

New Spanish Church To Aid Disrupted Lives

By HELEN ORDNER

They are too few, leaders say, and they have been long in coming, but community services for Hispanic peoples are increasing in the metro area.

Most people in this field agree that development of services has been hindered by language differences and the fears of illegal immigrants.

Aid for Spanish-speaking people is expected to increase when the Spanish Baptist Church — the first Spanish church in the state to construct its own building — moves into permanent quarters in a month and a half.

The church, now meeting with First Baptist of Avondale Estates, will be in a heavily-populated area, at 3532 Covington Highway.

Its ministry is holistic, according to the Rev. Bob Sena. First, they attend to survival, emotional and physical needs of people frequently experiencing cultural shock.

The church offers a job bank, contacting corporations to determine their needs and trying to match these with available people.

They also train job-seekers, giving them orientation, experience in interview skills and covering such basics as how to dress for an interview.

More than 50 people have found employment through this method and backers continue to give industry the message that "Hispanics are reliable and have stickability;

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Hispanic

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we can provide people for you."

If a language barrier is the problem, those needing jobs are referred to English and a Second Language classes offered by the church.

It is the only Baptist church, according to the pastor, to have a teacher certified by the DeKalb Board of Education.

Despite a high rate of dropouts, more than 100 persons have completed the course which is offered in several time periods through the week.

Among the future goals are a medical clinic at the church and a traveling dental clinic to go to the larger clusters of Spanish-speaking people.

Now, a doctor in the congregation sees those with physical problems and refers them for help — depending on their finances — to private or public care.

A lawyer and an accountant are also available through the church.

ITS MINISTRY is to the total community, according to the pastor, but it targets those who are disoriented by the double problems of a different culture and a different language.

On an assimilation test, they would score close to zero, the minister said.

He is hoping to recruit volunteers to expand his programs, but he says they would have to be those willing to invest in people without really expecting much of a return.

Whether those receiving aid ever become part of his church or not is okay, he said; a seed has been planted. "If they are hungry, we feed them; if they are sick, we find care. We are committed to the advancement of Hispanics in the holistic sense; not just spiritual."

Child-care for Hispanics at a nominal cost is another goal of the church. Even though the adults may have learned enough English to be in the work force, their children have not been exposed and are frequently traumatized by being placed in English-speaking daycare, he said.

Far more people are reached by

the non-profit Latin American Association (239-0940) than by the newly organized church. Last year, more than 10,000 received direct services or referrals, according to spokesmen. They aid them in handling legal problems of immigration and going through the confusing process of applying for food stamps and welfare.

They also aid with employment and provide translations and the services of an interpreter. Most law enforcement agencies are very limited in bilingual personnel or have them concentrated in only one zone.

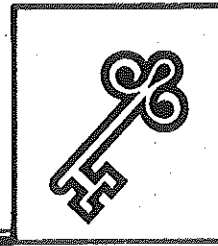
Grady Hospital does not have the bilingual personnel who are sometimes desperately needed and the Latin American Association assists there on a regular basis. Elderly gather at a center once each week to socialize with their peers, have arts and crafts and go on occasional local outings.

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, there are approximately 85,000 Hispanic residents of the metro area. Leaders in the community believe a figure of 150,000 would be more accurate, as many who have an illegal status have a fear of "coming out." "Somebody has to serve them," said the Rev. Sena. "If your focus is Spanish and you have needs, we try to minister to those."

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Keynotes

On
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TREVA TRASHUN FORD, a graduate of Avondale High School and daughter of Diane Ford of Decatur, entered Tennessee State University in Nashville in the fall of 1990 and has studied in the criminal justice field. She has maintained a 3.6-plus grade point average, after three semesters of fulltime study. She has earned and received three Dean's List Certificates from the university.

RACHAEL AND TONY DELA GARZA of Stone Mountain announce the birth of a daughter, Rebecca/Annley Lauren, Jan. 23 at Crawford Long Hospital. The baby weighed six pounds, 15 ounces, and was 20 inches long. Grandparents are Tony and Ruth DelaGarza of Stone Mountain and Mike and Kay Horn of Middleburg, Fla. Great-grandparents are Tony and Frances DelaGarza of San Antonio, Texas, and Cecil and Neva Howard of Warner Robins.

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA students initiated into Sigma Phi Chapter of Kappa Delta sorority are: Brandy Amato, daughter of Anthony and Carolyn Amato; Jennifer Leah Hill, daughter of Ruth Ann and Bruce Hill; Beth Hill, daughter of Kitty and Bill Hill; Suellen Parker, daughter of Jack and Reed Parker, and Lynette Vallecillo, daughter of Luis and Annette Vallecillo. Miss Amato was graduated from Lakeside High School; Jennifer Hill and Miss Vallecillo, from Tucker; Beth Hill from Redan; and Miss Parker from Henderson.

