispana Alfa y Omega," David Minch's personal collection, Shelbyville, KY, December 17, 1993.

³⁶David Minch, "Shelby Baptist Association Migrant Ministry Program Newsletter," David Minch's personal collection, Shelbyville, KY, January 13, 1994.

³⁷Cano, interview by author. Cano stated that his church has had an average attendance between 120-140 for the past five years.

³⁸Tony Hough, interview by author, LaGrange, Kentucky, October 10, 2012.

³⁹Pacheco, interview by author.

then known as Rolling Hills Mobile Home Park.⁴⁰ At this church plant, the Hispanic work took off under the leadership of then Southern seminary student Chris White, who was working with Pacheco.⁴¹

Much of the early ministry revolved around the migrant seasonal schedule from March to November. Social outings like picnics and Thanksgiving dinners, among other special events, were all held with the intent of evangelizing the migrant worker.⁴²

Pacheco reflects on the heart of this ministry in Shelbyville:

In the early weeks of October 1993, 10-12 guys from Chiapas, Mexico arrived in Shelbyville. They were reported to be staying at “la casa roja” or the red house. They were brought by a coyote to the U.S. and left. They had nothing, only the clothes on their backs. They were hungry. They called me and I went by the house where they were staying. The house was in very bad condition. All of the men piled into the six passenger van and I brought them to the Shelby County associational building. David Minch cooked them dinner and we gave them clothes from the clothes closet. We took them to the local Kroger and bought them enough groceries for the week. They were extremely grateful. The following week they all found jobs. On the weekend, I invited them to church and went by to pick them up. They all piled into my small van. That Sunday, all of the men made professions of faith.⁴³

The majority of these men left Shelby County. Pacheco did report that two of the men are currently serving in ministry positions in the state of Kentucky, Pedro Gonzáles and Miguel Gonzáles.⁴⁴ As noted above in this chapter, Pedro and Miguel were some of the first people baptized by Pacheco.

The impact of the missions or preaching points, which were started through the migrant seasonal ministry, can still be seen today in some shape or form. For example, the church, Iglesia Bautista Alfa y Omega, eventually sprung from the migrant seasonal

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Lucas, interview by author.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

ministry in Henry and Shelbyville.⁴⁵ The church was originally housed at Highland Baptist Church in Shelbyville and then moved to Burke's Branch Baptist Church.⁴⁶ From this area, Pacheco sought to establish satellite churches or preaching points all over the region.⁴⁷ He would even transport people to the church at Burke's Branch from as far as Carrollton.⁴⁸ The Hispanic work then moved to where it has stayed to date, housed on the same property as that of the office of the Shelby Baptist Association. Amazingly, eight pastors were raised up from within the local congregation that was comprised of people from Shelby and Henry Counties.⁴⁹ Overall, Pacheco describes this time of ministry as *una experiencia satisfactoria* ("a satisfying experience") and *un ministerio fructifero* ("a fruitful ministry").⁵⁰ He simply states that "it was a joy to work with migrants; they were very receptive, humble and respectful of the gospel."⁵¹

The Central Region has been blessed with a long line of capable leaders.⁵² A few brief examples provide a taste for what their ministries were like. For example, in June of 1996, Augustine and Gloria Reyes came to Kentucky from Corpus Christi, Texas as Mission Service Corps volunteers.⁵³ At first, they undergirded Pacheco's ministry and

⁴⁵David Minch, interview by author, Shelbyville, KY, September 17, 2012.

⁴⁶Cano, interview by author.

⁴⁷Young, interview by author. It should be noted that this philosophy of working from a central church was contested by some Central Region Board Members and KBC staffers that supervised Pacheco.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Pacheco, interview by author.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Minch, interview by author.

⁵³Melanie Childers, "Volunteers Arrive to Aid Churches with Hispanic Ministry," *Western Recorder*, August 6, 1996.

served faithfully at Buckner Baptist Hispanic Mission in Oldham County for three years. On Tuesday nights, Reyes or “Gus,” as he was affectionately known by some, conducted a Bible study. On Sundays, he led a Sunday School class and worship service. Starting in April 1997, Buckner Baptist Church, pastored by Bob Hanses, held bilingual services using bilingual hymnals and bulletins.⁵⁴ Hispanics and Anglos worshiped together on many occasions. Reyes’ ministry was fully backed by Pastor Hanses and supported by members of Buckner Baptist Church such as Billy and Holly Fischer and Kelly Thorn, a Mission Services Corps volunteer who had previously served as an International Mission Board Journeyman in Latin America.⁵⁵ It should be noted that not all Anglo members of Buckner Baptist were in full support of the Hispanic ministry, but the ministry nonetheless carried on under the leadership of Reyes.⁵⁶ Reyes eventually took over as Central Region’s area missionary after the departure of Pacheco to pastor the Hispanic mission housed at St. Matthews Baptist in East Louisville.

After the Reyes departure from Kentucky to their home in Corpus Christi, Texas, Luis Salazar was brought in from Texas on August 1999 as the first full-time regional strategist for Central Region Hispanic Ministry Inc.⁵⁷ Salazar, a native of Ecuador, worked faithfully to start a Hispanic work in Ballardsville. He also attempted to restart a ministry in Henry County while seeking to strengthen works that had been started under Pacheco’s ministry. His ministry lasted a few short years but was halted when both he and his daughter were tragically killed in a car accident in June of 2002.⁵⁸

⁵⁴Ken Walker, “Central Kentucky Work with Hispanics Growing,” *Western Recorder*, December 1, 1998.

⁵⁵Lucas, interview by author.

⁵⁶Fernando Rojas, interview by author, Ballardsville, KY, October 21, 2012.

⁵⁷Lucas, interview by author.

⁵⁸Ibid.

Coinciding with part of Salazar's ministry, Aquilena Rodríguez came to Kentucky in 2001 as a volunteer lay missionary.⁵⁹ She was instrumental in helping to continue Hispanic ministry in the LaGrange and Ballardsville areas.⁶⁰ The work started like many other Hispanic church plants in the state—English classes, tireless home visitations, and home Bible studies. Many of the Oldham-Trimble Baptist Association's member churches pooled together financial and volunteer resources to back this ministry in remarkable fashion behind their servant leader, DOM Rick Lucas. The mission grew and eventually called Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBTS) student, Brad White, first as interim pastor in July of 2002, and later as pastor.⁶¹ Under White's tenure, this mission was named Iglesia Bautista Nuevo Amanecer (New Dawn Baptist Church). In 2004, White went on to serve as an IMB missionary in Peru and, in February of 2005, the author of this dissertation, was called as the pastor. Also in 2005, the Hispanic mission at Bucker Baptist joined with Iglesia Bautista Nuevo Amanecer. Iglesia Bautista Nuevo Amanecer constituted as a church in November 2009 and is now self-supporting.⁶² From 2009 to 2012, this church has averaged around 100 people in worship attendance.

After Salazar's death, Pacheco returned to serve as the fourth Regional Strategist for Central Region.⁶³ In 2007, the North American Mission Board (NAMB) named Pacheco the "Hispanic Church Planting Missionary of the Year for his work to start new churches among Hispanics in Kentucky during 2006."⁶⁴ In 2007, Pacheco

⁵⁹Lucas, interview by author.

⁶⁰Jeff Robinson, "Love of People leads student to Ballardsville Hispanic church," *Western Recorder*, October 7, 2003.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²The author has served as pastor of this church since February 2005.

⁶³Lucas, interview by author.

⁶⁴Staff Writer, "NAMB honors Pacheco with top Hispanic Church Planting Award," *Western*

moved to Oklahoma to work with the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma as Ethnic Director. Pete Rivera, a long time Baptist denominational worker in Illinois and Florida, succeeded him as Regional Hispanic Strategist of Central Region in 2007.⁶⁵ He served in that capacity for nearly four years until May 2011.⁶⁶ From May 2011 until the present, the author of this dissertation has filled the role of Ethnic Strategist for the Central Region.

Many other Hispanic ministries within the Central Region have similar histories that are beyond the scope of this dissertation. Within this region of Kentucky, are several constituted Hispanic churches. La Primera Iglesia Bautista of Carrollton officially constituted as a church in 2008. This ministry is related to the migrant ministry that began in September 1996 under the leadership of Whites Run Baptist Association.⁶⁷ This church has been pastored by Francisco Llerena of Peru for the past ten years, making Llerena one of the longest tenured pastors in this association.⁶⁸ La Iglesia Bautista Pan de Vida of Frankfort constituted as a church in 2011.⁶⁹ This church is pastored by Peruvian-born Jorge Cuentas and is a participating member of the Franklin Baptist Association, which is led by DOM Dr. Howard Beaman. Pan de Vida was originally started by Fernando Rojas under the supervision of Pacheco.⁷⁰ As this work became an official mission around 1999, Rojas had to step down as pastor because he did not possess legal documentation at the time. The pastor's lack of legal status therefore

Recorder, March 20, 2007.

⁶⁵Pete Rivera, interview by author, Frankfort, KY, September 10, 2012.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Young, interview by author.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹The author attended the constituting ceremony in 2011.

⁷⁰Rojas, interview by author.

rendered it impossible for him to receive consistent financial compensation from Baptist churches in the area.⁷¹ Other works in this region are longstanding but are still considered missions because they have not yet officially constituted. The majority of these missions have existed for ten years or more. La Misión Bautista Montañas de Bendición in Owenton was connected with the Owen-Whites Run Hispanic Ministry, which was led by Rafael Juárez starting on April 1, 1997.⁷² This ministry was originally supported by Dallasburg Baptist, which was pastored by David Hewitt, First Baptist Owenton pastored by Paul Chitwood, Central Region, and Whites Run Association, with the principal contact being Bob Young, who was the mission chairperson for the association.⁷³ La Misión Bautista of Simpsonville was started by Pacheco disciple, Miguel Gonzáles, and has been led faithfully by Honduran Eusebio Barrera for nearly a decade.⁷⁴ Barrera was a disciple of Pacheco.⁷⁵ Amauri Ditz, another ministerial disciple of Pacheco, has served as pastor of the Misión Bautista Alfa y Omega in Shelbyville for more than a decade as well.⁷⁶ New church planting efforts are currently be carried out by the Central Region Hispanic Ministry in places like Milton, Lawrenceburg, Campbellsburg, Madison, Indiana, and among the horse farms of Oldham County.

⁷¹Grundy Janes, "Report for Tony," Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, 1999.

⁷²"Owen-Whites Run Hispanic Ministry," Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, 1997.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Minch, interview by author.

⁷⁵Pacheco, interview by author.

⁷⁶Minch, interview by author.

Louisville

The Long Run Baptist Association works mainly in the Louisville metro area. This association partnered with Central Region Hispanic Ministry from 2003 to 2005.⁷⁷ Within this particular association, notable Hispanic ministries have been started and carry on today. It has already been mentioned that the first Hispanic Baptist church was housed at St. Matthews Baptist in Louisville. Jesus Pacheco became the pastor of that mission in 1998, which was named Iglesia Bautista Nueva Jerusalén⁷⁸ That church then proceeded to buy its own property and conduct worship services as a self-supporting sister church of Long Run Baptist Association. In its own building, this church had a vibrant ministry for several years, but, unfortunately, this did not last. Nueva Jerusalén had to close its doors due to a dwindling attendance. One possible reason that this church died was that it simply could not pay the mortgage of the sizeable building it had purchased.⁷⁹ In fact, paying the bills began to consume much of the church's life, which, in turn, could be considered a contributing factor to diminishing evangelistic zeal.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, several Hispanic pastors and missionaries, including myself, who serve elsewhere in Kentucky and the world were affiliated with this church: Brad White, Aquilena Rodríguez, and Teófilo Pino to name a few.

Another Hispanic ministry of note in the Louisville area is that of Churchill Downs Racetrack Ministry. Churchill Downs employs approximately 700 Hispanics, most of whom are from Mexico, Central America, and Cuba.⁸¹ The ministry was provided a chapel on the backside of the Churchill Downs property and is intentionally bilingual with aspirations of reaching both the English and Spanish speakers employed at

⁷⁷Grundy Janes, "Outline of Hispanic Work In Kentucky August 1997 to August 2003."

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹The author of this paper was a member of this church from 2001 to 2004.

⁸¹David R. Lema Jr., "Churchill Downs chaplain helps faith blossom," *Baptist Press*, June 30, 2009.

the racetrack.⁸² Pedro Sayago worked as the first chaplain to Hispanics at Churchill Downs as early as 1992.⁸³ At the time of Sayago's employment, the Kentucky Baptist Convention (KBC) Ethnic-Language Consultant Tony Aja reported that approximately half of all the backside track workers were of Hispanic origin.⁸⁴ Pacheco followed Sayago as a part-time Spanish-speaking chaplain.⁸⁵ Today, Cuban native Yurian Santiesteban serves as the part-time chaplain.⁸⁶ Santiesteban is also a ministerial disciple of Pacheco. In 2008, Frank Lockwood mentioned a worship service at Churchill Downs, stating that they "ministered to 30 to 50 people coming to Wednesday Bible studies."⁸⁷

Also within the Louisville area, significant strides were made in the ethnically diverse Americana Apartments by Argentine Edgar Mansilla.⁸⁸ He also started a Hispanic work at Highland Baptist Church in Louisville as early as October of 1993.⁸⁹ Santiesteban is also the part-time pastor of Iglesia Bautista Senda de Luz, the largest and one of the most stable Hispanic Baptist works in the state.⁹⁰ This church reported an annual worship attendance of 115 for 2010 and 150 for 2011.⁹¹ Senda de Luz, unlike

⁸²Yurian Santiesteban, interview by author, Louisville, KY, April 9, 2012.

⁸³Pacheco, interview by author.

⁸⁴Tony Aja, "Ethnic Language Ministry in Kentucky: Assessment and Strategy for the Future," Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, 1992.

⁸⁵Pacheco, interview by author.

⁸⁶Santiesteban, interview by author.

⁸⁷Frank Lockwood, "No Losers in God's Kingdom: Churchill Downs Ministry Takes Gospel to Trainers, Owners and Jockeys," *Western Recorder*, May 1, 2003.

⁸⁸Carlos De la Barra, interview by the author, Louisville, KY, November 1, 2012.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰"Hispanic Church Stats for 2009-2011," Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, 2012.

⁹¹Ibid.

most of Kentucky's Hispanic Baptist churches, is comprised of mostly Cuban nationals. The 2010 Census estimates that there are approximately 8,000 Cuban nationals residing in Kentucky, with the majority of those found in Louisville.⁹² Some Cubans arrive to Kentucky through a visa lottery program, while others come through various means welcomed by refugee relocation organizations such as Catholic Charities or Kentucky Refugee Ministries, which are headquartered in Louisville.⁹³ Senda de Luz has its finger on the pulse of this unique segment of the Hispanic population in Kentucky and has played an integral part in Hispanic church planting efforts in the Louisville area.

In Louisville, there are approximately 9 Hispanic works. Among these ministries are Iglesia Bautista Cooper Chapel pastored by César Cano, yet another fruit of the ministry of Pacheco. This majority Guatemalan church started in May 1997 under the leadership of Cano.⁹⁴ For the first eight years of his pastorate at this church, the pastor worked a secular job and was reimbursed by the church a mere twenty dollars a week for gas.⁹⁵ Since then, the church has begun to pay him a part-time salary and they have also bought the building once owned by Iglesia Bautista Nueva Jerusalén.⁹⁶ The purchase price of the church building was \$428,000 in 2008.⁹⁷ Remarkably, Cano states that the church should have the mortgage paid off completely by 2013.⁹⁸ Iglesia Bautista La Respuesta is pastored by native Honduran Ramón Osorio and is affiliated with Highview

⁹²U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Kentucky Census Data 2010*, <http://www.uscensus2010data.com/21-kentucky-census-2010-data> (accessed October 30, 2012).

⁹³Santiesteben, interview by author.

⁹⁴Cano, interview by author. Cano stated that 90 percent of the people that attended his church were from Guatemala.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Ibid.

Baptist Church where current NAMB President Kevin Ezell was pastor when this work began in June 2006.⁹⁹ Over the brief existence of this church, the work has had highs and lows and now has a steady worship attendance that hovers between “80 on a bad day and 120 on a good day.”¹⁰⁰ The first family to attend this church, other than that of the pastor, was that of Hector and Elena Medina.¹⁰¹ Other churches in the Louisville area include Iglesia Bautista Victoria, La Misión Hispana de Parkland, Iglesia Bautista Getsemaní, and Iglesia Bautista de Manantial de Vida.¹⁰²

Northern Kentucky Baptist Association

Northern Kentucky Baptist Association Hispanic Ministry, though not part of the Central Region, is in close proximity and has been involved with Hispanic ministry since 1997.¹⁰³ This Baptist association is comprised of churches in Boone, Kenton, Campbell, Grant, Pendleton, and Bracken counties.¹⁰⁴ Hispanic ministry, however, has had more success in the Kentucky cities of Erlanger and Covington, both found in Kenton County. The genesis of this ministry can be contributed, in part, to collaborative efforts of both the Northern Kentucky Baptist Association and what was once known as the Cincinnati Baptist Association (now Baptist Association of Greater Cincinnati).¹⁰⁵ As

⁹⁹Ramón Osorio, interview by author, Louisville, KY, October 30, 2012.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²“Hispanic Church Stats for 2009-2011.” Iglesia Bautista Getsemani, although found in Louisville, maintains its membership with the Nelson Baptist Association.

¹⁰³Rick Robbins, interview by the author, LaGrange, KY, September 13, 2012. The *Western Recorder* also mentions of Anita Roberts, a Missions Service Corps. volunteer. She had a longstanding ministry to Hispanic track workers at Turfway Park in Northern Kentucky. See Bill Mackey, “Hispanic Ministry,” *Western Recorder*, October 27, 1998.

¹⁰⁴“Church Directory,” Northern Kentucky Baptist Association website, <http://www.nkbaptist.org/directory.htm> (accessed September 17, 2012).

a result of this joint effort, Robert Allen, a Spanish-speaking Anglo from Texas, was brought into this area for the sole purpose of reaching Hispanics in the Northern Kentucky and Cincinnati regions.¹⁰⁶ He was funded by both associations and by the KBC at onset.¹⁰⁷ Although Allen spent nearly five years in the area ministering and attempting to establish Bible studies and churches, no lasting Hispanic churches in Kentucky are left as a result of his labors.¹⁰⁸ Allen had greater ministerial success on the Ohio side of the river.

After Allen departed from the area, there was a year lapse between his ministry and that of his successor. DOM Rick Robbins recalls this interval between the two Hispanic church planters:

There was a sense of disappointment in the year interval. We worked under the false assumption that we could start a large church that could eventually support itself. We also worked under the false assumption that language was the ultimate unifier, but we learned that the differences between cultures made it hard to plant a church. We invested a lot of money and saw little return for our investment.¹⁰⁹

Despite the disappointment about the return that they had received on their investment, this association decided to press on.

