

Believers in Spain Issue Plea For Evangelists

An ambitious project will plant 1,000 churches in Spain and Portugal by 2010

Church leaders in Spain and Portugal for years have prayed and begged for Christian laborers from around the world to help them reach their goals to harvest souls in these European nations. A project now in place has the ambitious goal to plant hundreds of churches in Spain within 10 years.

“Please, and I insist, please help

us by sending laborers into this harvest field,” Francisco Garcia, pastor of New Life Christian Center in Chiclana de la Frontera, Spain, told Charisma.

For several years he has been sending out this global appeal, as he did at a conference last year in Guatemala where he declared: “This is a Macedonian call to invite Christians to come help Spain and Portugal.”

Less than 1 percent of the population of Spain is evangelical, according to Operation World, a missions reference manual by Patrick Johnstone.

Pastor Harold Caballeros from El Shaddai Church in Guatemala City embraced Garcia’s challenge in 1995 when he heard Garcia say to Latin leaders, “Centuries ago we [Spain] conquered you through aggression and force. Now we are asking you to conquer us with the love of Jesus Christ and His

gospel.”

These words inspired Caballeros to initiate and coordinate Project Spain and Portugal—a mission aimed at motivating and mobilizing believers around the world to work together to plant 1,000 churches on the Iberian peninsula by 2010.

The mission was launched in October 1998 during the World Congress on Intercession, Spiritual Warfare and Evangelism in Guatemala. At that gathering 1,150 believers and ministers from 50 nations committed their prayers and finances to the project. Since then, churches from Singapore, Uruguay, New Zealand, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Puerto Rico have committed to send church planters to Spain.

To prepare, the Leadership Institute of El Shaddai added a missionary training branch in February. In addition, the international committee for Project Spain and Portugal conducts two annual training-and-strategic-planning conferences in Spain to implement the vision. The most recent one, in March, involved pastors and leaders representing 25 provinces in Spain and 12 nations.

C. Peter Wagner of Global Harvest Ministries was including Spain and Portugal when he announced a new directive of prayer for nations in the 40/70 Window—a region of the world between latitudes 40 degrees and 70 degrees north of the equator, encompassing Europe and north and central Asia.

“Latin America has revival fires burning brightly. Asia is experiencing the greatest evangelistic harvest in the world,” Wagner said. “Africa south of the Sahara is now majority Christian. Revival reports are coming from virtually every

part of the world, except from the 40/70 Window.”

Garcia noted a four-to-five year period in the mid-1990s when the work of the church in much of Spain had ceased. Churches were not growing, and some closed. Many battled division or a general sense of depression.

Things started to change in 1999, and many credit the Spanish church’s Kairos conference in March of this year as a key turning point. Prophecies by leaders attending revealed that the Holy Spirit had started the breakthrough Garcia and others had labored for causing renewed hope for revival.

Garcia’s church has established two training programs—a one-month and a three-month program—to equip missionaries for church planting and cultural adaptation in Spain. Caballeros’ many trips to Spain have resulted in a heavy traveling schedule in which he travels worldwide telling believers, “This is the hour to impact Spain through church planting.”

A second World Congress will be held in Guatemala Oct. 24-29 with revival leaders Steve Hill, Rodney Howard-Browne, Claudio Freidzon and Cindy Jacobs. It is expected to be another major thrust to accelerate church planting in Spain and Portugal.