

HISPANIC OUTREACH IN SIOUXLAND

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During the third week of July I was able to attend the National Hispanic Conference in Orlando, FL. Each day was filled with worship, Bible studies, presentations, and workshops. The theme was “One mission, One message and One people” based on Eph. 4:1-7. The oneness which we have comes from Christ and the Gospel message. We may have different cultures, but we have one Savior. We may not all look and act exactly alike, but we are moved by the same Lord of love. We may have different questions and applications, but we have the same source of revelation in God’s Word. In Christ we have union even though we may have different ways of speaking and living. This unity must be appreciated as we with other Christians in other ethnic groups reach out to DIVERSE groups who likewise need the Savior, but who will not be exactly like one’s own group. Each will have their uniqueness, yet their unity is in Christ. Christ is the Head of the body, and He holds it together.

The topic of one workshop focused on Anglo congregations sharing their facilities with other ethnic groups. Many small matters and details can cause misunderstandings and offenses. Good communication is necessary between the leaders of the groups. Certain basic rules for the use of facilities need to be followed by all groups, yet the rules should be flexible and adaptable to the different cultures involved. Congregations wanting to reach out to other cultures need to prepare themselves for certain changes. Workshops and Bible studies should be offered to prepare the members for the new cultural group and its ways. Just as the early church had to adapt to the Gentile believers coming into a church composed mostly of Jewish converts, so also we will have to make some changes and adaptations. By God’s grace each culture will enrich the other and all will grow in a fuller understanding of the Gospel and Christian life.

We continue to visit the homes of the ESL students, give classes to the senior citizen group, teach one confirmation class and connect with different community leaders working with Hispanics. We finished sending out the fliers, newspaper announcements, and posters for the new session of English classes which begin August 17 in South Sioux City and August 18 in Sioux City. On the first Sunday of August we invited all of the students and teachers of ESL to a potluck supper and ice cream social. We had a good group of over 40 and enjoyed the time for each to introduce themselves and share a little of their personal history. Two of the students shared their musical talents with us in singing and playing the accordion.

Do your best to keep the oneness of the Spirit by living together in peace. Eph. 4:3