In 2003, the Northern Kentucky Baptist Association began conversations with Edgar Moralesjude, a native of Bolivia living in New York City. At the time, Moralesjude was serving as a minister and working as an air-traffic controller at LaGuardia Airport.¹¹⁰ In March 2004, Moralesjude was brought to the area where he was

¹⁰⁵Robbins, interview by author.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

the Hispanic Church Director until 2012.¹¹¹ Moralesjude was a multitalented individual with a myriad of interests. Robbins described Moralesjude as a very entrepreneurial and ambitious, yet humble minister of the gospel.¹¹² At times, Edgar talked about becoming a doctor, lawyer, and even quipped about having the “gift of real estate.”¹¹³ He was also interested in local politics.¹¹⁴ Among all of these competing interests, Moralesjude spent countless hours pursuing his primary calling of Hispanic church planting. In fact, during his tenure as Hispanic Church Director, Moralesjude was part of starting three Hispanic congregations that have since constituted and affiliated officially with the Northern Kentucky Baptist Association. Moralesjude reports that his main missiological strategy for reaching Hispanics in this area of Kentucky was through church planting, home visitation, and small group meetings.¹¹⁵ Many of these churches planted by Moralesjude also offered social services to the community such as English classes, free food, clothes closets, and professional counseling.¹¹⁶ The three churches are United in Christ Baptist Church in Covington pastored by Sergio Tomas, Potter’s House Baptist Church also in Covington pastored by Elfido Marcio, and the Hispanic Mission of Erlanger Baptist Church located in Erlanger, which is pastored by Joe Owen.¹¹⁷ Interestingly, Moralesjude, procured funds to buy some of the buildings that would then house future

¹¹¹Edgar Moralesjude, interview by author, LaGrange, KY, September 11, 2012.

¹¹²Robbins, interview by author.

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Moralesjude, interview by author.

¹¹⁶“Hispanic Ministries,” Northern Kentucky Baptist Association, <http://www.nkbaptist.org/directory.htm> (accessed September 17, 2012).

¹¹⁷Robbins, interview by author.

Hispanic works.¹¹⁸ He is said to have skillfully negotiated and bought a building reportedly worth \$80,000 for \$18,000.¹¹⁹

Close to Northern Kentucky Baptist Association's geographical territory is Crittenden Baptist Association. It should also be noted that Crittenden Baptist Association led by DOM Ron Chastain supported a migrant ministry as early as 1997; this ministry was initiated by Erma Parks.¹²⁰ The ministry never formally connected with Central Region.

South Central Region

South Central Region Hispanic Ministry was the second Hispanic regional ministry to be formed in 1996.¹²¹ The ministry initially started in Waynesburg, Kentucky in 1995 and successively spread to places like Somerset, Crab Orchard, Albany, and Monticello.¹²² It now comprised of the Baptist associations of Freedom, Wayne, Russell, Pulaski, Lincoln, Casey and Rockcastle counties. Ken Roberts became the first regional strategist for this region and the second strategist statewide. As of 2012, he still serves there.¹²³

In the early 1990s, in rural Kentucky areas such as Somerset, Crab Orchard, Albany, and Monticello, a new phenomenon was introduced.¹²⁴ Due to a tax-free status

¹¹⁸Ibid.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Sorin Farc, "State of Language Missions in Kentucky," Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, July 1997.

¹²¹Ken Roberts, interview by author, LaGrange, KY, September 10, 2012.

¹²²Ibid.

¹²³Ibid.

¹²⁴Ibid.

granted to this part of Kentucky, the poultry industry began to infiltrate the region.¹²⁵ Albany and Monticello were some of the first places in South Central Kentucky affected by this new industry. As a result, Hispanics were recruited to work in the poultry plants. Bill Mackey reflects upon the migrant worker situation at this time: “Migrants find work in a variety of occupations, but the majority work in the tobacco, poultry and race track industries [I]n just eight years, the commercial poultry industry has grown to 13th in the nation, according to Grundy Janes, KBC consultant for Hispanic ministries.”¹²⁶

Roberts reports that this industry, at its peak, employed around 600 to 700 Hispanics.¹²⁷ Growth in the poultry industry and the Hispanic population was explosive in these bucolic areas. People in the countryside of southern Kentucky began to take note of this demographic shift. Roberts relates one such account:

In November of 1995 Annette Story, a member of the Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) of Pleasant View Baptist Church of Waynesburg, KY was driving down Kentucky Highway 27. She noticed some Hispanic migrant workers walking alongside the road. She soon reported back to her WMU at Pleasant View Baptist that they needed to do something to reach the Hispanics in the community. Around Thanksgiving of the same year, they organized a Thanksgiving dinner for the Hispanic migrant workers; there were 60 in attendance including volunteers. Lay members, such as exchange students from Latin America, helped with translations.¹²⁸

This outreach effort marks the genesis of Baptist missions among Hispanic migrant workers in the area.

Annette Story characterized her role in the Hispanic ministry of Pleasant View Baptist in Waynesburg as minimal. In fact, she stated that it was like that of a mustard seed that the Lord grew into something more significant.¹²⁹ She believed that this small

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Bill Mackey, “Partners in Mission: Hispanic Ministry,” *Western Recorder*, October 27, 1998.

¹²⁷Roberts, interview by author.

¹²⁸Ibid.

ministry vision to reach out to Hispanics in her area was from God. Story reflects upon this pivotal moment in her life:

I can still see these people in my mind. When I saw them it dawned on me, “Hey, we need to do something.” It had to be God giving me this. It burdened my heart, and, at the next Wednesday WMU meeting, I let the women know about it. We decided to do a Thanksgiving meal for Hispanics. The women prepared the food and the church provided the meat. We basically had a month to prepare. We went out into the community to places where we knew Hispanics lived and began to invite them. We had about 17 migrants at the first meeting, which was the Saturday night before Thanksgiving.¹³⁰

Though Story’s participation was as simple as communicating to others what she had seen, her burden for reaching and helping Hispanics has had long lasting effects. Story continues to support the Hispanic ministry of Pleasant View Baptist, La Historia De Jesus, as well as supporting the South Central Region Hispanic ministry as a member of the regional council.¹³¹

The Sunday following this initial Thanksgiving dinner, Hispanics from the dinner began to come to Pleasant View Baptist for Sunday school, morning worship, evening worship, and even Wednesday night prayer meetings. As Story stated, the ministry began “full-fledged the very next day.”¹³² Members of this small rural church scrambled frenetically to find interpreters for the newcomers.¹³³ Pleasant View Baptist, under the pastoral leadership of Vola Brown, continued to seek ways to reach out to the Hispanics in their midst through interpretation for the next several months.¹³⁴ This rural church, in the span of a few short months, attempted to incorporate the Hispanics into

¹²⁹Annette Story, interview by author, Waynesburg, KY, October 10, 2012.

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Ibid.

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³Ibid.

¹³⁴Ibid.

Pleasant View Baptist Church's regular routine through English to Spanish interpretation. They organized a church-wide mission project to provide Hispanic households with items such as blankets, sheets, towels, and mattresses, among other household necessities.¹³⁵ English classes and a Spanish mission committee were also formulated.¹³⁶

In ensuing weeks, Pastor Vola Brown happened to overhear a conversation in Spanish taking place in the nearby Wal-Mart.¹³⁷ What was strange about this conversation was not that Spanish was being spoken, but the conversation's participants. Brown took note of an Anglo and a Hispanic family conversing in Spanish.¹³⁸ With interest peaked, Brown approached the Anglo and Hispanic family and met Ken Roberts. After some dialogue, Brown found out that Roberts and his wife Jealetta had served in Mexico for around four years as Independent Baptist missionaries in Cardenas, Tabasco, Campeche, and the Yucatan region.¹³⁹ He also learned that the missionary couple had moved back to the area and were seeking to find what God had for them next.¹⁴⁰

Brown and Roberts discovered together what God had in store. Soon after this initial meeting, Ken was working voluntarily with Hispanic migrant workers in the Waynesburg area in association with Pleasant View Baptist. Without a doubt, the couple possessed the necessary cultural and linguistic skills and, most importantly, the heart for the work. By January of 1996, 16 new believers had been baptized from amongst the

¹³⁵"Pleasant View Baptist Church Mission Project," Annette Story's personal collection, Waynesburg, KY, December 1995.

¹³⁶Joyce Sweeney Martin, "Rural Church Develops Language Ministry Rapidly," *Western Recorder*, January 9, 1996.

¹³⁷Ibid.

¹³⁸Story, interview by author.

¹³⁹Ibid.

¹⁴⁰Ibid.

Hispanics attending Pleasant View Baptist.¹⁴¹ After laboring for around six months voluntarily, support from local Baptist associations and the KBC was sought and approved.¹⁴² In fact, the KBC support was effective April 1, 1996 and was scheduled to last until 1999.¹⁴³ Around the same time Stan Stevenson, DOM of both Lincoln and Casey Baptist Associations, sought to garner resources and support for this ministry.¹⁴⁴ Soon after, the South Central Hispanic ministry was born. In 1997, Ken was appointed by NAMB as a church planter missionary, making him the second Baptist missionary to Hispanics within the state of Kentucky.¹⁴⁵ So began the partnership between the KBC, NAMB, and the South Central Region Hispanic Ministry. South Central did not officially incorporate with the state until May 23, 2001.¹⁴⁶ The original board of directors was made up of Mark Shelton of Burkesville, DOM of Lincoln County Baptist Association Stan Stevenson, Kenneth Dick of Monticello, and Wiley Faw, Vola Brown, and Gary King all of Waynesburg.¹⁴⁷

By 1998, Kentucky was receiving 25,000 migrants annually.¹⁴⁸ It was estimated that around 2,500 of those were staying each year.¹⁴⁹ By this time, South Central Region Hispanic Ministry was reaching out intentionally to Hispanic migrant

¹⁴¹Martin, "Rural Church Develops Language Ministry Rapidly."

¹⁴²Tony Hough, Correspondence with Vola Brown, Annette Story's personal collection, Waynesburg, KY, April 1, 1996.

¹⁴³Ibid.

¹⁴⁴Stan Stevenson, interview by author, Nancy, KY, December 18, 2012.

¹⁴⁵Story, interview by author.

¹⁴⁶"Articles of Incorporation of South Central Region Hispanic Ministries, INC.," Annette Story's personal collection, Waynesburg, KY, May 23, 2001.

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

¹⁴⁸Mackey, "Partners in Mission: Hispanic Ministry."

¹⁴⁹Ibid.

workers concentrated in Wayne and Clinton Counties in the cities of Monticello and Albany.¹⁵⁰ The First Baptist Churches of Monticello and Albany were both key players in this initial outreach. These churches, among others, helped to supplement the ministry of the South Central Region by providing meals, welcome bags, and transportation.¹⁵¹

The initial outreach efforts were not without challenges. Coy Webb, former pastor of First Baptist Monticello (1992-2007) and a member of the original Hispanic Council for the South Central Hispanic ministry, reported the transitory nature of migrant worker existence as being extremely exigent to the establishment of stable Hispanic ministries.¹⁵² Story echoed Webb's sentiment, stating that many Hispanic workers would often uproot rapidly when given the opportunity for better employment.¹⁵³ Webb also noted that both communication and trust barriers between Hispanic migrant workers and the local Baptist churches had to be overcome as well.¹⁵⁴ Chris Platt, former pastor of High Street Baptist Church in Somerset, mentioned that there was a lack of integration between Hispanic churches and other churches in local associations. Platt commented that "it [wa]s like they have their church and we have our church."¹⁵⁵ Platt admitted that this lack of amalgamation could probably be attributed to language and cultural barriers.¹⁵⁶ Story poignantly noted that many Hispanics were nominal Catholics. She cited that being Catholic in name only impeded the progress of missionary efforts among Hispanic migrant workers in her area of the state. She acknowledged that many would

¹⁵⁰Coy Webb, interview by author, LaGrange, KY, September 5, 2012.

¹⁵¹Ibid.

¹⁵²Ibid.

¹⁵³Story, interview by author.

¹⁵⁴Webb, interview by author.

¹⁵⁵Chris Platt, interview by author, LaGrange, KY, October 11, 2012.

¹⁵⁶Ibid.

receive Christ as Lord and Savior but having them follow through in baptism was much more difficult.¹⁵⁷ Story explained, moreover, that many Hispanics would tarry for years between their initial profession of faith in Christ alone and baptism.¹⁵⁸

Within this context, Roberts worked diligently to share the gospel with the burgeoning Hispanic population of the region. Tony Hough observed the following about Roberts: “He was passionate and full of zeal . . . [H]e had [a] love for Hispanics.”¹⁵⁹ Early on, there was “more work than there was Ken to go around.”¹⁶⁰ Due to a lack of resources, such as a pool of trained pastors from which to draw, the missionary feverishly worked to establish preaching points, all of which he shepherded himself. Roberts faithfully traveled from one place to the next and was actually traveling “around 600 miles a week conducting worship services in 8 different locations.”¹⁶¹ Roberts said that he preferred not to work in this manner being a believer in indigenous church planting principles.¹⁶² He stated, “In that particular time in Kentucky, if you wanted resources you had to dig for them.”¹⁶³ Roberts diligently “dug” into the Hispanic migrant community by visiting the farms and chicken processing plants that employed them.

Then pastor of First Baptist Monticello, Coy Webb, and state convention workers Grundy Janes and Tony Hough were concerned for Roberts well being especially

¹⁵⁷Story, interview by author.

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

¹⁵⁹Tony Hough, interview by author, LaGrange, KY, October 10, 2012.

¹⁶⁰Ibid.

¹⁶¹Ken Walker, “Mexican Pair Coming to Start Churches in State,” *Western Recorder*, January 14, 2003.

¹⁶²Roberts, interview by author.

¹⁶³Ibid.

in the early portion of this ministry. Roberts ostensibly felt obligated to attend to multiple ministry sites on a weekly basis, mainly because he was the lone minister among Hispanics in this region. Hough believed because of this sense of duty, Roberts was on the precipice of “burning himself out.”¹⁶⁴ It was at that point that Janes, Webb and Hough encouraged Roberts to contemplate a change his ministry praxis.¹⁶⁵ Soon thereafter, Roberts realized that he could not continue to shepherd all the new church plants alone. Around the same time, help arrived to alleviate Robert’s ministerial load.

One form of help came by way of growing pastors and lay people from within the nascent church plants. Other ministerial aid was sought from outside. For example, in 2003, two medical doctors from Mexico, Vianey and Angelica López, were called to help Roberts in this region of Kentucky.¹⁶⁶ The López family was brought in to focus on starting churches in Clinton, Wayne, and Pulaski Counties. The couple was supported in part by the KBC and member churches of the South Central Hispanic Region.¹⁶⁷ Even the chicken processing plant near Albany offered a large grant to help bring the López family to Kentucky, and a member of First Baptist of Monticello provided a rental home for their housing.¹⁶⁸

Though Hispanic work in the South Central Region has experienced many ministerial milestones, none is greater than the transition from a migrant ministry to a church planting ministry. Webb comments,

One of the great victories was moving from an outreach to migrant workers to establishing a church plant, as the population became more stable and Hispanics began making their residence in our area. The first year that we moved to a church

¹⁶⁴Hough, interview by author.

¹⁶⁵Ibid.

¹⁶⁶Walker, “Mexican Pair Coming to Start Churches in the State.”

¹⁶⁷Ibid.

¹⁶⁸Ibid.

plant, we saw God move with several decisions for Christ and baptisms. The second great milestone for the work was establishing a core of believers who provided a foundation for the work. The church plant today continues at First Baptist of Monticello with a strong Hispanic Pastor and attendance now running consistently from 70-80 in attendance.¹⁶⁹

Many of Kentucky's Hispanic ministries started as seasonal migrant ministries, evolved into year-round ministries, and then into church planting ministries. South Central's story has continued on this same trajectory.

Roberts continues to serve in the South Central Hispanic Ministry, which is currently made up of the Baptist Associations of Rockcastle County, Russell Creek, Casey County, Lincoln County, Pulaski County, Wayne County, and Freedom. Currently, several Hispanic works are located in this region. Luciano Chávez, a native of Peru, pastors three works: Iglesia Bautista Jesús Es Luz del Mundo in Albany, Iglesia Bautista Príncipe de Paz in Monticello, and Iglesia Bautista Faro de Salvación in Somerset.¹⁷⁰ La Iglesia Bautista Principe de Paz reported the highest worship attendance for 2011 among the Hispanic churches in this region with around 50 people in attendance each week.¹⁷¹ Rudi Montavo, a native of El Salvador, serves as a bi-vocational pastor of Iglesia Bautista Caminando con Jesús in Russell Springs.¹⁷² Luis López, from Vera Cruz, Mexico, serves as a volunteer pastor of Iglesia Bautista La Fe in Liberty and Iglesia Bautista La Historia de Jesús in Waynesburg.¹⁷³ Roberts has also pastored a work in Mt. Vernon, Iglesia Bautista Dios Vivo.¹⁷⁴ The missionary reports that the ministry to Hispanics in this region is being supported and carried on mainly by Hispanics.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁹Webb, interview by author.

¹⁷⁰Roberts, interview by author.

¹⁷¹"Hispanic Church Stats 2009-2011," 3.

¹⁷²Roberts, interview by author. According to the KBC's Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department's statistics, this church had the second largest attendance for Hispanic Baptist churches in this region with nearly 48 people in weekly worship services.

¹⁷³Ibid.

Conclusion

In 1821, First Baptist Church of San Antonio, Texas pioneered Southern Baptists' first outreach among Spanish-speaking Mexican Americans.¹⁷⁶ In 1861, the Spanish Bible class constituted as First (Mexican) Baptist Church.¹⁷⁷ Grijalva asserts that, in 1884, a Spanish language group was initiated in Florida and that Spanish Baptist works were started respectively in Arizona in 1944, California in 1948, and Colorado in 1955.¹⁷⁸ Kentucky's first Baptist Spanish language group would not be added until 1979. At the time that Grijalva compiled *Ethnic Baptist History*, he, along with others intimately involved with ethnic-language ministries in the United States, probably did not dream that Hispanics in the U.S. would grow as explosively as they did from the late eighties into the dawning of the twenty-first century. Kentucky was not left untouched by this exponential growth within this time period. In response to this growth, Kentucky Southern Baptists rallied in unique fashion. As a result, two lasting regional Hispanic ministries were formed—the Central and South Central Regions. Both regions continue to serve as catalytic forces for starting new Hispanic churches and assisting those already in existence. I now turn to two other Hispanic regions, the Bluegrass and South Western Regions.

¹⁷⁴Ibid.

¹⁷⁵Ibid.

¹⁷⁶Joshua Grijalva, *Ethnic Baptist History* (Miami: META, 1993), 82.

¹⁷⁷Ibid.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., 83-84.

CHAPTER 3

BLUEGRASS AND SOUTHWEST REGIONS

In 1959 the Southern Baptist Convention was held in Louisville, Kentucky.¹ *Western Recorder* editor, C. R. Daley, greeted the convention attendees saying, “To many the Bluegrass State is best known for bourbon whiskey and blooded horses, but to the thousands of visitors to Louisville this week, it ought to be emphasized that Kentucky is also a land of Baptists.”² Bluegrass Hispanic Region crosses through Lexington, “the horse capital of the world” and near the county in which bourbon whiskey received its name, Bourbon County. Baptist missions among Hispanics within this area has its own traceable history, although not as pronounced as whiskey and thoroughbreds, it is nonetheless significant. This chapter will document the histories of both the Bluegrass Hispanic Region and the Southwest Region, which is comprised of the Baptist associations of Christian County, Gasper River Region, and Little River.

Bluegrass Region

Bluegrass Hispanic Ministry Incorporated currently comprises the Baptist associations of Mercer, Nelson, Central, South District, Anderson, and Tates Creek.³ In 1998, Mercer and South District Baptist Association along with Chaplin Baptist church partnered with the NAMB and KBC to form the third Hispanic region in Kentucky

¹James Duane Bolin, *Kentucky Baptists 1925-2000: A Story of Cooperation* (Brentwood, TN: Southern Baptist Historical Society, 2000), 171.

²Ibid.

³Job Juarez, interview by author, Louisville, KY, September 13, 2011.