JEFFREY L. KNIGHT of Decatur has been named to the fall Dean's List at Georgia Institute of Technology. He is a freshman.

ALISON SHERRILL, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Sherrill, was elected registrar of her sorority, Epsilon Epsilon Chapter of Sigma Kappa at the University of Georgia. Sherrill is an early education major at the university. She is involved with the All Campus Homecoming Committee and is area coordinator for Communiversiety.

LORI AND BRIAN BURNHAM had adopted a baby boy, Zachary David, born Jan. 13 and weighing six pounds, 10 ounces. The maternal grandparents are Ermine and Carl Davis of Avondale Estates and paternal grandparents are Sally and Jerry Burnham of Mawmee, Ohio.

NELA WILLIAMS returned to Zurich on her way home to Zagreb, Yugoslavia. She is a Southern Baptist foreign missionary, her husband Jim died in a car accident in Yugoslavia in 1978. Her three children, Tanja, 20, Kresimir, 18, and Ian, 13 remained in the United States attending school with their paternal grandparents in Gray. Nela is the daughter of Josip Horak, former president of the Baptist Union of Yugoslavia. She furloughed two weeks here with her children at Christmas time.

MUSIC AUDITIONS for Martha Settle Scholarship for Youth Music Camps will be held Saturday Feb. 1 at Wienc Rd. Baptist Church. Vocalists, keyboardists, and instrumentalists are eligible. No taped accompaniment is permitted.

KATHY MERRITT was chosen the 1991-92 Teacher of the Year at St. Thomas More Catholic School in Decatur. Mrs. Merritt teaches music to the 300 plus kindergarten through eighth grade students.

DR. AND MRS. ROBERT CHERRY of Stone Mountain had as their recent visitors their daughter Becky and husband Brian Frick and their three-year-old daughter Morgan of Texas.

MINNIE C. FOSTER of Decatur was one of seven reading specialists inducted into the Georgia Reading Hall of Fame by the Georgia Council of the International Reading Association.

GEORGIA BAPTIST CONVENTION'S Administration Committee elected officers at its recent meeting: Robert Woodall, pastor of Mountain Park First Baptist Stone Mountain, chairman; William Tribble, pastor, Social Circle First Baptist, vice chairman; James N. Griffith, executive-director-treasurer of GBC Executive Committee; Cathy Humphrey, secretary for Executive Committee.

LLOYD FACKLER of Decatur recently retired after more than 40 years of service with the Atlanta Gas Light Co., where he was senior vice president-finance of the company.

ALLEN AND SUE DICKSON of Denver, Colo., are recent newcomers to the Stone Mountain area.

THE 207TH ANNIVERSARY celebration of the founding of the University of Georgia will be held at the Athens Country Club, Thursday, Jan. 30. The keynote speaker for the banquet will be Gene Methvin, senior editor of *Reader's Digest*. He is a 1955 journalism graduate of the University. There will be a reception at 6:30 p.m. with dinner and the program beginning at 7. Tickets are available by calling Genie Snyder at 542-2251.

THE MT. CARMEL CHRISTIAN CHURCH group going to India is scheduled for Feb. 10-26. Alec and Patti Ward, Dalton and Zelda Scott, Tracy Adams, J.D. Smith and Bruce Barfield are included in the group. They plan to join Browster McLeod, already there, in visiting the church's 18 congregations.

BILL AND ANDREANN PHILIPS of Kansas City, Mo., were recent holiday visitors of relatives in the Decatur area.

IOTA THETA CHAPTER of Zeta Tau Alpha of the Georgia Institute of Technology congratulates Lynn Kawaminami for making Dean's List for fall quarter. Lynn, daughter of Charles and Carolyn Romines, is a sophomore, majoring in industrial engineering.

FIRST SPANISH BAPTIST CHURCH of Metro Atlanta celebrated the inauguration of its new \$1 million building on Nov. 24. The church is located on Covington Highway in Decatur. This is recognized as the first Hispanic Baptist Church in the State of Georgia. Bob Sena is pastor. Truett Gannon, president of the Georgia Baptist Convention and Nancy Schaefer attended the services.

WILLIAM CRAWFORD OF TUCKER received his Master of Divinity degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. In the same services, Jonathan Tucker of Atlanta received his Master of Church Music, and George Edward Robertson, Jr., of Atlanta received a Master of Religious Education degree.

