

# Shared Heartbeat

## The Benefits of Partnership

**W**hat happens when two churches from two different cultures form a true partnership? **Cave Spring Baptist Church** (Roanoke) and Iglesia Gracia Redentora (Vega Baja, Puerto Rico) have both seen great benefits from their growing partnership. Cave Spring (CSBC) first traveled to Puerto Rico in December 2017 as a part of the SBCV Disaster Relief response to Hurricane Maria. After helping meet the physical needs resulting from the hurricane, SBCV churches began to meet spiritual needs in Puerto Rico through church planting partnerships with Send Network Puerto Rico. After a quick tour of the island and meeting several church planters, CSBC met one final planter before heading home: Xavier Torrado of Iglesia Gracia Redentora (IGR). With a clear shared commitment and vision, the two churches prayerfully entered into a new partnership.

“From the start, we both wanted an ongoing relational connection beyond just sending teams,” shared Allen James, CSBC’s pastor of community and missions. “We wanted a partnership where each church encouraged and served the other. We wanted to build a true Gospel friendship between the two churches.”

CSBC began taking trips to Vega Baja twice a year to help IGR reach its community with the Gospel and train leaders within the church. The churches have partnered in sharing the Gospel door to door, serving a local elementary school, hosting Vacation Bible School, doing community service projects, and prayer-walking through the neighborhoods around the church. Torrado shared, “It’s always a joy to work on God’s mission, but it’s even more joyful when God puts partners alongside us to work for His Glory.”

In June of this year, CSBC sent a team to help IGR with Vacation Bible School through manpower and resources. Allen James said, “We were encouraged to find that most of the children who came spoke good English—they laughed at our attempts at Spanish and told us they understood our English better.” The

team enjoyed helping with VBS and the times of fellowship, prayer, and worship with the church. One conversation with Pastor Torrado led to a discussion of CSBC’s upcoming Serve Roanoke week, a student camp and local outreach event. Within 24 hours, IGR had recruited four students to participate in Serve Roanoke as well as a young man to lead their team. The five volunteers flew to Roanoke and participated in Serve Roanoke and stayed at the church each night, along with more than 50 students from CSBC. By the end of the week, many new friendships had formed between the students and the team from IGR.

These are the benefits of true partnership. A shared vision, a shared desire to see the Gospel spread, shared resources, and the sharing of lives spent for God’s glory. Torrado explained, “We believe that a partnership is not about only one side serving the other. This is the beauty of this relationship. This is something that pastors from both churches always keep in mind—how to develop a mutually beneficial relationship in this partnership.”

James echoed the same heartbeat. “We’ve received much more than we’ve given through our partnership with Iglesia Gracia Redentora. People want to make a difference. They want to be used by God. They want to be stretched and challenged. This partnership has accomplished all that and more. Every CSBC member who has gone to Puerto Rico has been blessed and wants to go back.”

The partnership between CSBC and IGR is one of over a dozen church-to-church partnerships between SBCV and Puerto Rican Baptist churches. ■

### RESOURCE:

*To pursue a partnership with a Puerto Rican church or church plant, contact:*



[missions@sbcv.org](mailto:missions@sbcv.org)



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