Baptist history.⁴ Carlos and Cristina De la Barra were called as its original missionaries. Initially, this regional ministry was officially incorporated in 1998 as Mercer, Nelson, Central, and South District Hispanic Ministries Incorporated and in April 2005 was renamed Bluegrass Hispanic Ministry Incorporated.⁵ Mark Baldauff, then pastor of Calvary Baptist in Harrodsburg, served as the first director of the corporation.⁶

Carlos de La Barra is Chilean by birth. In Chile, he was a successful computer programmer with a master's degree in business administration from *Universidad Catolica de Chile*.⁷ While still living in Chile he was won to Christ by International Mission Board missionaries Shannon and Loraine Long.⁸ Afterward, he sensed a calling to minister to Hispanics in the U.S. Since entering the U.S. in 1991, De la Barra has worked in Hispanic church planting. He started in Tigerville, South Carolina, where he helped to plant three new Hispanic missions.⁹ In 1992, he and his family moved to the Louisville, Kentucky area so that he could pursue a Master of Divinity at Southern Seminary. He soon began to attend the Hispanic Mission at Saint Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville. It was there that he was ordained as a Gospel minister. After a few years working near Huntingburg, Indiana, as a church planter, De la Barra was recruited to serve as Hispanic minister to migrant workers in the Nelson County, Kentucky, area. He

⁴Carlos De la Barra, "The Church Planting Strategy of the Kentucky Baptist Convention in the Hispanic Migrant Community in Kentucky: Analysis and Recommendations" (D.Min. project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005), 40.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Carlos De la Barra, interview by author, Louisville, KY, November 1, 2012.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Bill Mackey, "KBC's New Ethnic Associate," *Western Recorder*, April 10, 2007.

⁹De la Barra, interview by author.

continued to work both in Indiana and Kentucky and soon opted to dedicate his energies exclusively to Kentucky.¹⁰

In Nelson County, as was true throughout the state of Kentucky, tobacco farming was ubiquitous. This agricultural enterprise was doing well and had begun to recruit migrant workers mostly from Mexico. De la Barra was called in to reach these workers with the gospel. Vicki Stevens aptly provides his job description: “His job is to plant churches that are trying to minister to a growing segment of their population in areas such as Garrard and Mercer Counties.”¹¹

For nearly two years in 1993 and 1994, Chaplin Baptist Church had tried valiantly to reach out to the migrant seasonal workers that had come to their “backyard” in Nelson County to work in the booming tobacco industry.¹² The church formed a Hispanic ministry committee that was chaired by Wendy Chesser Meador. Meador also tailored English classes to the needs of the migrant workers.¹³ Meador crafted the classes in order to help the migrant workers adjust as quickly as possible to life in rural Kentucky, specifically working on a tobacco farm. In fact, that was the very first ministry offered in order to open the door of gospel ministry to these farm hands.¹⁴ Chaplin also had several deacons who were key players in this ministry. William “Tootie” Holt was a farmer affectionately known as *abuelo*, “grandfather,” by many of the former migrant workers because of his personality and the respect he showed the workers.¹⁵ Another deacon originally from Puerto Rico, Fernando Campoamor, helped

¹⁰Twyla Hernandez, interview by author, Campbellsville, KY, November 5, 2012.

¹¹Vicki Stevens, “Central Kentucky Churches Join Forces to Start Hispanic Ministry,” *Danville Advocate-Messenger*, used with permission by *Western Recorder*, June 30, 1998.

¹²Stan Lowery, interview by author, Bardstown, KY, October 24, 2012.

¹³Wendy Meador, interview by author, LaGrange, KY, November 2, 2012.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

fill the linguistic and cultural gap between the predominantly Anglo church and the Hispanic migrant workers. During this time, Campoamor was the only linguistic and cultural bridge between this rural church and the migrant workers. Campamor, not only transported these workers to Chaplin Baptist, but he eventually started a Bible study with them in Spanish.¹⁶ The ministry was fully backed by Chaplin's pastor, Jeff Fuller, and the church congregation. This rural church broke through local prejudice and cultural barriers simply by attempting to meet needs; they offered home-cooked meals, clothes, ESL classes, and even Bible studies.¹⁷

Although Chaplin Baptist had been very visionary about starting the work, they soon realized that they needed a church planter.¹⁸ As a result of this need, De la Barra was called to the area. Vicki Stevens makes mention of this phenomenon new to rural Kentucky:

In Nelson County, where migrant workers come from Mexico to work in tobacco eight months of the year, De la Barra helped start a Hispanic mission three years ago at Chaplin Baptist Church. The mission averaged 75-80 people every Sunday night during tobacco season and about 20 during the winter. 'Ninety percent of the people are from one town in Mexico,' he says. . . . The workers are picked up by van around 5PM each Sunday. . . . After Bible study or English class, a hot meal is served in the fellowship hall. . . . Then after the food is cleared away, a worship service is held. . . . The hardest part is finding churches willing to open their . . . In Garrard County, Hyattsville Baptist Church and Lancaster Baptist Church have committed to the Hispanic Ministry.¹⁹

De la Barra knew early on that this work would not immediately be a church but a seasonal ministry.²⁰ The two main contributing factors that informed this opinion were

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷De la Barra, interview by author.

¹⁸Tony Hough, interview by author, LaGrange, KY, October 10, 2012.

¹⁹Stevens, "Central Kentucky Churches Join Forces to Start Hispanic Ministry," 3.

²⁰De la Barra, interview by author.

the seasonal nature and the legal status of the workers. Men came in March, stayed for eight months during tobacco season, and would return in December for the winter. De la Barra stated that in spite of the fact that many of these men had wives and families in Mexico, they lived a rambunctious bachelor's life in the U.S. with excessive drinking on non-work nights.²¹ It was in this type of ambivalent spiritual environment that De la Barra entered armed with the gospel.

While the migrant ministry was in full swing under De la Barra's leadership, church vans driven by Chaplin members would bring male migrant workers to church where they would have ESL classes, a meal, and then a time of worship. Some of these men would come to worship in the clothes they had been given: t-shirts, tank tops, and shorts, sometimes even wearing shirts with beer advertisements or sexually suggestive content.²² On most occasions, Chaplin Baptist looked past what many would consider to be a church *faux pas* in North America and sought to minister in the love of Christ to these foreigners. Some members of Chaplin did struggle with how some of these "foreigners" viewed appropriate dress and behavior in the church environment, but the ministry continued. After having seen Chaplin minister to their needs time and time again, many migrant workers wondered why "their bosses and bosses' wives would cook them full meals and serve them on Sundays and basically treat them as if they were the bosses."²³ It was at that point that De la Barra could share with the migrant workers about Christ's love and that the people of Chaplin had that same love in their hearts.²⁴ In one worship service, a migrant worker stood and proclaimed, "We come here and you just accept us. Everybody wants something from you and you did not want anything.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

You just accepted us.”²⁵ The migrant worker was referring to the love and acceptance they had received from Chaplin Baptist. The social ministry served to “gain a hearing” and to win the trust of apprehensive Hispanic migrant workers. De la Barra asserted that they simply opened the doors of the church to the migrant workers so they could, in effect, “*perder el temor*” or “shed the fear” of entering an evangelical church.²⁶

In essence, the initial efforts to reach Hispanics in this area of the state were two pronged: social ministry and evangelism. De la Barra reported that he did home visitation twice during the week nearly every week of his ministry.²⁷ Most of the men lived on the premises of the farms where they worked, and many lived in deplorable conditions with some small homes or trailers housing 10 to 15 men.²⁸ The missionary/pastor did comment that the farmers that were from Chaplin Baptist provided markedly better housing for their workers.²⁹ Some farmers from the area that were not associated with Chaplin Baptist’s ministry resisted these home Bible studies at first.³⁰ De la Barra stated that he would have to arrive at the homes of these men after the work day had ended around 8pm or 9pm and, at times, would not leave until midnight.³¹ The sage missionary did mention that he was asked to leave on one occasion by a farmer who brandished a shotgun in his hand.³² Over time, the standard of living on the farms

²⁵Meador, interview by author.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Lowery, interview by author.

³¹De la Barra, interview by author.

³²Ibid.

improved. On many occasions people such as Holt and Campoamor would seek to persuade farmers to allow their workers to come to church on Sundays.³³

The Hispanic ministry at Chaplin Baptist began to shift along with the change in migrant population. Eventually, men began to bring their families after they realized that there were support systems such Chaplin Baptist Church that would care for their wives. De la Barra reported that men began to bring their wives about two years after the onset of his ministry in 1995.³⁴ Before that time, De la Barra quipped that the worship services were incredibly different. He stated that the church was filled with men and when they sang it sounded like “an army singing” because of a disproportionate ratio of men to women.³⁵ That phenomenon soon changed. After five years men, women, and children would return with regularity during tobacco season. At this time, many of these families decided to make Kentucky a more permanent dwelling. In three brief years this ministry changed from a seasonal migrant ministry to a year-round outreach. In due course, this ministry formed as a church, La Iglesia Bautista Getsemani of Nelson County.

Eventually, other churches in the Nelson Baptist Association “bought into” the ministry at Chaplin and began to support it.³⁶ This broader participation was not without struggle.³⁷ Some surrounding churches in the association did not immediately support this Hispanic ministry. Many churches saw the Hispanic migrant ministry as solely a ministry of Chaplin Baptist. Over time, that type of mentality was overcome by a majority of churches. The history of this Hispanic region bears this out. The Hispanic

³³Lowery, interview by author.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

ministry at Chaplin eventually bloomed into an associational ministry of Nelson County Baptist Association under the leadership of DOM Fred Halbrooks around 1997.³⁸ Many ultimately realized that this ministry was bigger than just than one church's ministry.³⁹

Around that same time Mercer, South District, and Nelson Baptist Associations began to meet to discuss the idea of forming a regional Hispanic ministry.⁴⁰ Chaplin's initial ministry to Hispanics cast the vision for what could be done on a larger scale. Even though this was the case, the aforementioned associations began to converse and it was at that point that Chaplin joined the conversations about starting a larger Hispanic ministry that would stretch across several Baptist associations.⁴¹ Nelson County Baptist Association did not support this ministry initially. Nelson's preliminary involvement with this regional ministry was through the participation of Chaplin Baptist. A little over two years after the formation of Central Region Hispanic Ministry, and around a year after the second, South Central Hispanic Ministry, Nelson/Mercer and Southern District Incorporated was born. This region was the first to officially incorporate in 1998 with a full board of trustees and president, but was the third regional Hispanic Baptist ministry in the history of Kentucky.⁴² Other Hispanic regions followed suit and formed official corporations because it provided organization and facilitated the funding of these ministries. In the same year, De la Barra was appointed to NAMB and was provided support "on a phasedown with the KBC part being; 1998: \$20,000; 1999: \$20,000; 2000: \$15,000; 2001: \$10,000; 2001: \$5,000."⁴³ Mercer Association and South

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Grundy Janes, interview by author, Louisville, KY, November 30, 2012.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Grundy Janes, "Summary of Activities January-March 1998," Multiethnic Missions and

District Association each promised to supply \$6,000.00 annually while Nelson Association/Chaplin Baptist Church pledged \$7,800.00 annually.⁴⁴

The tobacco industry began to fade not only in the counties found within the Bluegrass Hispanic Region but in the Bluegrass state in general. In part, the tobacco industry started to diminish during the first and second Clinton administrations.⁴⁵ The administration legislated the change from a guaranteed fixed rate for tobacco production to a more free market enterprise that favored larger farming operations.⁴⁶ In effect, the larger farms grew larger and more competitive, while the smaller farms became smaller and less competitive. Due to the fact that most farms in the region were relatively small, they changed their cash crops to such products as corn or cows. For this type of farming, the farms simply needed less manpower to maintain their new cash crops. In turn, less migrant workers were contracted, and the workers who had stayed in Kentucky began to look for work in larger economic markets such as Louisville, Lexington, Bowling Green, and near Cincinnati.⁴⁷ A concrete example of this migration to more urban areas in or around the state can be found in La Iglesia Bautista Getsemini. The majority of the migrant converts from Iglesia Bautista Getsemini moved to Louisville and would travel over an hour to worship in Nelson County on the weekends.⁴⁸ Ultimately, this church relocated to east Louisville, where they found a more permanent home housed within the

Ministry Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, 1998.

⁴⁴“Funding Recommendation,” Nelson Baptist Association Archives, Bardstown, KY, February 5, 1998.

⁴⁵“Governor Details Proposed Buyout Plan for Tobacco Farm Families,” http://www.e-archives.ky.gov/_govpatton/search/pressreleases/2000/tobbuy.htm (accessed January 7, 2012).

⁴⁶De la Barra, interview by author.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid.

facilities of Westport Road Baptist Church.⁴⁹ This church was not the only effort in this region to reach Hispanics in the nineties, but it was the most important and the most formative. For example, Argentine national Edgardo Mansilla worked for a brief stint in Mt. Washington in collaboration with First Baptist Mt. Washington and the KBC starting in 1999.⁵⁰

Although the Hispanic ministry that started in Chaplin is now housed in Louisville, Bluegrass Hispanic Ministry Incorporated is still functioning today in its traditional geographical territory, which stretches south along the I-64 corridor. It spans from the east side of Louisville to Lexington and has even extended down I-75 South through Richmond to Corbin.⁵¹ Today, the Bluegrass Hispanic Ministry Incorporated strengthens existing works while pursuing a church-planting and church strengthening focus. The Bluegrass Hispanic Region has been under the capable leadership of Regional Strategist Job Juárez since 2007.

Juárez provides a very good picture of how the Bluegrass Hispanic Region has changed over the years. The regional ethnic strategist states that “institutional reproduction has been the dominant paradigm of missions in his region.”⁵² Although this model has been a prevailing pressure upon his ministry, he adamantly opposes this ideology and states that it is not his preferred mode of operation.⁵³ Juárez believes that there is considerable pressure to reproduce “*lo que ya esta establecida*” or “what is already established.”⁵⁴ For example, he believes that supporting churches, mostly Anglo,

⁵⁰Tony Hough, Letter Written to Edgardo Mansilla, Multethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, August 20, 1999.

⁵¹Juárez, interview by author.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid.

view as ideal the reproduction of “mini-First Baptists” or traditional churches among the Hispanic churches being planted in Kentucky.⁵⁵ In other words, Juárez perceives that many established churches want the new Hispanic churches to be mirror images of themselves.

The face of missions among Hispanics has changed in the Bluegrass Region. Juárez states that they have to be more creative because of the situation in which they find themselves. He states, “We have experienced a radical change because there are less resources available . . . because of the economic crisis.”⁵⁶ This economic change has served to shape the theology of missions of this region. For example, economic stagnation has led Juárez and some of the other pastors in the region to reflect biblically and adopt a model of church resembles more closely the primitive church of the first century. Juárez avers,

We want to go to the model of the primitive church. . . . We have to do more with less. . . . Focus more on community. . . . We want to get away from institutionalism and organizationalism. . . . We want to focus on being the body of Christ, a body of believers no matter if they are only a church of 25 to 30 people . . . to reinforce the idea of the local church, not programs.⁵⁷

Juárez’s ecclesiology is partly revealed in these statements. This ecclesiology has no doubt been transmitted to the pastors and church bodies he serves in his region.

Apostolic ministry has been the most emphasized facet of missions in the Bluegrass Hispanic Region, according to Juárez.⁵⁸ The regional ethnic strategist carefully delineates apostolic ministry in terms of a missionary who is sent to preach the gospel in places and to people who have not heard the biblical message of Christ.⁵⁹ The

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

missionary vision that Juárez holds for the region under his charge is twofold. First, he wants to strengthen the idea among existing Hispanic churches and missions that they are part of the body of Christ.⁶⁰ With this same idea, the missionary desires for the nascent churches to distance themselves from a numbers-driven missiology and ecclesiology.⁶¹ Juárez states that he does not want to plant churches that are like mushrooms, ones that sprout up hastily and are gone as quickly as they appear.⁶² Second, Juárez desires for churches to experience internal growth. In other words, the growth he desires to see is qualitative and not merely quantitative.

Juárez recognizes how much missions to Hispanics in the Bluegrass Region has changed. He states that the “ministry in Kentucky has matured,” hinting at the shift from migrant ministry to established missions to church planting, that was also mentioned by De la Barra.⁶³ When asked about which aspect of missions had been emphasized more in his region of Kentucky, the examples of sending, going, proclaiming, healing, witnessing, teaching and making disciples were mentioned to him. Juárez stated confidently that none of the above had been emphasized intentionally in his region. The savvy missionary attests, “We have emphasized the Christian experience as the body of Christ and the ‘one-another’ statements found within the New Testament.”⁶⁴

Several Hispanic works pepper the region with either De la Barra or Juárez to thank for initial efforts that led to their inception. First Baptist Church of Richmond houses a new Hispanic ministry that is currently pastored by Julio Girón.⁶⁵ Iglesia

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵“Hispanic Ministry,” First Baptist Richmond, <http://www.firstbaptistnet.com> (accessed

Bautista El Buen Pastor in Danville, Iglesia Bautista Amigo Fiel in Lebanon, and Iglesia Bautista Emanuel in Harrodsburg are led by Cuban native Ernesto Font. Cuban national, Eduardo Cutiño, leads La Misión Hispana de Parkland and La Iglesia Bautista Beechland, both in Louisville. Cutiño also helped start a Hispanic ministry at Bardstown Baptist Church in September of 2010.⁶⁶ Pete Rivera pastors this region's longest standing church, Iglesia Bautista Getsemaní. Additional works have been started in such places as Junction City, Springfield, Lancaster, and Barbourville. The original regional missionary for this area, De la Barra, now serves full-time with the KBC under the title Director of the Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department.

More than a few strengths are apparent as I reflect upon the ministry of Bluegrass Hispanic Region. First, Chaplin Baptist's decision to minister *among* Hispanic migrant workers instead of *to* them should not be underestimated. This distinction was evident in the love that characterized Chaplin's outreach efforts to Hispanic migrant workers. By identifying with, caring for and ministering among the migrant workers, Chaplin essentially gained a hearing for the gospel message. Second, continuity in leadership is definite strength of Bluegrass Hispanic Region. De la Barra served as the first pastor to migrant workers as this ministry was getting started. He then took on the larger role of regional missionary. When De La Barra moved on to a state level role with the KBC, Job Juárez, his ministerial disciple, seamlessly stepped into the void he left as regional missionary. This continuity has lent itself to a sustainable and growing ministry in the Bluegrass Region. As far as challenges, previously in this dissertation Juárez did an excellent job of delineating the obstacles that beset the ministry of Bluegrass Hispanic Region. Further elaboration would just belabor the points made by Juárez.

November 12, 2012).

⁶⁶“Hispanic Ministry,” Bardstown Baptist Church, http://www.bardstown_baptistchurch.org (accessed 12 November 12, 2012).

In the Lexington area, Elkhorn Baptist Association originally became a member of Bluegrass Hispanic Incorporated in 2003, but eventually opted to leave.⁶⁷ Within the Lexington area are several Hispanic ministries of interest. One such is the ministry of Juan C' De Baca, a third-generation Mexican American.⁶⁸ This ministry started in the early nineties at Northview Baptist Church in Lexington and then, toward the end of the same decade, merged with the struggling Anglo congregation at First Baptist Lexington.⁶⁹ Within a couple of years, most of the Anglo members departed, and the church was left a majority Hispanic membership.⁷⁰ The average worship attendance for this church housed at historic First Baptist Lexington held at around 35 as of 2011.⁷¹ The membership of this church within Elkhorn Baptist Association is purported to be under review because of non-Baptistic doctrines concerning issues such as the virgin birth of Christ, heaven, and hell that have been espoused by C' De Baca both in writing and via radio.⁷²

By 1997, an ecumenical ministry named Amigos was going strong in the outlying areas of this association.⁷³ Clark, Bourbon, Jessamine, and Woodford Counties each participated in this ministry to Hispanic migrant workers. Micki Davis Robison

⁶⁷Grundy Janes, "Outline of Hispanic Work in Kentucky: August 1997 to August 2003," Multiethnic Missions and Ministry Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, 2003.

