

Transitions & Growth: A new journey for RED LATINA NC CBF!

by Linda Jones | CBFNC Missions Coordinator



Excitement and enthusiasm is evident with a new beginning and the promise of good things to come for our CBFNC Latino network! At the same time, we celebrate 10 years of our CBFNC Hispanic Network under the leadership of Javier Benitez. Many things were accomplished in those ten years: new church starts, retreats for men, women, children, and families, mission endeavors in Mexico and beyond, and meaningful ministry in North Carolina. Prayer and discipleship undergirded it all as evident in the successful churches and ministries flourishing today. With the maturity and growth of the Network, it was time for more structure. A temporary interim steering team diligently worked, creating new bylaws, a new name, and subsequently a new leadership team.



A new chapter has begun for **Red Latina NC CBF** (“Red Latina” means “Latino network” in English.) Red Latina is under the leadership of Santiago Reales, our new Director. Santiago is a CBF-endorsed chaplain at Trellis Supportive Care. He received an MDiv degree from Gardner-Webb University Divinity School. He has served as pastor and associate pastor at several churches in Texas & North Carolina, most recently Associate Pastor of the Hispanic-Latino Ministry at Piney Grove Baptist Church, Mt. Airy, NC.



Santiago Reales (right) Director, Red Latina NC CBF, with his wife, Elaine E. Correa-Castro

A new leadership team has been elected by Red Latina. It is composed of Daniel Sostaita, Pastor of Iglesia Cristiana Sin Fronteras, Winston Salem; Richard Contreras, Pastor of Comunidad Evangelica Internacional La Red, Charlotte; Fortino Ocampo, Pastor of Centro Familiar Cristiano, Siler City; and

Rafael Hernandez, Pastor of FBC Latino Ministry, Huntersville. These are very accomplished leaders who have served in many churches as pastors and associate pastors with much wisdom, discernment, and most important of all, faith. In truth, all our Red Latina pastors and leaders are committed, faith-filled, educated ministers providing love, guidance, support, and resources to their congregations and community in these tenuous times as Latinos.

The work of Red Latina NC CBF consists of nurturing a growing, mutual, and interdependent relationship among Latino congregations and pastors, developing collegial learning attending to their unique gifts and needs, and integrating Red Latina churches and pastors into the life of CBFNC. In addition, Red Latina will collaborate with CBF Familia in their focus on Fellowship, Advocacy, Missions & ministry, Identity, Leadership, Intergenerational emphasis, and Alliances. Past collaborations with church planting training, Dawnings, and participating on the CBF Familia leadership team will continue with enthusiasm.

“CBF has been a family to experience faith, community, and gathering. I am excited to be a part of the CBFNC leadership to continue the work of empowering the next generation of Latino pastors and leaders in NC.” – Santiago Reales

Philippians 3:14 ASV “I’ve got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward-to Jesus. I’m off and running, and I’m not turning back.”

“As I entered the room, Latino pastors and their spouses were gathering for a retreat led by Dr. Herbert Palomino. Snacks were being set out, materials distributed on the tables, and people were greeting each other with hugs. Delight was in the air! We were all glad to see each other! Expectations were high since Dr. Palomino, professor at Gardner-Webb Divinity School, had led a previous successful retreat. I must say any time these friends of mine are together, relationships run deep and joy is present! Life can be difficult for a Latino in NC, documented or undocumented. Yet these pastors and spouses (who often function as co-pastors) minister in Jesus’ name with love to each other, to their congregations, and in their communities. By all accounts, it was a great retreat and Dr. Palomino did not disappoint!”

—Linda Jones, CBFNC Missions Coordinator

