

Trust in the Lord

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It was the beginning of a journey of faith on behalf of the church I serve. The small Caucasian congregation is in the heart of a community that has transitioned in recent years to a populace that is predominantly Hispanic. With declining attendance and red ink regularly appearing in our monthly financial reports, the handful of faithful members made a difficult choice. Our future viability in question, the tenacious leadership team decided to expend monies some might consider exorbitant to send me to a three-day denominational conference in a distant city. At the conference I was expected to connect with those experiencing success in planting Hispanic churches and denominational leadership which could offer financial support to such an endeavor. In the back of my mind was the issue of pastoral leadership for the new congregation. Who would be willing to move to our city to minister to the Hispanic community as a bi-vocational pastor with no guaranteed support from our congregation or the denomination?

The answer to all my uncertainty and the burden of those who had entrusted the future of their church to me was found in Seat 7C of a Boeing 737 on that fateful Sunday afternoon. As I sat there, surrounded by more than 100 strangers who were totally unaware of why I was joining them on that particular flight, the words of Solomon echoed in my mind, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight" (Prov. 3:5-6, NIV). Those of us aboard that aircraft were nonchalantly exchanging greetings and getting comfortable for an experience that would have occupied the purview of science fiction in the not too distant past. In a matter of minutes, the mass of more than 150,000 pounds of man and machinery in which we were riding would be "flying" at an elevation of 35,000 feet at speeds in excess of 500 miles per hour.

Those far more knowledgeable than I in such matters would understand the laws of physics that make such a feat possible. What I was able to comprehend in that experience was God's grace that created and sustains the natural order we take for granted and the intellect with which He has gifted humanity in our exercise of dominion over His creation. During the ensuing days, I would experience an even greater blessing in the realization of God's intervention in the affairs of His people. Within hours of the opening of the conference, I was sharing the church's story with a couple whom I expected would lead me to others who would consider planting a Hispanic church in our community and working alongside me in ministry to the existing congregation. They later shared with me that, during our conversation that afternoon, God was unmistakably speaking to them and calling them to do so.

At the time of this writing, less than ten days after our initial conversation, they are hours away from driving a day's journey to visit the church and the community He has called them to serve. In the months preceding our conversation, God was preparing their hearts, ordering their life's situation, and prompting the strategic planning process with which the church was engaged. On that blistering summer day, at a time and place of His choosing, God brought together those who would work to accomplish His will for this small congregation of faithful disciples. All involved in this new venture are confident that the future is in His hands. As we seek to remain true to God's will for us as individuals and as a church, we understand that each day's efforts must begin with the same unwavering understanding of His grace and calling that brought us together. The work of God's kingdom that lies ahead is ours; the glory for the fruits of our labors belongs to Him alone.

What is God calling you to do for His kingdom? What is He expecting of you that will require you to "Trust in the Lord with all your heart . . .?"