⁶⁸Van Camp, "Elkhorn Baptist Association Summary of Ethnic Work July 2011," Ray Van Camp's Archives, Lexington, Kentucky, July 2011.

⁶⁹Ken Walker, "Anglo Church Crosses Race Barrier to Hire Hispanic Pastor," *Western Recorder*, January 27, 1998.

⁷⁰Van Camp, "Elkhorn Baptist Association Summary of Ethnic Work July 2011."

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid. Van Camp's summary of ethnic works did not specify how these doctrines deviated from Baptist views, only that they deviated enough to warrant an investigation by the local Baptist association.

⁷³Micki Davis Robison, "Strategist/Catalytic Monthly Report—September 1997," Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, September 1997.

played a pivotal role early on in this ministry.⁷⁴ Generally, these ministries lasted from spring to fall, coinciding with the Kentucky migrant work season. The Amigos ministry in Paris (Bourbon County) provides an example of how these ministries appeared in this region. The ministry in Paris was an ecumenical effort from the onset that included churches from the Elkhorn Baptist Association.⁷⁵ By and large the scope of their ministry approach was holistic. They worked to provide food, English classes, Spanish-language worship, translation, interpreters, and counseling to Hispanic migrant workers.⁷⁶ This effort has now converted into a Hispanic Baptist church that is housed at First Baptist of Winchester.⁷⁷

In 1998, Pedro Sayago became the Hispanic missionary for the Elkhorn Baptist Association.⁷⁸ Ten years before taking this position, Sayago started a Hispanic congregation that is now part of First Baptist Lexington.⁷⁹ Sayago also pastored the Hispanic mission at Saint Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville in the early nineties.⁸⁰ Sayago's official ministry with Elkhorn Baptist Association was to be a year-round catalytic presence among Hispanics within the associational geographical territory, a shift from seasonal-migrant ministry. In 1999, both Pedro and his wife Norma were appointed as NAMB missionaries.⁸¹ This missionary's ministry was key in initiating and sustaining

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Bill Mackey, "Hispanic Ministry," *Western Recorder*, October 21, 1998.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Janes, "Outline of Hispanic Work in Kentucky."

⁷⁹Micki Davis Robison, "Hispanic Catalytic Missionary!!!" Mpack, Missions and Ministry Newsletter of Elkhorn Baptist Association, Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, August 8, 1998.

⁸⁰De la Barra, interview by author.

⁸¹William C. Graham, NAMB Letter to Pedro and Norma Sayago, Multiethnic Missions and

several Hispanic ministries in this association's realm of influence. Sayago left this post in February of 2001 and now pastors at Beechmont Presbyterian Church in Louisville.⁸² Sayago was replaced by Ray Van Camp in May 2001.⁸³

As of 2012, other notable leaders ministering among Hispanics within this area are Clemente and Twyla Hernández. This couple met at and served early in the ministry among Hispanics in the Chaplin area. In fact, Clemente was baptized, ordained and married by De la Barra.⁸⁴ Twyla currently serves as Assistant Professor of Christian Missions at Campbellsville University, a position she has held since 2011.⁸⁵ Moreover, she has led the Hispanic Baptist Bible Institute as Executive Director since its inception in 2005.⁸⁶ Clemente leads a Hispanic church housed in Gano Baptist Church in Georgetown, Iglesia Bautista Ebenezer, and is also ministering in the Campbellsville area.⁸⁷ Moreover, Clemente serves as chaplain to Hispanic workers at the Keeneland racetrack.⁸⁸ Consolidated Baptist church also supports a Hispanic ministry pastored by Vincent Rivera where there are Hispanic ministries also in Nicholasville and Versailles.⁸⁹

Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, March 11, 1999.

⁸²Tony Hough, Email Correspondence, Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, February 16, 2001.

⁸³“Welcome Ray Van Camp, Director of Church Development,” Mpack, Missions and Ministry Newsletter of Elkhorn Baptist Association, Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, May 21-27, 2001.

⁸⁴De la Barra, interview by author.

⁸⁵“Dr. Twyla Hernández,” Campbellsville University, <http://www.campbellsville.edu/twylahernandez> (accessed 1 November 2012).

⁸⁶“Instituto Bautista Hispano Capacita a Sus Líderes,” *Hoy en las Américas*, November 22, 2007.

⁸⁷Clemente Hernández, interview by author, Campbellsville, KY, November 5, 2012.

⁸⁸Van Camp, “Elkhorn Baptist Association Summary of Ethnic Work July 2011.”

⁸⁹Ibid.

The Hispanic ministry in Nicholasville, Ministerio Esperanza, is currently supported by five churches in Nicholasville: Nicholasville Baptist, Edgewood Church, Thoroughbred Church, East Hickman Baptist and Brookside Baptist.⁹⁰

In 2006 Elkhorn Baptist Association and the KBC attempted to plant a high-impact church named Iglesia Bautista de Cardinal Valley in Lexington; Claudio Toro led this ministry.⁹¹ A high-impact church is “defined by the KBC as congregations that have the resources and vision to reach a five-year attendance goal of 250”.⁹² High-impact churches received “special support and additional funds through the KBC as they seek to reach the unchurched or dechurched.”⁹³ It has been reported that this church plant received \$100,000 dollars through the KBC starting in July 2006 and an additional \$150,000 from Immanuel Baptist church in Lexington, all of which was spent.⁹⁴ The area in which this new church plant was to take root was fertile ground for this type of Hispanic church. Dannah Prather aptly reported there was “an estimated population of 10,000 Hispanics that live in this area.”⁹⁵ The Hispanic church at Cardinal Valley, for whatever reason, failed to reach these lofty expectations. In fact, in 2009, Iglesia Bautista de Cardinal Valley reported an average worship attendance of 55.⁹⁶ As of 2012, this

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Dannah Prather, “Hispanics in Kentucky: State Offering Helps Meet Ministry Needs,” *Western Recorder*, September 12, 2006.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Van Camp, “Elkhorn Baptist Association Summary of Ethnic Work July 2011.”

⁹⁵Prather, “Hispanics in Kentucky.”

⁹⁶“Hispanic Church Stats for 2009-2011,” Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, 2012.

ministry perseveres under the leadership of Toro and is housed at South Elkhorn Baptist in Lexington.⁹⁷

Southwest Region

The fourth Hispanic region to form in the history of Southern Baptist missions among Hispanics in Kentucky was the Southwestern Region. This region is located in the southwestern region of Kentucky and is currently comprised of the Baptist associations of Little River, Christian County, and Gasper River.⁹⁸ The Southwestern Hispanic Region has the distinction of having the first constituted Hispanic church in Kentucky, Iglesia Bautista La Roca Eterna in Oak Grove, which organized in 1996.⁹⁹ Jorge García began to minister regionally in the Summer of 1998 when Christian County and Little River Baptist Associations pooled resources in order to employ García as their migrant ministry coordinator.¹⁰⁰ In 2002, Jorge and his wife, Milagos, were appointed by NAMB as missionaries in Hopkinsville, Kentucky.¹⁰¹

Hispanic ministry in this area began as a ministry focused on Hispanic migrant workers and Hispanic military personnel.¹⁰² García and then DOM of Christian County Baptist Association, Larry Baker, provided pivotal leadership for both of these ministries among Hispanics. Many consider García one of the pioneer ministers among Hispanics

⁹⁷Van Camp, "Elkhorn Baptist Association Summary of Ethnic Work July 2011."

⁹⁸"Map of Regional Hispanic Regions," Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, 2010.

⁹⁹"Hispanic New Church Starts," Kentucky Baptist Convention and Christian County Baptist Association Staff, <http://www.christiancountybaptist.org/id3.html> (accessed 1 November 2012).

¹⁰⁰Larry Baker, Letter to Tony Hough, Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, October 9, 1997.

¹⁰¹Larry Baker, Letter to Jorge Garcia, Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, February 22, 2012.

¹⁰²Larry Baker, interview by author, LaGrange, KY, November 13, 2012.

in Kentucky, and rightfully so.¹⁰³ Even though this is the case, García is quick to recognize the ministerial contributions made by others in this vital ministry. García specifically lauded the ministry of Stan Smith as being pivotal in this part of Kentucky.

Smith began ministering to Hispanic migrant workers in this area after retiring from a career as a helicopter and airplane pilot with U.S. Border Control on the U.S.-Mexico border.¹⁰⁴ Smith learned Spanish as part of the job. He quipped, “I spent 30 years trying to catch and round them up and I am still doing that, just now with a different purpose.”¹⁰⁵ When Smith moved from Tennessee to Kentucky he was a fairly new believer in Christ. In Kentucky he and his wife began to attend Bainbridge Baptist Church in Cerulean.¹⁰⁶ It was here that Pastor Hank Casey encouraged him to use his unique linguistic ability and past experience to reach Hispanic migrant workers for Christ.¹⁰⁷ Smith gives Casey the credit for the start of this ministry, because at that point the migrant workers were not very visible in regular community life. The ministry began with just a few migrant workers during the migrant season of 1993.¹⁰⁸ It did, however, continue to grow steadily. By 1994, García took over this ministry while Smith and his wife dedicated the next 10 years to Hispanic migrant ministry farther north in Princeton, Kentucky, within the ministerial territory of Caldwell-Lyon Baptist Association.¹⁰⁹

From 1992-2004, migrant ministry characterized much of this area’s Hispanic ministry. Christian County Baptist Association used many of the same tools and methods

¹⁰³Jesús Pacheco, interview by author, LaGrange, KY, September 27, 2012.

¹⁰⁴Stan Smith, interview by author, LaGrange, KY, October 29, 2012.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

that were used statewide to reach Hispanics during this era. Baker notes, “ESL, sundry packets, meals, movies, preaching, legal, and medical assistance, friendships, Bible distribution, music, personal witnessing” as being central to initial Hispanic ministry.¹¹⁰ This association was very active in cross-cultural missions and ministry. Baker reported as early as September 1993 that a Korean ministry, a Spanish ministry, and a migrant ministry had been formed.¹¹¹ Fort Campbell Military Base in Hopkinsville provided ample opportunity for ministry among Hispanics in military service. Baker reported that

the Hispanics have been conducting Sunday School and a Friday night worship service. Oak Grove, First is sponsoring this group. They have a pastor, Mike Vidal; an associate pastor, George Garcia; and a youth minister. They are averaging 23 in Sunday School and Worship. When our building is available, they will conduct weekly evangelistic meetings in Spanish at the Multi-Ministry Building. At present, their offerings go to Oak Grove, First and most ministry items are provided by the church. The Association has provided hymnbooks, Sunday School literature and VBS literature.¹¹²

Within this same letter Baker reported on the migrant ministry:

We have housed the South Christian Migrant Ministry at Pembroke Baptist Church. We are also working with the North Christian Migrants in Cadiz. There has been a weekly average participation of forty-seven migrants. Six have made professions of faith. Each Sunday we do English as Second Language (ESL) classes, a meal, and a Bible Study. We have provided care packets, Kid packets, clothing, counseling in Spanish and medical help. Next summer and fall this ministry will be housed in the multi-ministry center at Oak Grove.¹¹³

This association made a significant investment to ensure that the gospel was preached and heard in the heart language of major people groups found in this area. As indicated previously, a multi-ministry site was being developed at First Baptist Oak Grove so that these gatherings could worship uninhibited in their own respective languages. Baker

¹¹⁰Baker, interview by author.

¹¹¹Larry Baker, Letter to Tony Hough, Multiethnic Missions and Ministry Department Archives, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, September 20, 1993.

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³Ibid.

reported on April 25, 1994, that they “had a ground breaking ceremony at Oak Grove” (First Baptist Church Oak Grove) and that both the Korean and Hispanic congregations were present and sang a hymn, each in their own language.¹¹⁴ Wesley Pitts, then DOM of Cumberland Baptist Association in Tennessee, J. Bill Jones of the KBC, and eleven churches from Christian County Baptist Association were present at this ceremony.¹¹⁵ On October 4, 1994, Baker reported, “Yesterday the Hispanics celebrated their First Anniversary. They are nearly ready to organize into a church (and could if the mother church would let go).”¹¹⁶ The “Hispanic Wing” of the Multi-Ministry Building was completed by June 12, 1995.¹¹⁷ By August of the same year, migrant workers were being bused to the Oak Grove facility, and a total of fourteen professions of faith were reported during that month.¹¹⁸ From January to May of 1996, the Hispanic ministry worship attendance was hovering around thirty participants.¹¹⁹

This church constituted officially in 1996 as Iglesia Bautista Bet-El and later changed its name to Iglesia Bautista La Roca Eterna.¹²⁰ A year later, García’s ministry continued to grow with the increasing migrant influx. At this point, Christian County and Little River Baptist Associations pooled their resources to support García as their

¹¹⁴Larry Baker, Letter to Tony Hough, Multiethnic Missions and Ministry Department Archives, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, April 25, 1994.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Larry Baker, Letter to Tony Hough, Multiethnic Missions and Ministry Department Archives, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, October 4, 1994.

¹¹⁷Larry Baker, Letter to Tony Hough, Multiethnic Missions and Ministry Department Archives, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, June 12, 1995.

¹¹⁸Larry Baker, Letter to Tony Hough, Multiethnic Missions and Ministry Department Archives, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, August 28, 1995.

¹¹⁹Larry Baker, “Hispanic Mission Report: January 1996-May 1996,” Multiethnic Missions and Ministry Department Archives, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, May 1996.

¹²⁰Jorge García, interview by author, Oak Grove, KY, October 27, 2012.

Hispanic Ministry Coordinator. The missionary's primary duties were to oversee migrant ministry in both counties, continue as pastor of Bet-El, and serve as the Hispanic Center's principal coordinator.¹²¹ His secondary duties were too numerous to mention and beyond the scope of this dissertation. Suffice it to say that García did his best to meet the expectations set by both associations. I would posit that Garcia's ministerial work load was far beyond the capabilities of one man's most targeted efforts.¹²²

Iglesia Bautista La Roca Eterna is unique in the history Southern Baptist missions among Hispanics in Kentucky for several reasons. First, it was the first Hispanic Baptist church to constitute officially. Second, this church is a majority Puerto Rican church, making it the only Hispanic Baptist church in Kentucky comprised mostly of those of Puerto Rican descent.¹²³ Third, even though migrant workers were bused to this church during peak migrant times early on, this church is mainly a ministry geared toward military families. García is perfectly suited for this church milieu since he himself retired from the military and is Puerto Rican.

¹²¹"Job Description: Hispanic Ministry Coordinator, Christian County and Little River Baptist Association," Multiethnic Missions and Ministry Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY.

¹²²García's responsibilities for the Migrant Ministry were: (1) to visit all migrant camps or work areas in both associations; (2) coordinate English as a Second Language teachers and classes; (3) provide interpretation for farmers and in medical emergencies; (4) coordinate banquets and other special events; (5) conduct evangelistic events; (6) conduct Bible studies; (7) coordinate medical help to migrants; and (8) coordinate other activities as needed. García's responsibilities as Pastor of Primera Iglesia Bet-El were to (1) lead worship; (2) disciple the members; (3) equip the members to serve; (4) minister to the physical needs of our members and community; (5) testify to the Hispanic community about our Lord Jesus; (6) have within ten years a church meeting facility built and paid for by the congregation; (7) support the Migrant Ministry of our Association; and (8) begin other Hispanic works in Hopkinsville and Clarksville, TN. García's responsibilities for the Hispanic Center's Coordination were to (1) build bridges between the Hispanic community and the Baptist Church; (2) minister to the physical needs of the Hispanic Community; (3) serve as liaison between the Hispanics and the Community agencies; (4) give spiritual, family, marriage, and financial counseling to the Hispanics; (5) channel the church resources to help the Hispanic community; (6) map the Hispanic Community by nationality, place of living, employment, church affiliation, family composition, needs, etc.; (7) start new Hispanic churches in the area; (8) find and mentor new Hispanic leaders to serve the community; and (9) empower the Christian County Baptist Association and the Little River Baptist Association to focus on local mission work toward the Hispanic community.

¹²³García, interview by author.

Fourth, García's vision for this church makes it unique. He sees a tremendously distinctive ministry at Roca Eterna. The seasoned missionary-pastor comments, "In this church there is constant turnover with the military members in the congregation being that they are constantly assigned to new parts of the country or world."¹²⁴ García knows that this type of ministry comprised of a highly transient membership requires much patience, but he also sees a great missionary opportunity in this situation. He proudly stated, "I prepare teachers, preachers and missionaries to go out into all over the world, with the Gospel message *through* military service."¹²⁵ Most of those whom García sends out through this ministerial revolving door are bilingual, bicultural Christians who have been discipled and are indeed uniquely equipped by their very nature to reach people for Christ. Much like other longstanding Hispanic works in Kentucky, if La Roca Eterna could gather all the people to whom they had ministered over the years, the church easily would be between 200-300 people strong.¹²⁶ Fifth, this church is distinctive among Hispanic Southern Baptist churches, in that they have bought six and a half acres and are building their own building, which is slated to be finished in the Spring of 2013.¹²⁷ The project has been ongoing since 2007.¹²⁸ If completed on time, this building will be the second in Kentucky Southern Baptist history built specifically for Hispanics, with the first being Iglesia Bautista Nueva Vida in Bowling Green, built in 2006. La Roca Eterna's building, however, will be the first built with funds coming distinctly from a Hispanic Baptist church. García believes that this building will provide

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷Ibid.

¹²⁸"Hispanic Ministry," Christian County Baptist Association Archives, Hopkinsville, KY, 2007.

incredible freedom and ministry opportunity for La Roca Eterna. Time will determine if the building will be a blessing or a curse for this ministry. Several Hispanic ministries in Kentucky have suffered underneath the weight of maintaining ministry facilities.

Planning is already in place to plant an entirely new church that will share these new facilities with the existing church. The new plant will be geared to reach second-generation Hispanics, and Jorge García, Jr., will lead the charge.¹²⁹

Hispanic ministry in Kentucky could be characterized in one respect as a highly transient ministry mainly due to the economic circumstances of those who are the focus of Hispanic outreach. García's ministry among both migrant workers and military personnel could be categorized as one of the most fluctuating ministry contexts. Within this context, García perseveres. He cites two specific challenges found within his ministry: leadership development and the legal status of the congregants.¹³⁰ From his perspective, these two go hand-in-hand. García works diligently to develop leaders by training and equipping them.¹³¹ Many have been mentored by him and have attended a Hispanic Baptist Bible institute in Tennessee.¹³² Unfortunately, García cannot place or seek financial backing for these biblically qualified ministers to work as pastors of churches if their legal status is in flux. This dilemma is all too familiar to Hispanic ministry, not only in Kentucky but across the nation. The quandary is that of a leadership vacuum, resulting in growing churches and not enough leaders to guide them. As a result, García has to serve several churches at once. Such a feat is not easily accomplished, especially when complicated by the difficulty of the task and the distance that often lies between separate ministries.

¹²⁹García, interview by author.

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Ibid.

¹³²Ibid.

Within this region there are several Hispanic Baptist churches. The centerpiece and genesis of the entire regional ministry, La Iglesia Bautista La Roca Eterna, has been discussed previously. The last annual report filed by this church in 2009 showed a total membership of 85, with worship attendance holding at 55, with 10 baptisms for the year.¹³³ A 2012 NAMB report filed by García mentioned that this church was experiencing a revival of sorts, with souls being reached for the Kingdom and lives being rededicated to His service.¹³⁴

La Iglesia Bautista el Buen Pastor, was started in part by Stan Smith on June 30, 2002 and was originally housed at First Baptist Hopkinsville.¹³⁵ This church reaches out mostly to migrant workers. At one point, it was pastored by Panamanian Jorge Parris.¹³⁶ He was followed for a brief time by García's son, Jorge, Jr. Since April 15, 2012, this mission has been relocated to Sinking Fork Baptist Church in Hopkinsville, KY and is currently pastored by García's son-in-law, Luis Javier Monjaras.¹³⁷ Monjaras was first contacted in Tuxpan, Mexico, where Little River Baptist Association, led by DOM Michael Rust, had visited on a mission trip.¹³⁸ Part of the team shared the gospel with him there. Monjaras is now "returning the favor" and is on mission sharing the gospel among Hispanics in Kentucky. Stan Smith notes that some of the original members from Bainbridge Grove Baptist Church still attend El Buen Pastor. Smith indicated that the church averages between twenty and thirty in attendance during the

¹³³"Hispanic Church Stats 2009-2011."

¹³⁴Jorge García, "Report for North American Mission Board, SBC," Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, October 25, 2012.

¹³⁵Smith, interview by author.

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷Ibid.

¹³⁸Michael Rust, interview by author, Cadiz, KY, November 14, 2012.

migrant season with forty-three being the largest worship attendance to date; the church dwindles to a few people from January to March.¹³⁹ La Iglesia Bautista Luz y Vida in Morgantown is a ministry associated with Gasper River Baptist Association. This church officially constituted in 2011.¹⁴⁰ García continues to minister to migrant workers in Cadiz with the Little River Baptist Association and Christian County Baptist Association.¹⁴¹ Within the Little River Baptist Association territory alone there are more than ten different farms where García ministers within the migrant camps.¹⁴² García's ministerial influence has also extended beyond Christian County, Little River, and Gasper River Baptist Associations into places such as Russellville and even into Bowling Green.¹⁴³ He is a respected missionary-pastor among Hispanic Baptists in Kentucky.

This survey of Southwestern Hispanic Region's history brings to light several obvious strengths of this regional ministry. First, García has served as the regional missionary from its inception to date. The missionary is the expert of his field of ministry. García has established an incredible rapport with the Hispanic community in his area of influence and has left an indelible mark in this region and the state of Kentucky. Second, the ministry of Southwestern Hispanic Region is incredibly balanced. In this area, migrant ministry is still a growing and viable avenue of ministry. García balances his time between migrant ministry, ministry at an established Hispanic church and church planting. In addition, García directs other outreach efforts in multiple counties among other ministry sites and has plans to start a church geared towards

¹³⁹Ibid.

¹⁴⁰García, interview by author.

¹⁴¹"Migrant Ministry," Little River Baptist Association, <http://www.littleriverbaptistassociation.com> (accessed 10 November 2012).

¹⁴²Rust, interview by author.

¹⁴³García, interview by author.

ministering to second generation Hispanics. This type of balance requires incredible energy, flexibility and adaptability.

A few shortcomings can be pointed out about the ministry of Southwestern Hispanic Region. First, when the ministry started, considerable resources were poured into constructing a multi-ethnic ministry site on the property of First Baptist Oak Grove. I do not question the intent or the motivation behind these actions. My doubts concerning these dealings revolve around the issues of long-term sustainability and strategy. Second, García is an exemplary missionary that has an incredible work load placed on his ministerial shoulders. Like many missionaries, he has multiple competing ministerial responsibilities and is limited by what one person can realistically accomplish. Admittedly, this limitation is not entirely his fault. Garcia works with several Baptist associations in his area. Each association independently functions as his de facto supervisor in that they financially support his ministry. Each association has its own set of expectations for Garcia. It may be beneficial for these associations to examine the possibility of joining together in supporting Garcia, much like what other Hispanic regional ministries have done in other areas of the state. The creation of a conglomerate of associations and their respective resources has the potential to reduce the work load of Garcia and provide continuity across the areas where he serves. If Garcia's strengths are his energy, flexibility and adaptability, then a weakness would be ministerial focus. The missionary is over extended and would benefit from assistance from other trained ministers. I would posit that his desire to minister among such a diverse group of found within the Hispanic community is directly fueled by his burden to spread the gospel among as many people as possible. Even so, further investment in the area of leadership development is an essential step in the maturation process of this regional ministry.

Conclusion

In the beginning of this chapter, the history and formation of the Bluegrass Hispanic Region was explored. The region aptly takes its name from the Bluegrass Region of the state of Kentucky. The second part of this chapter dealt with the Southwestern Hispanic Region. Traveling southwest through Rosine into the small town of Cadiz, visitors are welcomed with a sign that reads, “Welcome to Cadiz, Gateway to the Land Between the Lakes.” Moreover, Cadiz is the gateway to long term Hispanic Baptist ministry in this part of Kentucky. Examining the histories of these two Hispanic regions, many similarities can be drawn that surpass the common names shared between musical genres and grasses. These ministries were both birthed from a vision to reach the Hispanic nations in their midst. This burden to reach these nations at their veritable doorsteps, in turn, birthed a sustainable Hispanic ministry in both regions that continues to expand and grow the Kingdom of God among its target population.

CHAPTER 4

SOUTH AND WEST REGIONS

Green River is the longest river in Kentucky, stretching an impressive 370 miles from its headwaters in Lincoln County to its mouth in Henderson.¹ Portions of the Green River flow underground, forming the longest surveyed cave system in the world, Mammoth Cave.² Within this same geographical region, Hispanic ministry has also stretched over the past two decades, forming what is now known as Southern Kentucky Hispanic Ministry. Although some Baptist may have felt that ministry to Hispanics took shape in an almost subterranean fashion, the historical account of this regional ministry tells a different story. The ministerial fields were prepared and ripe for harvest in plain sight. This chapter will close with a brief examination of the last region, the West Hispanic Region.

South Region

In the rural city of Glasgow lies a pasture that has been fashioned into a soccer field. One can find anywhere from ten to forty Hispanics from diverse Latin American backgrounds playing soccer there on any given day of the week. This field is just one place among many in the Southern Kentucky Hispanic Region where Heriberto Torres makes his ministry contacts.³ Torres has served in this region since June of 2007. The

¹A sign at Mammoth Cave National Park provided this information.

²Ibid.

³I have visited and played soccer on this field several times over the past two years.

Hispanic region he serves, however, was officially formed in 2002. Before Torres' ministry can be fully understood, some historical antecedents must be explored.

Migrant ministry to Hispanic migrants is the “gateway ministry” that led to sustainable Hispanic ministry in this area. This situation is not exclusive to this area. The pattern was repeated throughout Kentucky Baptist history of missions among Hispanics. In 1998, Calvary Baptist Church in Glasgow was enjoying an annual church picnic at a park when several Hispanic men approached.⁴ From there, church members Marvin and Sandy Claywell attended an ESL workshop led by Pat (Howard) Gutierrez and almost immediately after began an ESL ministry.⁵ Even though the Claywells did not speak any Spanish and many times had to communicate through “grunts and gestures,” their ministry grew.⁶ In fact, English classes soon turned into English classes coupled with a Bible Study in Spanish.⁷ Eventually, Marvin Claywell contacted Pat Gutierrez of Bowling Green once again. Through that contact David Rodriguez came to help shepherd this infant Hispanic Baptist ministry.⁸ At that point, the Hispanic church met at South Fork Baptist in Hodgenville.⁹ In 1999, KBC staff worker Grundy Janes mentioned that David Rodríguez left the area, which left “missions in Bowling Green, Glasgow, Horse Cave and Hodgenville without a worker.”¹⁰ After Rodriguez's quick departure, Mario Escárcega led the work.¹¹ Then, the church's next pastor came from

⁴Kevin Denton, interview by author, LaGrange, KY, October 30, 2012.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Dimas Miranda, interview by author, Glasgow, KY, October 24, 2012.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Denton, interview by author.

⁹Miranda, interview by author.

¹⁰Grundy Janes, “Report for Tony: April 1, 1999,” Multiethnic Missions and Ministry Department Archives, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, April 1, 1999.

within the body of the Hispanic ministry core; Dimas Miranda took up the mantle of pastor.¹² He and his wife Janet were some of the original English students of the Claywells; Dimas became a Christian under the brief ministry of Escárcega.¹³ The Claywells were a constant source of encouragement for Miranda's early ministry.¹⁴ Miranda continues to serve as the pastor of what has become Iglesia Bautista Emanuel in Glasgow.

As this church was being born, so was the migrant ministry among Hispanics at Horse Cave Baptist Church. Kevin Denton, pastor of Horse Cave Baptist, reflects,

I am not a real spiritual guy. I grew up on a dairy farm, so I know that life is practical. But at a point in my life, I had been fasting and praying over a separate issue. It had been about ten days. At some point during that time, I got up in the morning and was studying John 4, and I get to the point where Jesus says, "I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest." I just could not move on. I thought why can't I continue on? I couldn't get away from that.¹⁵

Later, Denton came to an awareness of why his heart was transfixed by that verse. Soon after Denton spoke with Ray Wilcoxson, a church member who was employed by a large local tobacco company.¹⁶ His duties included bringing in contract laborers for the local farmers. Wilcoxson, at the same time, was burdened to start some kind of ministry among the Hispanic migrant workers.¹⁷ Denton then came to understand that he was, literally, to look into the fields around him. When he looked into those fields, they were full of Hispanic migrant workers. Consequently, the ministry among Hispanic migrant

¹¹Miranda, interview by author.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Denton, interview by author.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

workers started. Marvin Claywell promised that if Horse Cave Baptist, led by Denton, could start this ministry, then he would make it his job to find a Spanish speaker to share the gospel message for every meeting.¹⁸ He kept that promise for 14 years.

Bill Mackey made note of Hispanic migrant ministry in this area in 1998, reporting that Horse Cave Baptist Church, located in Hart County, conducted a “Hispanic Fiesta” with 250 people in attendance.¹⁹ Horse Cave Baptist Church’s website also mentions this event on the same date, but states that 115 Hispanics showed up and that 32 made professions of faith.²⁰ Denton, who has been a stalwart supporter of Hispanic ministry in this area for over fourteen years, believes the discrepancy can be resolved easily. He adamantly suggests that Mackey reported in the *Western Recorder* a total attendance, including Anglo volunteers and migrants, while the numbers reflected on Horse Cave Baptist’s website report only the Hispanic migrant workers who attended.²¹ The same website also provides a succinct timeline for the migrant ministry in their area:

1998 - Three get together, 49 accepted Christ.

1999 - Four months of Saturday services, 70 accepted Christ.

2000 - Four months of Saturday services, 44 accepted Christ, 5 baptized, 1st Health Fair with 70 attending.

2001 - Four months of Saturday services, 11 accepted Christ, 4 baptized, 2nd Health Fair with 30 attending. Southern Kentucky Hispanic Ministry started by Liberty Association.

2002 - Six months of Saturday services, 50 accepted Christ, 2 baptized, 3rd Health Fair with 40 attending.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Bill Mackey, “Hispanic Ministry,” *Western Recorder*, October 21, 1998, 4.

²⁰“Hispanic Ministry,” Horse Cave Baptist Church website, <http://www.horsecavebaptistchurch.com> (accessed October 1, 2012).

²¹Denton, interview by author.

2003 - Four months of Saturday services, 22 accepted Christ.

2004 - Four months of Saturday services, 57 accepted Christ. El Faro began year round ministry.

2005 - Four months of Saturday services, 48 accepted Christ. 4th Health Fair with 66 attending.

2006- Four months of Saturday services, 13 accepted Christ, 1 baptized, 5th Health Fair with 63 attending. UK Extension Service helped and won a National Award for Diversity.

2007- Four months of Saturday services, 21 accepted Christ, 2 bapized [sic], 6th Health Fair with 150 attending.

2008 - Four months of Saturday services, 1 accepted Christ and was baptized, 7th Health Fair with 130 attending, all done free of charge.

2009 - Four months of Saturday services, 11 accepted Christ, 8th Health Fair with 150 attending and 90 volunteers.

2010 - Three months of Saturday services, 11 accepted Christ, 9th Health Fair with 115 attending and 77 volunteers.

2011 - Three months of Saturday services, 4 accepted Christ, 10th Health Fair with 70 attending and 75 volunteers.²²

This ministry, as the record reflects, was consistent. Furthermore, this timeline clearly demonstrates that social ministry was utilized, but not to the exclusion of evangelism. Evangelism took center stage. Less evident in this timeline, a mere litany of dates and activities, is the love and dedication invested in this ministry. Horse Cave Baptist fully backed and championed this work. Even though the Hispanic migrant ministry in this area came to a close in 2012, it was not due to waning interest. Denton believes that the Lord gave them this precious ministry and now, in essence, He has taken it away.²³

²²“Hispanic Ministry,” <http://www.horsecavebaptistchurch.com/page21.html> (accessed 22 December 2012).

²³Denton, interview by author.

While the migrant ministry lasted, many would say that Denton took this particular Hispanic migrant ministry “underneath his wing”; he loved it, cared for it, promoted it, protected it, and fought for it faithfully for so many years.²⁴ Despite the fact that this ministry has come to an end, the regional Hispanic ministry continues.

Coinciding with the migrant ministry in this area in 2000, surrounding Baptist associations began proactively to plan the launch of a regional Hispanic ministry.²⁵ In fact, Janes reports that, around this time, the Baptist associations of Lynn, Liberty and Warren were planning to pool their resources in order to fund the ministry. They were thought to have come up with about \$20,000 in startup funds.²⁶ Another report mentions that Liberty and Warren associations and South Fork Baptist Church were studying the possibility.²⁷ Warren Baptist Association decided to take another route. It should be noted that Janes, the KBC Ethnic-language consultant, worked passionately behind the scenes relating to other associations with the intention of bringing them into this partnership.²⁸ He believed that these conglomerates or corporations facilitated the funding of these regional ministries.²⁹ Janes persistently and patiently served as an advocate for this ministry throughout his tenure with the KBC, much the same as he did with other regional Hispanic ministries.³⁰

John Torres was the first missionary for this Hispanic region when it formed

²⁴Victor Silbestre, interview by author, Cave City, KY, October 24, 2012.

²⁵Janes, “Outline of Hispanic Work in Kentucky August 1997 to August 2003.”

²⁶Grundy Janes, “Meeting with Tony: June 14th,” Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, June 14, 2000.

²⁷Janes, “Outline of Hispanic Work in Kentucky: August 1997 to August 2003.”

²⁸Denton, interview by author.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Jesús Pacheco, interview by author, LaGrange, KY, September 27 2012.

on June 5, 2002.³¹ The Torres family moved from Houston, Texas, to Glasgow, Kentucky, to man this important post. On June 5, 2001, Simpson Baptist Association, led by DOM Larry J. Baker, set the stage for Torres' arrival by signing on as the first association to join Liberty Baptist Association and make a four-year commitment to Southern Kentucky Hispanic Ministry.³² Kevin Denton served as the original president of the corporation with Marvin Claywell, Ray Wilcoxson, Steve Curtis, George Crabtree, Jr., and Larry J. Baker all serving on the original board of directors.³³ Torres remained a missionary of this regional ministry until January of 2005.³⁴

Torres was considered by many to have been a groundbreaking pioneer missionary in this area. He was tough with a Pauline air about him.³⁵ Torres was a man with a strong personality and character. Denton stated that people "either loved him or wanted to hit him."³⁶ Torres was instrumental in aiding one Hispanic ministry to "constitute into a church which joined Liberty Association as Iglesia Emanuel."³⁷ The missionary also helped to establish two additional year-round works in Liberty and Simpson associations, which continue to the present day.³⁸ Torres worked incessantly for two-and-a-half years and then moved back to Houston in 2005. Also in 2005, Simpson

³¹"Hispanic Ministry," <http://www.horsecavebaptistchurch.com/page21.html> (accessed 22 December 2012).

³²Ibid.

³³"Articles of Incorporation of the Southern Kentucky Hispanic Ministry, Inc." Multiethnic Missions and Ministry Department Archives, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, August 28, 2001.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Denton, interview by author.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

Baptist Association had completed their commitment and opted to leave the partnership.³⁹ The Baptist associations of Lynn, Taylor, and Severns Valley were accepted as partners in this ministry on April 12, 2005.⁴⁰

In October of 2005, Rolando Muñiz was called as the second missionary for this Hispanic region.⁴¹ Muñiz moved his wife Sarai and two children from Clayton, GA, to Hodgenville, KY, and began ministering by January 2, 2006.⁴² A few months into his ministry, on July 25, 2006, Monroe Association became a partner for this region.⁴³ Muñiz was instrumental in helping start new Hispanic works in Taylor, Monroe, and Severns Valley Associations; he also worked diligently to restart a Hispanic ministry in “Lynn Association and supported three on-going works in Liberty.”⁴⁴ The missionary specifically connected well with South Fork Baptist Church. This church began ministering to Hispanics about the same time as Horse Cave Baptist in 1998.⁴⁵ Brenda and Tom Clopton, members of South Fork, were “real movers” and advocates for ministry to Hispanics.⁴⁶ It is said that Brenda would go to Wal-Mart, turn on Spanish music, and soon after Hispanic shoppers would surround her.⁴⁷ As these people gathered

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰“Hispanic Ministry,” <http://www.horsecavebaptistchurch.com/page21.html> (accessed 22 December 2012).

⁴¹Denton, interview by author.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³“Hispanic Ministry,” <http://www.horsecavebaptistchurch.com/page21.html> (accessed 22 December 2012).

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

around her, she would pass out Spanish tapes and evangelistic tracts.⁴⁸ For years, South Fork tried to maintain a Hispanic ministry, but it has experienced incredible turnover both in leadership and in the transient Hispanic population in its area. Today, that ministry has all but disappeared. The passion with which some members of this church reached out to migrant workers leaves little wonder why Muñiz connected so well with South Fork Baptist.

Muñiz tragically died on March 5, 2007 due to complications after heart valve replacement surgery.⁴⁹ He was the second missionary, after Luis Salazar of Central Region in 2002, to pass away while serving as missionary among Hispanics in Kentucky. His wife continued to be an inspiration at his funeral service. Sarai Muñiz stood and addressed a church full of Baptist ministers and others who had come to pay their respects. With bold assurance she beckoned all to continue “*adelante en Cristo*” or forward in Christ, because that was what she had decided to do.⁵⁰

On June 5, 2007, Southern Kentucky Hispanic Region called Heriberto Torres called as its third missionary.⁵¹ He moved his wife, Noemi, and two children from Lenoir City, TN, and began ministering in August of 2007. Torres actually came to fill the position of Muñiz by recommendation of Muñiz. Torres recalls,

I planted a church in Lenoir City with the association and local church. I was full-time, but the funding began to run out. I wanted to continue there. In the middle of this, I met Rolando Muñiz who was the missionary here in Southern Kentucky Hispanic Region. He wanted to plant a church in Elizabethtown. He believed that there could be a strong Hispanic church there. I gave him my resume. I even went to E-town. He even came to Lenoir City. We spoke quite often via telephone. After that, he had his operation and we all know that he did not come out of the

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰I attended Muñiz’s funeral.

⁵¹“Hispanic Ministry,” <http://www.horsecavebaptistchurch.com/page21.html> (accessed 22 December 2012).

operation.⁵²

Torres went on to finish the amazing story. He stated that before Muñiz went into his operation, he handed Torres' resume to an unspecified person who was on staff at the KBC, basically telling him that if anything happened to him, then Heriberto could do the job.⁵³ Others believe that Muñiz may have instructed his wife to deliver Torres' resume.⁵⁴ Whatever the case, the resume fell into the appropriate hands. Muñiz cared so much for the ministry he had been given that he made provisions for his successor. The Horse Cave Baptist Church website sums up some of Torres' accomplishments and responsibilities: "In March 2012, Heriberto helped El Faro move from mission to church status. Constitution, by-laws and legal work were completed for Iglesia Bautista El Faro. Heriberto visits and/or preaches at each group every month, as well as teaching classes at the KBC sponsored Hispanic Baptist Bible Institute."⁵⁵ Torres has followed in the shoes of his missionary predecessors of Southern Kentucky Region. He helped bridge the gap between the Hispanic populace and Anglo churches while Rolando Muñiz was more of a pure church planter.⁵⁶ Heriberto Torres fashions himself a hybrid of the two roles.⁵⁷ He seeks to maintain good relationships with Anglo Baptists and the community at large, while forging ahead to plant Hispanic churches where Christ has not been named in their heart language.

The methodology of missions for Southern Kentucky Region under Torres'

⁵²Heriberto Torres, interview by author, Cave City, KY, October 24, 2012.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Grundy Janes, interview by author, Louisville, KY, November 30, 2012.

⁵⁵"Hispanic Ministry," <http://www.horsecavebaptistchurch.com/page21.html> (accessed 22 December 2012).

⁵⁶Staff Writer, "Rolando Muniz, Regional Hispanic Strategist for KBC, Dies at Age 42," *Western Recorder*, March 13, 2007.

⁵⁷Torres, interview by author.

tenure is comprised of two major facets: (1) Discover the groups; (2) Apply an intelligible theology that goes with the people in consideration.⁵⁸ As these two facets are carried out, Torres states that he also incorporates other ministry tools, such as sports, with the end goal being evangelization of the lost.⁵⁹ According to Torres, evangelism and church planting have been the most emphasized facets of missions in his region of Kentucky. Torres related that to arrive at this he has had to retool and hammer out his theology of missions over and over. The missionary states, “I started out trying to put a church where there was once one . . . but this did not work . . . After that I started to take the church to homes . . . From there, we started Bible studies, and when relationships had been established, we then began to have worship services in church buildings.”⁶⁰ At first, Torres attempted to replicate, build upon, and even restart what his ministry predecessors had established. He soon found out that he had to develop his own missions philosophy and practice that would fit with the mercurial target population.

Making disciples, discipleship, and leadership development have all been important aspects of missions emphasized in the Southern Kentucky Hispanic Region. Torres stated that the Great Commission as found in Matthew 28:19 serves as his region’s marching orders to participate in missions in Kentucky and around the world. Torres sees the desire to present Christ as Savior and the only means of salvation as the primary motivating factor for missions involvement. As a missionary, this impetus puts him dead center in the struggle of contextualization. He presses forward with the aim of presenting the “supra-cultural message of the gospel in culturally relevant terms.”⁶¹ Torres is

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Oscar I. Romo, *American Mosaic: Church Planting in Ethnic America* (Nashville: Broadman, 1993), 97.

putting into practice this mission philosophy in the region that has come to be known as Southern Kentucky Hispanic Region.

The region is continuing to grow and is actively seeking to expand into new areas. One example of this trend is the internal growth within this region. La Iglesia Bautista El Faro is a perfect illustration of this expansion. El Faro is currently considered the strongest Hispanic Baptist church within the Southern Kentucky Region.⁶² Initially, this ministry, which was housed at Horse Cave Baptist Church, started under the leadership of John Torres with the idea that it would be a community center for Hispanics.⁶³ In 2005, Jerry Cambrany led this ministry to mature into a mission with regular worship services and Bible study.⁶⁴ Over time, through ebbs and flows, a strong Hispanic Baptist church emerged. The ministry transitioned into a church under the leadership of Heriberto Torres and the care of Horse Cave Baptist Church. Victor Silbestre is the pastor of this church today. Silbestre provides context to both his life and ministry:

I left Guatemala and came to San Antonio, TX. I lived on the streets. I slept under bridges, bathed in the canals, ate food from trash cans. I lived like this in Houston, and then I went to New Orleans, then to Mobile, then to Tallahassee. After that, I ended up in Kentucky. To be where I am now, I give glory to God. He is so real. Everything is fantastic, especially because I know that God is so real in my life. He can bring anyone out of any situation. After all, he has predestined us. He had patience with me, and for that reason I have patience with the people to whom I minister.⁶⁵

⁶²Torres, interview by author.

⁶³Silbestre, interview by author.

⁶⁴“Hispanic Ministry,” <http://www.horsecavebaptistchurch.com/page21.html> (accessed 22 December 2012).

⁶⁵Silbestre, interview by author.

Silbestre came to the U.S. from Guatemala; his native tongue is indigenous to the region from which he hails.⁶⁶ He learned both Spanish and English on the streets without any formal education.⁶⁷ In 1997, Silbestre arrived in Kentucky as a migrant worker with a very sordid past.⁶⁸ While still living on the farm in Smith Grove where he worked, he became a Christian through the ministry of Little Bethel Baptist Church.⁶⁹ This small, rural Baptist church led by Larry Lowe looked past his skin color, his nationality, and his ethnicity, and loved him with the love of Christ.⁷⁰ In 2004, Little Bethel licensed Silbestre to preach the gospel message.⁷¹ Silbestre became the pastor of El Faro in December of 2007 and was ordained by Horse Cave Baptist on November 16, 2008.⁷² On April 24, 2011, El Faro worshipped in their new facility located at 202 Main Street, Cave City.⁷³ In March, 2012, under the guidance of Torres, this church constituted under the name Iglesia Bautista El Faro.⁷⁴ Silbestre refers affectionately to Horse Cave Baptist as their mother church. He firmly believes that God will continue to bless “their mother church” in a special way for the fact that they have, for so long, opened their arms to the

⁶⁶Denton, interview by author.

⁶⁷Torres, interview by author.

⁶⁸Silbestre, interview by author.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹“Hispanic Ministry,” <http://www.horsecavebaptistchurch.com/page21.html> (accessed 22 December 2012).

⁷²Silbestre, interview by author.

⁷³“Hispanic Ministry,” <http://www.horsecavebaptistchurch.com/page21.html> (accessed 22 December 2012).

⁷⁴Ibid.

foreigner in their midst.⁷⁵ La Iglesia Bautista El Faro reported an average worship attendance of 70, with 4 baptisms and 45 active members in 2011.⁷⁶

Another form of growth in this region is expansion growth. Even though Severns Valley and Lynn Baptist Associations, respectively, fulfilled and then discontinued support of this ministry in 2009, other Baptist associations have come on board.⁷⁷ Southern Kentucky Region has recently expanded its ministry reach into Ohio County. Ohio County Baptist Association, led by DOM Matthew Sickling, was accepted as a member of the Southern Kentucky Hispanic Region in July, 2012.⁷⁸ The association notes the following concerning this ministry:

We began a partnership with Heriberto Torres and the Southern Kentucky Hispanic Ministry to reach Hispanic people in Ohio County with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Heriberto and I have been working with Jesus Amaya, the pastor of a Hispanic Congregation that meets at Bellevue Baptist Church in Owensboro, and together with the help of some of his congregation were able to have a Hispanic VBS that was held at Beaver Dam Baptist Church on July 25-27th.⁷⁹

Torres and Southern Kentucky Hispanic Region are proactively seeking to expand the reaches of their ministry. In so doing, they are collaborating with other Hispanic pastors and missionaries, as well as with other Baptist entities. This strategic move reflects health for this regional Hispanic ministry.

Several Hispanic Baptist churches are scattered throughout this region. La Iglesia Bautista El Faro in Cave City is pastored by Victor Silbestre. Iglesia Bautista de Campbellsville is pastored by Clemente Hernandez; they reported six members and an

⁷⁵Silbestre, interview by author.

⁷⁶“Hispanic Church Stats 2009-2011.”

⁷⁷“Hispanic Ministry,” <http://www.horsecavebaptistchurch.com/page21.html> (accessed 22 December 2012).

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹“Hispanic Ministry,” Ohio County Baptist Association website, <http://www.ohiocountybaptistassociation.com/Hispanic-Ministry.html> (accessed November 10, 2012).

average worship attendance of seventeen in 2011.⁸⁰ Iglesia Bautista Emanuel in Glasgow, pastored by Dimas Miranda, Iglesia Hispana de Tompkinsville, pastored by Mardoqueo Rodriguez, and Iglesia Bautista El Buen Pastor in Greensburg are also part of the Southern Kentucky Hispanic Region.⁸¹ The ministry in Greensburg, led by Heriberto Torres, reported an average worship attendance of fifteen in 2011, down from twenty-seven in 2009.⁸²

Even though Warren Baptist Association was involved with the original plan for a regional Hispanic ministry, they did not officially join Southern Kentucky Hispanic Ministry, according to the history provided by Horse Cave Baptist Church. Because of the proximity of this Baptist association to the region at hand, its historical account of missions among Hispanics will be briefly mentioned here.

In 1992-93 Hispanic presence in Bowling Green became more pronounced.⁸³ In 1994, the first Hispanic Baptist mission in Bowling Green was started at Glen Lily Baptist Church.⁸⁴ Pat Howard and Mario Escárcega, helped to initiate this work by means of holding a Spanish Bible study housed at Glen Lily.⁸⁵ Eventually, this small mission sought out a minister, and Cuban native Daniel Rodríguez, member of La Primera Iglesia Bautista de Nashville, took on the challenge.⁸⁶ Rodríguez, was a retired

⁸⁰“Hispanic Church Stats for 2009-2011,” Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, 2012.

⁸¹Torres, interview by author.

⁸²“Hispanic Church Stats 2009-2011.”

⁸³Pat Gutierrez, interview by author, Bowling Green, KY, November 16, 2012.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid.

minister from Florida and served as pastor of this small mission and one in Glasgow for as long as he could. He traveled from Nashville to attend these missions.

In 1998, the Hispanic church moved to First Baptist of Bowling Green under the leadership of Daniel's nephew, David Rodríguez.⁸⁷ David moved to Kentucky from Miami to oversee the work in Bowling Green.⁸⁸ Daniel passed the ministerial torch to David.⁸⁹ David briefly served in the Hispanic ministries of Glasgow, Horse Cave, and Hodgenville.⁹⁰ By April 1, 1999, David Rodríguez had taken a job in Florida.⁹¹

Ken Walker notes that on November 12, 2006, Bowling Green's first Hispanic church building was dedicated.⁹² The building housed Iglesia Bautista Nueva Vida (New Life Baptist Church). In September of 2002, Gus and Gloria Reyes came on a second tour of duty to Kentucky from Corpus Christi, Texas, as Missions Service Corps Volunteers and helped to plant Nueva Vida.⁹³ Three years prior, Gus had worked with Central Region Hispanic as regional strategist and church planter.⁹⁴ Reyes was aided in his ministry endeavors by Warren Baptist Association, led by DOM Jerry Oakley, Forest Park Baptist Church, pastored by Mark Bauldaff, and others, including Pat Gutierrez, and Mario Escárcega.⁹⁵ Gutierrez is well known and loved in the international community.⁹⁶

⁸⁷Grundy Janes, "Summary of Activities January-March 1998," Multiethnic Missions and Ministry Department Archives, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, March 1998.

⁸⁸Christian Franco, interview by author, Ballardsville, KY, November 11, 2012. Franco is a member of one of the founding families of this church.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Janes, "Report For Tony: April 1, 1999," 1.

⁹¹Ibid., 1.

⁹²Ken Walker, "Leaders Dedicate First Hispanic Mission in Bowling Green," *Western Recorder*, November 21, 2006.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Rick Lucas, interview by author, Crestwood, KY, September 13, 2010.

Of her many duties, she has served with the Southern Baptist Mission Service Corps for over a decade, coordinates the international ministry at First Baptist Bowling Green, and works as a Client Relations Specialist at a local immigration law office.⁹⁷

Reyes' ministry in Warren County was significantly different than the previous endeavors. The missionary indicated that a major difference in this area is that most of the people to whom he ministered were legal residents.⁹⁸ The church building constructed to house the fruit of Reyes' ministry is also distinct. The building used for Hispanic ministry in Bowling Green holds the distinction among Hispanic Baptists in Kentucky of being the "first facility built specifically for Hispanic Ministry, a 250-seat capacity sanctuary with Sunday School rooms."⁹⁹ Jose Luis Espinosa served as pastor for little over a year after Reyes' second departure from Kentucky. Espinosa sought to lead the church to grow into the new building by leading the congregation "to lead people to Christ, equip them as disciples and send Hispanics out to minister in Jesus name."¹⁰⁰ While speaking at the dedication ceremony of Nueva Vida, former state convention worker, Larry Baker, stated, "While Hispanic outreach in the state started as ministry to migrants, two years ago it shifted to a church-planting emphasis."¹⁰¹ Baker continued,

⁹⁵Pat Gutierrez, interview by author.

⁹⁶Franco, interview by author.

⁹⁷Gutierrez, interview by author.

⁹⁸Walker, "Leaders Dedicate First Hispanic Mission in Bowling Green."

⁹⁹Ibid. This building was planned and constructed for the Hispanic ministry in Bowling Green mostly through the volunteer efforts of Baptist Builders. Roca Eterna in Oak Grove can be distinguished from Nueva Vida in that its building will be the first building built for Hispanic Baptists planned and funded by an Hispanic Baptist church.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

“Fourteen Hispanic churches were started last year and 14 in 2006 with a goal of 16 for 2007.”¹⁰² Today, Salvadorian Douglas López pastors Nueva Vida.¹⁰³

Severns Valley Association of Baptists joined Southern Kentucky Hispanic Ministry on April, 2005.¹⁰⁴ Upon fulfilling their commitment to the corporation, this Baptist association decided to part ways in January, 2009.¹⁰⁵ Today, Severn’s Valley independently supports a Hispanic ministry, Iglesia Bautista Fe y Esperanza. In fact, the associational website lists the specific churches and their pastors who support this ministry:

Berean Baptist—Pastor Jim Webster; Central Avenue—Pastor Tom Wicker; Elizabethtown Baptist—Pastor Danny Haynes; Franklin Crossroads; Mt. Zion—Pastor Leon Chambers; New Hope Community—Pastor Herb Williams; New Life—Pastor Hyuk Lee; Northside—Pastor Kevin Roberts; Red Hill Baptist—Pastor James Royalty; Severns Valley Baptist—Pastor Bill Langley; Tunnel Hill—Pastor Nathan Whisnant; Valley Creek—Pastor Scott Kerr.¹⁰⁶

The Hispanic ministry is housed at Central Avenue Baptist Church, in Elizabethtown.¹⁰⁷ It began on February 24, 2008, and is currently under the very capable and humble leadership of Teofilo Pino, a Cuban native. His wife, Milvian, ministers at his side. As of 2011, the membership of the church was 14 with an average of 25 in attendance for worship services.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Gutierrez, interview by author.

¹⁰⁴“Hispanic Ministry,” <http://www.horsecavebaptistchurch.com/page21.html> (accessed 22 December 2012).

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶“Hispanic Ministry,” Severns Valley Association of Baptist website, <http://svabaptist.org/HispanicMinistry.html> (accessed 28 October 2012).

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸“Hispanic Stats for 2009-2011.”

West Region

In the late nineties, the poultry industry spread throughout Western Kentucky in the outlying areas of cities like Mayfield, Paducah, Henderson, and Owensboro. Farms, such as Seaboard Farms, began operating in Mayfield; Hispanic migrant workers would soon come to man the farms.¹⁰⁹ The demographic shift was noticeable within these communities. Some Baptist churches and associations determined that missionary action was required. These initial efforts served, once again, as foundational in establishing long-lasting Hispanic ministry in this part of the state. These historical antecedents will be discussed in relationship to the regional Hispanic ministry of Antonio Santos, who works in Graves County and West Union Baptist Associations as regional strategist. For the purpose of this dissertation, this region will be referred to as West Hispanic Region. Other Hispanic ministries of note in this general area will conclude this chapter.

Mayfield

Initial efforts to reach Hispanics within Graves County Baptist Association started around 1997. By that time, the association had employed Jose Rivas, who was pastoring a Spanish ministry called La Mision Bautista Hispana Nueva Vida or New Life Baptist Spanish Mission. Rivas reported that this mission continued “to grow and reach out unto the entire community meeting needs and spreading God’s love to those who most need his touch.”¹¹⁰ By 1999, Rivas’ leadership position with this ministry was terminated for undisclosed reasons.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹Tony Hough, interview by author, LaGrange, KY, October 10, 2012.

¹¹⁰Jose Rivas, Letter from Rivas to Ministry Supporters, Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, January 29, 1998.

¹¹¹Tony Hough, Email Correspondence with Grundy Janes, Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, January 11, 1999.

In August of 2002, First Baptist Church of Mayfield initiated a ministry among Hispanics under the leadership of Frances M. Irizarry, a Puerto Rican native who served as the Director of Community Ministries for the church.¹¹² In 2004, Irizarry reported that this ministry was averaging 40 worshippers every Sunday.¹¹³ This faithful servant mentioned that the majority of these were of Mexican descent.¹¹⁴ Incredibly, at this point, 22 Hispanics had become members of First Baptist Mayfield, with the majority of those new memberships coming by means of baptism.¹¹⁵ Irizarry mentioned that a great emphasis was placed on reaching and teaching these new believers; many were being disciplined faithfully. Irizarry asserts, “The majority of the people have demonstrated a desire to know more about the Lord and His Word and are actively sharing what they have learned with their family members and friends.”¹¹⁶

In July of 2007, Puerto Rican natives Jaime and Ana Massó were called to First Baptist Mayfield to lead the Hispanic ministry.¹¹⁷ Massó is a Biblical/Theological Studies graduate of the Baptist University of the Americas in San Antonio.¹¹⁸ He is the first Hispanic pastor for First Baptist in its 167 year history.¹¹⁹ First Baptist’s website reports:

¹¹²Frances M. Irizarry, Letter to Carlos De la Barra, Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, December 13, 2004.

¹¹³Frances M. Irizarry, Letter to Carlos De la Barra, Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, November 22, 2004.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷“Hispanic Pastor,” <http://www.firstmayfield.com> (accessed 20 November 2012).

¹¹⁸Ibid.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

Our Hispanic Ministry is constantly growing. Sunday School Classes are available in Spanish, followed by a Hispanic worship service. While the parents are in Bible study, their children attend FBC's Sunday School classes. During the summer, we reach out with a Hispanic VBS, and a Hispanic Outreach Emphasis, which includes Bible study, free legal advice, free medical advice and information.¹²⁰

This Hispanic ministry continues to grow. It collaborates, not only with First Baptist, but also with Graves County Baptist Association, and the Kentucky Baptist Convention. In 2010, this ministry reported 16 baptisms with an average worship attendance of 60, while in 2011 it reported no baptisms with an average worship attendance of 65.¹²¹ In 2012, Massó served as the president for the Kentucky Baptist Hispanic pastors' fellowship.

Mexican nationals, Antonio and Ada Santos, serve as the regional missionaries for this area. The majority of their ministerial efforts are invested in Graves County and West Union Baptist Associations.¹²² Originally, Santos' ministry in Kentucky started in Harrodsburg at Shawnee Run Baptist Church in 2005.¹²³ Ralph Neal was the pastor of Shawnee Run. The Hispanic ministry over which Santos took charge was originally planted by Job Juarez.¹²⁴ Shawnee Run Baptist, First Baptist of Lawrenceburg, and NAMB through the KBC, joined together to support this ministerial endeavor financially.¹²⁵

On June 1, 2007, Santos responded to a ministerial call and moved to the western part of the state in Graves County Association under the leadership of DOM Dr.

¹²⁰"Hispanic," <http://www.firstmayfield.com> (accessed 20 November 2012).

¹²¹"Hispanic Church Stats 2009-2011."

¹²²Carlos De la Barra, interview by author, Louisville, KY, November 1, 2012.

¹²³Ibid.

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵James W. Carpenter, Jr., Letter to Grundy Janes of the KBC, Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, September 5, 2006.

Charles Clark to serve as associational Hispanic Church Planter/Pastor.¹²⁶ Soon after, he was officially appointed as a NAMB missionary to this area on September, 13, 2007.¹²⁷ Antonio and Ada set out to minister to Hispanics in Mayfield through Highland Baptist Church, which at that time was located in the heart of the Hispanic community in Mayfield.¹²⁸ The missionary couple was aided greatly by associational churches and by the ministry of Eva Rodriguez. Santos wrote, “Eva Rodriguez has worked to lead us directly into a healthy base group for us to further develop into a growing ministry.”¹²⁹

In the first month of his ministry at Highland Baptist Church, Santos’ ministry saw several professions of faith, three of them leading to baptisms.¹³⁰ Santos envisioned that their ministry in Mayfield would focus on reaching families and young people.¹³¹ Santos delineated the end goal:

An autonomous, independent Hispanic Baptist Church is the goal for Graves County Baptist as well as my wife and I. This is to be completed in a five year term. For the first year 100% of the financial support for this vision will be supplied by GCBA, KBC, . . . and the committee of churches with in [*sic*] the GCBA As the second year comes to term, this support will diminish 20% and this will continue to happen in the years to come as we reach the fifth year.¹³²

Graves County Baptist Association wrote guidelines that further demarcated Santos’ role. The objectives clearly stated that, through Santos’ ministry, the end result would be an

¹²⁶Charles Clark, Letter to Larry Baker of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, April 11, 2007.

¹²⁷North American Mission Board, Letter to Antonio Santos, Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, September 13, 2007.

¹²⁸Antonio Santos, “Newsletter,” Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, July 2007.

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Ibid.

¹³²Ibid.

autonomous Hispanic Southern Baptist Church affiliated with the association, KBC and SBC.¹³³ These guidelines also specified that Santos would relate to a Hispanic Church Planting Team and that High Point Baptist Church, Sharon Baptist Church, and Trace Creek Baptist Church were to be the principal sponsoring churches.¹³⁴ The Hispanic church plant was housed at High Point Baptist Church, but struggled to meet the expectations that were set by Santos and the Hispanic Church Planting Team. It may have been because Santos was “spread a little too thin” among all of his ministerial responsibilities.¹³⁵ He eventually began to minister within the West Union Baptist Association’s geographical territory while seeking to plant the Hispanic church at High Point Baptist.¹³⁶

Paducah

In 1998 and 1999 single men, mostly from Mexico with H-2A Visas, came into Ballard County to work in agricultural industries, such as chicken processing and farming.¹³⁷ Around that time, churches within the West Union Baptist Association, such as Oscar Baptist Church, led by Pastor Marty Brown, were engaging Hispanic seasonal migrant workers with the gospel.¹³⁸ Others were involved as well. Jeff Wallace is one example. In 1998, he and his family were on medical leave from the IMB as missionaries to Spain and had returned to the Paducah area.¹³⁹ First Baptist of Lone Oak hired him as

¹³³“GCBA Hispanic Church Planter/Pastor Guidelines,” Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, n.d.

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵Glynn Copeland, interview by author, Mayfield, KY, November 28, 2012.

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷Jeff Wallace, interview by author, Paducah, KY, November 12, 2012.

¹³⁸Kentucky Baptist Convention, *When the World Comes to You*. DVD, Louisville, KY, 1998.

¹³⁹Ibid.

pastor to Hispanics and Senior Adults.¹⁴⁰ Wallace was also employed by West Union Baptist Association as their language consultant and by the KBC as a catalytic missionary.¹⁴¹ Wallace ministered in this capacity faithfully for a year-and-a-half before returning to Spain as an IMB missionary. Following Wallace's departure, in April 1999, a Peruvian was recommended to take his place, but his tenure did not last long. The ministry at Lone Oak then devolved into a Spanish Sunday School class that was led by one of Wallace's original converts.¹⁴² Through time, many of the Hispanic attendees began to filter into the English Sunday School classes and into the general life of Lone Oak.

By 2008, Antonio Santos started a Hispanic church at First Baptist Paducah, and many of the Hispanic members of Lone Oak transferred their letters of membership there.¹⁴³ Today, Santo's son-in-law, Julio Cesar Acosta, pastors the work. In 2011, this Hispanic ministry reported having 42 members, with an average Sunday School attendance of 80.¹⁴⁴ That same year, the Hispanic ministry baptized six people.¹⁴⁵

Henderson

First Baptist Church of Sebree, Kentucky, is a member of Green Valley Baptist Association, which is housed in Henderson, Kentucky. By January 15, 1998, this church had produced English/Spanish brochures to be utilized to reach to new Spanish-speaking residents of their community.¹⁴⁶ Janes, from the Metropolitan Ministries Department of

¹⁴⁰Ibid.

¹⁴¹Ibid.

¹⁴²Ibid.

¹⁴³Ibid.

¹⁴⁴“Hispanic Church Stats 2009-2011.”

¹⁴⁵Ibid.

the KBC, aided in the initial stages of this ministry.¹⁴⁷ Janes reported meeting on several occasions with Steve Thompson then DOM of Green Valley Baptist Association and Bob Hardison, pastor of Sebree First Baptist Church, and even speaking at Green Valley Baptist Association's WMU meeting.¹⁴⁸ Sebree First Baptist, like many upstart migrant ministries, combined social ministry with evangelistic priority as they prepared "shoeboxes and care kits for newcomers."¹⁴⁹ Green Valley Baptist Association under the leadership of interim DOM Leslie Smith sought to reach out to Hispanics as early as 1998. Nada Huntley wrote, "Simon Leon, a retired missionary to Mexico, taught two Spanish Bible studies on Thursday afternoons at 1 and 6. He did home visitation. Had ESL and Sunday afternoon soccer games . . . The Hispanics work at Tyson Foods."¹⁵⁰ By 1999, Janes and Wallace had taught a conference on Hispanic ministry in the area of Sebree.¹⁵¹ Wallace reported that many farmers and others involved in the agricultural industry were contracting Hispanic workers who had H-2A visas to come man the fields and chicken-processing plants.¹⁵² Wallace recalled that one chicken-processing plant bought an old hotel in Sebree and used it to house the migrant workers.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁶Bob C. Hardison, Letter to Grundy Janes State Language Coordinator, KBC, Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, January 15, 1998.

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

¹⁴⁸Janes, "Summary of Activities January-March 1998."

¹⁴⁹Hardison.

¹⁵⁰Nada Huntley, Letter to Tony Hough, Director of Extension-Ministries, KBC, Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department Archives, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, July 14, 1999.

¹⁵¹Wallace, interview by author.

¹⁵²Ibid.

¹⁵³Ibid.

Antonio Santos began a Hispanic Ministry at First Baptist of Henderson in 2010.¹⁵⁴ The work is led by Antonio Santos' son Jonathan, who serves as the volunteer pastor of this ministry.¹⁵⁵ First Baptist's website reports that several people have been saved and baptized through the ministry.¹⁵⁶ In 2011, the Hispanic ministry reported having fifteen members, with an average worship attendance of fifty people.¹⁵⁷ The same year the Hispanic ministry baptized two souls.¹⁵⁸

Owensboro

Owensboro is the fourth largest city in the state of Kentucky. Jesus Amaya is currently the pastor of the Hispanic ministry housed at Bellevue Baptist Church in Owensboro. This church is part of the Daviess-McLean Baptist Association. Amaya provides a succinct history of this Hispanic ministry:

The Hispanic Ministry at Bellevue began in Nov. [*sic*] 2001 with English as a Second Language Classes. The classes originally met in the apartment of one of our students. In January, 2002, they were moved to the church where we currently meet each Wednesday evening at 6:00pm . . . these classes are led by Teresa Hamilton, Angela Austin, Kathy Baird and Beverly Meloney, and coordinated by Elizabeth Amaya. Danny Gray, Chairman of Partnership in Missions, provides support for the ministry.¹⁵⁹

By 2002, these English classes had grown into worship services. Reverend Bob Milburn, pastor of Mount Vernon Baptist Church in McLean County, was the first pastor of this Hispanic congregation; he led the congregation through bilingual services.¹⁶⁰ In the

¹⁵⁴“Hispanic Ministry,” <http://fbchenderson.org> (accessed 12 November 2012).

¹⁵⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷“Hispanic Church Stats 2009-2011.”

¹⁵⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹“Hispanic Ministry,” <http://bellnet.org>, (accessed 11 November 2012).

¹⁶⁰*Ibid.*

summer of 2003, Jesus and Elizabeth Amaya were brought to serve as summer missionaries in Owensboro and aided the nascent Hispanic congregation.¹⁶¹ The Amayas returned to Texas to complete biblical studies in San Antonio, and in their absence, Ruben Franco, a pastor of a Hispanic congregation in Jasper, Indiana, served in their stead.¹⁶² After Franco's short stint as pastor, Robert Soza, a member of Bellevue's congregation, led the Hispanic congregation until the Amayas returned to Owensboro in June, 2005.¹⁶³ In 2010, this church reported a membership of 50, with an average of 65 in attendance for worship services, and reported 6 baptisms for the year.¹⁶⁴ As of 2012, Jesus Amaya has also reached out into such places as Ohio County, where he is collaborating with ethnic strategist Heriberto Torres of the Southern Kentucky Hispanic Region.

Conclusion

Grijalva states, "History does not conclude. As long as there is life, there will be history. As long as Southern Baptists continue Christ's mandate to carry the gospel to Jews and Gentiles, Baptist ethnic history will continue to be made."¹⁶⁵ The Southern Kentucky Region and the West Hispanic Region started well after the onset of Southern Baptist missions among Hispanics in Kentucky. They are the last of the regions to be examined, but that does not mean that the history ends. I posit that if these respective regions continue on the same gospel-centered trajectory on which they began, souls will

¹⁶¹Ibid.

¹⁶²Ibid.

¹⁶³Ibid.

¹⁶⁴"Hispanic Church Stats 2009-2011."

¹⁶⁵Joshua Grijalva, *Ethnic Baptist History* (Miami: META, 1993), 184.

continue to be won and the historical accounts of these nascent regions will continue to grow.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In 2012, the Kentucky Baptist Convention convened for its 175th Annual Meeting. Here Kentucky Baptists officially approved a “Resolution on Ministry to Immigrants.”¹ The resolution reads as follows:

WHEREAS, The Kingdom of God is a realm that includes persons from every tribe, tongue, nation, and language (Revelation 7:9); . . . WHEREAS, The law, . . . instructed the people of God to show compassion and strive for justice for the sojourner and alien among us . . . WHEREAS, To ignore the “stranger” is tantamount to a rejection of Jesus (Matthew 25:38-43) . . . WHEREAS, The church is commanded to take the gospel to the nations (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8); and WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of Kentucky has a Foreign-Born population of approximately 140,000 and an estimated population of between 15,000 and 50,000 undocumented immigrants; . . . RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Kentucky Baptist Convention meeting in Lexington, KY on November 13, 2012, call on our churches to recognize the opportunity God is providing us by bringing the world to us, and to minister in word and deed, to all persons, regardless of country of origin or immigration status.²

As has been documented in prior chapters, Southern Baptist ministries among Hispanics in Kentucky existed for nearly thirty-three years before this resolution. Approximately twenty-two years before this resolution was made, Southern Baptists reached out to Hispanics in Kentucky starting in rural Henry County. The reason for the lapse of time between the inception of the ministry and the proposal of the resolution is unclear. What is clear is that Kentucky Baptists are beginning to understand the import of reaching the nations in their midst. Hispanics are just one part of the broader context. In this

¹“Resolution on Ministry to Immigrants,” Kentucky Baptist Convention, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington, Kentucky, November 13, 2012.

²Ibid.

concluding chapter, the findings of previous chapters will be summarized and suggestions for further research will be espoused.

Summary

Chapter 1 of this dissertation explored the historical antecedents that were present before the onset of Southern Baptist missions among Hispanics in Kentucky. One such example was the Hispanic mission housed at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville, which started in 1979. This chapter provides a historical backdrop for chapters 2, 3, and 4.

Chapter 2 explored the historical accounts of both the Central and South Central Hispanic Regions. The Central Region was the first Kentucky Baptist Hispanic ministry to begin to reach out across associational boundaries. The regional concept of this ministry formed in an official capacity in 1995. The Central Region continued to change and form in ensuing years. This Hispanic region was followed closely by the South Central Region, which began ministering regionally in an unofficial capacity in 1996 and officially in 1997. Other Hispanic regions followed the examples of these two. Some Hispanic regional ministries improved upon the concept.

Chapter 3 provided a historical account of the genesis of the Bluegrass and Southwestern Hispanic Regions. Bluegrass followed the lead of Central and South Central in evolving into a regional ministry officially in 1998. The Southwest Hispanic region began to expand from a lone associational Hispanic ministry into a regional ministry in 1996. Even though this ministry never officially incorporated, by the summer of 1998 it was reaching across county and associational borders.

Chapter 4 supplied a historical sketch of the Southern Kentucky and Western Hispanic regions. The Southern Kentucky Hispanic Region formed officially in 2001, while the West Hispanic Region began in Graves County Baptist Association in 2007, and soon expanded into the West Union Baptist Association's ministerial territory. In

addition, I would be remiss not to mention the influence of two entities that helped to shape the Hispanic regions as they themselves took form. The statewide Hispanic Council and the Hispanic Baptist Bible Institute have been stabilizing forces in this missions' enterprise among Hispanics, especially of late.

The Hispanic Council took shape informally with people such as KBC Ethnic-Language Consultant Grundy Janes, meeting intentionally on a regular basis with Hispanic ministers such as Jesus Pacheco and Carlos De la Barra.³ Over time, these unofficial meetings took on a more prescribed tenure. The statewide Hispanic Baptist Council started in 2004.⁴ The original council members were Carlos De la Barra, Jorge Garcia, Grundy Janes, Jesus Pacheco, Ken Roberts, John Torres, Gus Reyes, and Ray Van Camp.⁵ From early on, the purpose for the council was simple:

The purpose of this council is to plan and promote the development of the Hispanic work in Kentucky. The following are basic functions of the council:

1. Maintain a network of information about Hispanic work in Kentucky.
2. Recommend strategic planning for reaching the Hispanic population for Christ,,[sic] using the latest population statistics available.
3. Study the resources available, and make recommendations about their use.
4. Make recommendations about conferences and/or training meetings that the KBC can offer to churches, groups and leaders for the development of the Hispanic work.
5. Evaluate what is being done and make recommendations.
6. Promote Hispanic work.

The membership of this council will be made up of missionaries, pastors and other invited leaders of the Hispanic work.⁶

The guidelines, as well as the personnel, for this council changed over time but the general purpose remained the same. The council promoted unity among missionaries and

³Grundy Janes, interview by author, Louisville, KY, November 30, 2012.

⁴Ibid.

⁵“Hispanic Council March 1, 2004,” Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, March 1, 2004.

⁶“Council for the Hispanic Work in Kentucky,” Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, n.d.

other pastors working in different parts of the state. Moreover, the council supplied informed recommendations to ministries across the state. It existed to provide a vision based upon the collective knowledge of the Hispanic ministries represented in Kentucky. The committee also played an important role in creating, strengthening, and promoting an infrastructure of collaboration.

By 2005, the council had developed ministry objectives specific to the Kentucky Hispanic ministerial context. These objectives were all accompanied by corresponding action plans. From the objectives, five main goals were promoted:

1. To reach the Hispanic population of Kentucky with the Gospel of Jesus Christ
2. To plant new Hispanic churches in Kentucky
3. To develop ministries to meet Hispanic needs that lead to evangelism, church planting and church membership
4. To equip leadership to strengthen Hispanic churches in accomplishing their mission
5. To develop relationships with Hispanic Baptists, Kentucky Baptist Churches, Associations, the State Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention⁷

The Hispanic Council sought to unify the efforts of missionaries, pastors, and key supporters of Hispanic ministries across the state.

The Hispanic Council gave life to the idea of forming a theological institute that could train leaders for Hispanic ministry in Kentucky. The original idea of providing theological education for Hispanic Baptists was formulated over time as Kentucky Baptists realized the need to “raise up” equipped ministers and lay people for the present and future. A concrete example of an attempt to provide theological education can be seen in a facet of the early ministry of Augustine Reyes when he served as part of the Central Region Hispanic ministry. It was there that seminary extension classes were offered under his leadership and with the help of people like Daniel Hatfield. When

⁷“Hispanic Ministry in Kentucky Objectives—2005,” Multiethnic Missions and Ministries Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, KY, May 23, 2012.

Reyes left the area, the extension classes died out quickly for lack of infrastructure.⁸ By 2004, a Hispanic Education work group had been formed.⁹ The work group was comprised of Grundy Janes, Twyla Fagan, Jesus Pacheco, Carlos De la Barra, Cristina De la Barra, and Ray Van Camp.¹⁰ By 2005, others were invited to participate in the planning of the institute; Vernon Davis, John Chowning, Coy Webb, David Culp, Ruth Salazar, and Todd Robertson comprise the full list of participants.¹¹ On May 1, 2005, Twyla (Fagan) Hernandez became the administrator for the institute and was scheduled to make \$300.00 a month plus travel and other expenses.¹² By 2005, the *Instituto Biblico Bautista Hispano* had opened two locations in Kentucky.¹³ In 2006, they entered into a partnership with Campbellsville University.¹⁴ By 2009, other centers opened in Ohio and Illinois and, in 2010, another center was opened in Alabama.¹⁵ In 2012, the institute opened a center in Cuba; in 2013, this institution hopes to open another location in Mexico.¹⁶ The institute is firmly Baptist in theology and strives to provide a quality theological education that fits with the Hispanic socioeconomic and ministerial context of Kentucky. This institute is a mark of maturity for the Hispanic Baptist work in Kentucky and the United States.

⁸Janes, interview by author.

⁹Ray Van Camp, "Minutes from Hispanic Education Work Group Meeting," Van Camp's Personal Collection, Lexington, KY, June 23, 2004.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ray Van Camp, "Minutes for HBBI," Van Camp's Personal Collection, Lexington, KY, March 24, 2005.

¹²Ray Van Camp, "Minutes of HBBI Board Meeting," Van Camp's Personal Collection, Lexington, KY, April 14, 2005.

¹³Twyla Hernandez, interview by author, Campbellsville, KY, November 5, 2012.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶On November 10, 2012, at the eighth graduation ceremony of the Hispanic Baptist Bible Institute, Hernandez announced this partnership. I was present.

Suggestions for Further Research

Multiple additional areas of further research relating to Southern Baptist Missions among Hispanics in Kentucky need to be explored. Even though Hispanic Baptist ministries in Kentucky continue to mature, additional research could greatly benefit the church with the issues it faces. Suggestions for continued research include a study of the impetus behind ethnic language ministries in Kentucky, a study of ethical issues regarding missions and ministries among Hispanics in Kentucky, and a study of issues pertaining to leadership among Kentucky Hispanic Baptists.

Impetus Behind Ethnic Language Ministries

First, I would like to suggest that a study be conducted regarding the impetus for starting Baptist ethnic language ministries in Kentucky. The majority of the earliest Hispanic regional ministries started spontaneously. The ministries began in small bucolic communities with rural churches. The migrant presence was made known to the churches by the migrants themselves and locals that took note of the existence of the migrants. Ostensibly, the churches in these regions were not intentionally looking for the opportunity to participate in international missions in their proverbial backyards. When these churches were presented with the opportunity, however, some did seize the moment and take up the mantle of ministry. In the Central Region, farmers mentioned the Hispanic migrant worker presence to the DOM of Henry County and from there a ministry was started. In what became the Bluegrass Hispanic Region, Hispanic migrant workers showed up at the parking lot of Chaplin Baptist looking for work. It would be interesting to compare the impetus for starting Hispanic ministries both then and now. Who is starting the process of ministering to Hispanics or other ethnic language groups? Are Anglo Kentucky Baptists taking the initiative to start Hispanic ministries? Are Hispanic Kentucky Baptists taking the initiative to start other Hispanic ministries? What

are the motives for starting ethnic language ministries or churches? When these ministries are started, what are the end goals for the ministry?

Closely related to the study of the impetus behind starting Hispanic Baptist works in Kentucky is that of the thrust behind supporting Hispanic Baptist works in Kentucky. The Hispanic regions started, survived, and thrived where there was at least one person that championed the ministry. In the Central Region, people like DOM Pam Cobb, called Henry County Baptist Association to organize and support this endeavor. In the same region, DOM Rick Lucas, former DOM of Oldham-Trimble Baptist Association, and Shelby County layperson David Minch supported this ministry for years. They promoted it in their ministerial areas of influence, thereby providing visibility for the ministry in associational and convention meetings. In the South Central Region, Annette Story raised the need to minister to migrants in her area through the WMU of Pleasant View Baptist in Waynesburg. After that, former DOM of Lincoln and Casey Baptist Associations, Stan Stevenson, rallied support for a Hispanic migrant ministry using his influence among associational churches. Pastor of Horse Cave Baptist Church, Kevin Denton, carried out the vision to start a migrant season ministry and then a year round regional ministry for the Southern Kentucky Hispanic Region. He filled that role for fourteen years (i.e., since the inception of the ministry). The long-term support garnered by these individuals and groups that championed Hispanic ministries in their respective areas seems to be connected to ministerial sustainability. What is the connection between these few supporters and sustainable Hispanic Baptist ministries? What impact did the long term emotional backing have on these regional ministries? What impact did the long term financial backing have on these regional ministries?

Lastly, most Hispanic Baptist churches in Kentucky are concentrated where a Hispanic missionary or a series of missionaries have been present for an extended amount of time. Many missionaries provide a catalytic presence for church planting and

missions. These missionaries also serve as a cultural and communicative bridge between local Baptist associations and churches and Hispanic Baptist churches. Furthermore, missionaries provide supervision for Hispanic Baptist pastors. They minister to pastors and unite Hispanic churches to do more together. In Kentucky, why do more Hispanic Baptist churches exist where a missionary has been for an extended amount of time?

Ethical Issues Related to Hispanic Ministry in Kentucky

Over the past twenty years, Hispanic ministry in Kentucky has gone from a subterranean ministry to an above ground, highly-visible ministry. One reason why this ministry was less visible from the onset is that Hispanic ministries were riddled with ethical dilemmas. Many of the unique quandaries that existed were related to illegal immigration. Many people migrate to the United States looking to better their lives and their family's future. In so doing, these migrants start new lives while maintaining past ties through conduits such as social media, remittances, and by crossing national borders several times during their lifetimes. The result of this continual movement is the creation of a polycentric existence. Migration, then, could better be described as human mobility that is far from static or uni-directional.¹⁷ Questions pertaining to both legal and illegal immigration need to be researched. How can churches most effectively minister to Hispanics that live with a "migrant mentality" that lends itself to a divided existence between their new adopted country and their country of origin?¹⁸ Is there a way that Hispanic Kentucky Baptists can harness the transient nature that often characterizes Hispanic subsistence in the U.S. in order to reach others for Christ in Kentucky, the U.S.,

¹⁷Alan McMahan, "The Strategic Nature of Urban Ministry," in *Reaching the City: Reflections on Urban Mission for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Gary Fujino, Timothy R. Sisk, and Tereso C. Casiño (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2012), 8.

¹⁸A migrant mentality characterizes a person that lives for an extended amount of time in their adopted country while thinking of and planning on returning to their home country.

and the world? How should Hispanic Baptists respond to new believers that have become Christians in the United States and have started families in the U.S., but, at the same time, have spouses and families in their countries of origins?

Even though illegal immigration from Latin American countries like Mexico is slowing down, all indications point to a simple fact—Hispanics are here to stay.¹⁹ Jorge Garcia of the Southwest Hispanic region cited that leadership and immigration are connected.²⁰ In other words, there is an ethical component. Garcia stated that he had several ministers within his Hispanic congregations for whom he could not secure financial backing because of their legal status. This quandary is not unique to Garcia's ministry, but is ubiquitous in Hispanic Baptist life in Kentucky. In the body of this dissertation, I have purposefully chosen not to delve into these issues so as not to take the focus away from the overarching story of how Southern Baptist missions among Hispanics in Kentucky began. Even so, the issue of illegal immigration in Kentucky is real. The presence of illegal immigrants creates ethical dilemmas that must be addressed. Is it ethical for churches or church members to minister to families that are known to be or are potential illegal immigrants? Can illegal immigrants become members of Hispanic Southern Baptist Churches? If so, how much legal documentation does one need to possess? To serve in a ministerial position in the U.S., whether voluntary or vocational, does one need to be a legal resident of the U.S.?

Leadership

First, Hispanic Baptist ministries in Kentucky need to change as Kentucky changes. As this dissertation has demonstrated, Hispanic ministries in Kentucky have shifted from a focus on seasonal migrant ministries to year-round ministries to church

¹⁹Jeffrey Passel, D'Vera Cohn and Ana Gonzalez-Barrera, "Net Migration from Mexico Falls to Zero—and Perhaps Less," Pew Research Center, www.pewhispanic.org (accessed January 30, 2013).

²⁰Jorge Garcia, interview by author, Oak Grove, KY, October 27, 2012.

planting ministries to more stable Hispanic church ministries.²¹ Leading a Hispanic church or ministry is complicated enough in and of itself in that Hispanic churches are multinational, multicultural, and multigenerational in their base makeup. Martinez comments, “The average Latino church includes people of several Latin American countries, people born in the United States, someone from a minority group from Latin America, and some non-Latinos who have married someone from the congregation.”²² Leadership for this type of transient ministry will need to be both flexible and adaptable. Hispanic Baptist pastors in Kentucky are increasingly becoming aware of the changes in the Hispanic ecclesiastical and societal landscape. As noted earlier, immigration from Latin America to the U.S. is slowing. With this decline there will mostly likely be a decline in the influx of first generation Hispanics. Although there will be a need for continued support of existing ministries and a need to start new ministries among first generation Hispanics, ministering to the offspring of this group, second and third generation Hispanics, will also be vital. Daniel A. Rodriguez comments on one tendency of Latino Evangelical churches:

Consequently, Latino evangelicals, especially the foreign born, feel compelled to create spiritual as well as cultural ghettos like the land of Goshen (Gen 46:28) where they can sustain and reinforce the culture, values, language and practices of their *patria* while they ‘live in exile’ surrounded by a foreign, hostile and worldly society.²³

Many Hispanic Evangelical churches sense the need to preserve their culture, values, language, and practices from outside influence. This preservation is real, but it should

²¹Even though these changes have occurred in Hispanic Baptist ministries, some of the original forms of ministry are still needed. For example, a great need still exists in some areas of Kentucky for seasonal migrant ministries in addition to church planting.

²²Juan Francisco Martínez, *Walk with the People: Latino Ministry in the United States*. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2008), 60.

²³Daniel A. Rodriguez, *A Future for the Latino Church: Models for Multilingual, Multigenerational Hispanic Congregations* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Academic, 2011), 155.

not be pursued to the detriment of reaching ensuing generations of Latinos. Further study needs to be done on second and third generation Hispanics in Kentucky Baptist life. How do Hispanic Baptist pastors perceive ministry to second and third generation Hispanics? How do second and third generation Hispanics perceive Hispanic Baptist works comprised of a majority membership of first generation Hispanics? To what degree do Hispanic Baptist churches in Kentucky account for the linguistic, cultural, and worldview differences between first generation Hispanics and successive generations? Will the second and third generation Hispanics in Kentucky gravitate towards English-dominant, Spanish-dominant, or blended language worship services? Or, will this segment of the Kentucky Hispanic population fall through the ecclesiastical cracks?

Second, the value of the leadership of Hispanic regional missionaries in Kentucky should be examined closely. As mentioned previously, the majority of the Hispanic Baptist churches and ministries exist where a long-term missionary presence has been present. Several changes in Baptist life are threatening the ministries of these missionaries. NAMB, under new leadership, has made what many would consider sweeping changes over the past several years. One way that these modifications are affecting Kentucky Hispanic Baptists on the field is that NAMB's support for regional missionaries is being phased out.²⁴ This phase-out started in 2012 with NAMB's discontinuation of health insurance for regional missionaries.²⁵ Regional Hispanic missionaries have traditionally been provided health insurance by NAMB through the KBC, a contribution that has historically helped to make available a more comprehensive salary package for missionaries that otherwise would not have been feasible for these small organizations. When this financial component is completely phased out, will the missionaries be able to continue to minister on a full-time basis? Will this change force

²⁴Stan Lowery, interview by author, Bardstown, KY, October 24, 2012.

²⁵Ibid.

them to seek employment elsewhere in order to support their families? Will the regional Hispanic ministries be able to assume the responsibility of paying this significant portion of the financial support package of these missionaries? Is the regional Hispanic missionary concept viable in today's Hispanic ministry context? Will the regional ministries continue? Will the regional ministries be forced to combine several regions in order to support a missionary? Will the territories of these regions need to diminish in order to create more part time ministries? These questions urgently need to be researched and thought through as these changes are already underway.

Third, there is a dire need for more ethnic language leaders on all levels of Southern Baptist denominational life. On a national level, NAMB has downsized the number of Hispanic national workers. At the KBC, there is 1 state level representative for all language groups represented in Kentucky. On a regional level, there are 6 Hispanic ethnic field strategists. Compared with other states, this number is fairly sizable, but, as stated above, the future of these positions is in flux. Moreover, on a regional level, Hispanic Baptist churches need to be more involved in regional ministries. For example, Hispanic churches need to support their regional missionaries financially. The majority of the support for a Hispanic regional missionary comes from local Baptist associations, local churches, KBC, and NAMB. The administrative boards of the Hispanic regional ministries need to look creatively at ways to include Hispanic pastors and lay leaders on the boards. This inclusion may imply conducting meetings bilingually or primarily in Spanish with English interpretation. Several questions need to be asked in regards to ethnic language leadership on all levels of Southern Baptist denominational life. Why are there so few ethnic language workers on the national, state, and regional levels in Southern Baptist life? Is this just a natural result of the proportional demographic breakdown found within the SBC? Why are entities such as NAMB cutting ethnic-language representatives when ethnic language ministries are a growing segment

of Baptist life? Are ethnic-language ministers being excluded based upon their qualifications or other factors such as ethnicity and language? Are the ethnic-language ministers excluding themselves through isolation or because of other barriers related to culture and language? Is there a disconnect between Kentucky Baptists and Hispanic Kentucky Baptists? If Hispanics are not included in leadership, will they seek other avenues to make their voices heard? Will Hispanic Baptist churches leave the state and national conventions in order to form others entities that better fit their worldview and ways of conducting church affairs?

Fourth, some Hispanic Baptist pastors and leaders come from an ecclesiastical and denominational background that is not Baptist. Most of the Hispanic Baptist leaders and pastors come from Baptist backgrounds either in the U.S. or in their native countries. Some, however, have been brought to Kentucky to pastor or plant Hispanic Southern Baptist Churches from differing denominational backgrounds. A study needs to be conducted regarding this phenomenon. Why have non-Baptist ministers been recruited to work as Southern Baptists in Kentucky? Are these churches that are pastored by pastors from non-Southern Baptist backgrounds truly Southern Baptist ministries in doctrine and practice? Will these churches pastored by pastors from non-Southern Baptist backgrounds be Southern Baptist churches in doctrine and practice in the future?²⁶

Fifth, indigenous leadership for Hispanic Baptists in Kentucky needs to be developed through theological education that fits the sociological and ministerial context found in the state. Further study needs to be conducted into how pastors are being trained in Kentucky. Is the principle avenue of theological training occurring through formal theological education such as seminaries or institutes, apprenticeships in local churches and Hispanic regions, or by other means? What role has the Hispanic Baptist Bible Institute played in training Hispanic ministers in Kentucky? What role has The Southern

²⁶Ramon Osorio, interview by author, Louisville, KY, October 30, 2012.

Baptist Theological Seminary played in training Hispanic Baptists to minister in Kentucky? How can Southern Seminary's role be strengthened?²⁷

Sixth, Hispanic Baptists in Kentucky need to take the lead in participating in different missions endeavors. For Southern Baptists, Hispanics in Kentucky have been a foreign mission field found within the borders of the Commonwealth. Diana Barrera states, "It is time for us as Hispanics to begin to move from being a mission field to becoming a missionary force."²⁸ Hispanic Baptists in Kentucky need to begin the shift from being targets of missions to being agents of missions. Hispanic Kentucky Baptists have great potential to be a multicultural, multilingual missionary force in Kentucky and unto the ends of the earth. How will Kentucky Hispanic Baptist churches impact Anglo, Asian, African American, and other ethnicities in Kentucky in the area of church planting and missions? What missionary impact are Kentucky Hispanic Baptist churches having in Latin America and other nations?

Conclusion

The goal of this research was to trace and document Southern Baptist mission work among Hispanics in Kentucky. The reason that this qualitative research is so pressing is because, in the ensuing years, the narrative will be lost. Simply put, the story will vanish because the majority of it exists only in the minds of those who lived it. Now that the account has been chronicled, it can be better remembered and celebrated as part

²⁷The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was the first Protestant seminary in the continental United States to offer an Association of Theological Schools accredited M.Div. program in Spanish. The program started in 2004 and was initially coordinated by Dr. David Sills and Twyla (Fagan) Hernandez. Even though the program is pioneering, very few Hispanic ministers serving among Hispanics in Kentucky have participated in it. See David Roach, "M.Div. Taught in Spanish Slated at Southern Seminary," *Baptist Press*, <http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=17564> (accessed January 30, 2013).

²⁸Diana Barrera, "Chapter 20: Hispanics Involved in Missions," in *Hispanic Realities—Impacting America: Implications for Evangelism and Missions* (Fort Worth: Church Starting Network, 2006), 293.

of the Southern Baptist's ethnic history. My hope is that the research here will be studied and included as a small component of Southern Baptist history.

The suggestions for further research provided in this concluding chapter need to be addressed with urgency. Hispanic Baptist churches represent one of the few growing segments of Baptist life in Kentucky. Even though these churches may be small today, they are growing quantitatively and qualitatively. Some may perceive Kentucky Hispanic Baptists as marginal, dependent, or weak. Regardless of prevailing perceptions, Hispanic Baptists are seeking to follow Christ where he has placed them. Though they have little strength or influence, these churches are focused on keeping his word and have not denied the name of Christ. Kentucky Hispanic Baptists have much to teach their Kentucky Baptist forbearers. I pray that Kentucky Baptists would indeed have an ear to hear.

APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEWS

- Baker, Larry. Former DOM of Christian County and current Kentucky Baptist Convention Missions Growth Team Leader, Louisville, KY. Interview by author, Louisville, KY, November 13, 2012.
- Campoamor, Fernando. Member, Chaplin Baptist Church, Chaplin, KY. Interview by author, Chaplin, KY, November 14, 2012.
- Cano, Cesar. Pastor, Iglesia Bautista Cooper Chapel, Louisville, KY. Interview by author, Louisville, KY, October 29, 2012.
- Cobb, Pam. Former Director of Missions for Henry County Baptist Association, Rockford, IL. Interview by author, LaGrange, KY, August 20, 2010.
- Copeland, Glynn. Director of Missions for Graves County Baptist Association, Mayfield, KY. Interview by author, LaGrange, KY, November 28, 2012.
- De La Barra, Carlos. Director, Multiethnic Missions and Ministry Department KBC and former Hispanic Strategist for Bluegrass Hispanic Region, Louisville, KY. Interview by author, November 1, 2012.
- Denton, Kevin. Pastor, Horse Cave Baptist Church and Board Member of Southern Kentucky Hispanic Region, Horse Cave, KY. Interview by author, LaGrange, KY, October 30, 2012.
- Franco, Christian. Former member, Glen Lily Hispanic Mission, Bowling Green, KY. Interview by author, Ballardsville, KY, November 4, 2012.
- Garcia, Jorge. Regional Hispanic Strategist of Southwestern Hispanic Region, Oak Grove, KY. Interview by author, Oak Grove, KY October 27, 2012.
- Gutierrez, Pat. Missionary Associate, Kentucky Baptist Convention Missionary Associate, Bowling Green, KY. Interview by author, LaGrange, KY, November 16, 2012.
- Hernandez, Clemente. Pastor, Iglesia Bautista Ebenezer, Georgetown, KY. Interview by author, Campbellsville, KY, November 5, 2012.

Hernandez, Twyla. Executive Director, Hispanic Baptist Bible Institute, Louisville, KY. Interview by author, Campbellsville, KY, November 5, 2012.

Holt, William. Member, Chaplin Baptist Church, Chaplin, KY. Interview by author, Chaplin, KY, November 7, 2012.

Hough, Tony. Director of Missions, Shelby County Baptist Association. Former Director of Missions, Kentucky Baptist Convention. Interview by author, LaGrange, KY, October 10, 2012.

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ABSTRACT

A DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS OF SOUTHERN BAPTIST MISSIONS AMONG HISPANICS IN KENTUCKY

Jonathan Paul Young, D.Miss.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013
Chair: Dr. M. David Sills

Chapter 1 examines the Hispanic community in the United States then in Kentucky. It provides an overview of the history of Southern Baptist missions among Hispanics in Kentucky as seen through the framework of the six regional Hispanic ministries. An overview of the importance of the Hispanic Statewide Council and the Hispanic Baptist Bible Institute are sketched. Finally, the chapter concludes with the background of the study, and the research methodology.

Chapter 2 provides an in-depth sketch of the histories of the Central Hispanic Region and South Central Hispanic Region. I begin with a historical picture of the Central Hispanic Region. The beginnings, growth, and present standing are then examined. This chapter includes a brief look at other ministries geared towards Hispanics who are found within this geographical region. The Hispanic racetrack ministry of Churchill Downs in Louisville and of Turfway Park in Florence along with Northern Kentucky Baptist Association's Hispanic Ministry history serve as examples. Following this is an examination of South Central Hispanic Region. The beginnings, growth and present status will be provided chronologically. The chapter concludes with a few insights garnered from these two regions.

Chapter 3 presents historical sketches of both the Bluegrass Hispanic Region and the Southwestern Hispanic Region. First, the beginnings, growth and present status of Hispanic Southern Baptists are examined. Second, Elkhorn Baptist Association's Hispanic ministry history is surveyed. Third, the Southwestern Hispanic Region is presented in the same manner. The chapter concludes with several insights learned from these two Kentucky Hispanic Baptist Regions.

Chapter 4 chronicles the histories of the Southern Kentucky Hispanic Region and the Western Hispanic Region. Both of these regions are presented much like the other previous regional Hispanic regions in this dissertation while including the idiosyncrasies of the regions at hand.

Chapter 5 begins by summarizing the findings of this diachronic analysis of Southern Baptist missions among Hispanics in Kentucky. Drawing upon previous chapters, I suggest several potential applications for Kentucky Baptists, both Hispanic and non-Hispanic alike. The dissertation concludes with recommendations for further research.

VITA

Jonathan Paul Young

EDUCATIONAL

Diploma, Murray County High School, Chatsworth, Georgia, 1995

B.S., North Georgia College and State University, 2000

M.Div., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004

MINISTERIAL

Youth Minister, Iglesia Bautista Nueva Jerusalén, Louisville, Kentucky,
2001-04

Church Planter, Lyndon Baptist Hispanic Mission, Louisville, Kentucky,
2004-05

Pastor, Iglesia Bautista Nuevo Amanecer, Crestwood, Kentucky, 2005-
Ethnic Strategist, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Central Region Hispanic Inc.,
Crestwood, Kentucky, 2011-

ACADEMIC

Instructor, Hispanic Baptist Bible Institute, Louisville, Kentucky, 2007-

Instructor, Southern Baptist Seminary Hispanic Leadership Institute, 2010-

ORGANIZATIONAL

Evangelical Missiological Society