



The Cost of Leading with Integrity

by Larry Black, Church Planting Strategist, Central-West Region

“The one who lives with integrity is righteous; his children who come after him will be blessed.” Proverbs 20:7



SBCV catalytic church planter, Carlos Payan, is one of 46 million Mexican immigrants living in America today. With an R-1 (religious) visa, he moved his family to Lynchburg and started a Spanish-speaking church, Iglesia de las Americas. Many other Christian immigrants have followed a similar path, but Pastor Carlos' story stands out.

Doing the Right Thing

Pastor Carlos applied for long-term legal status, paid massive lawyer fees multiple times, and did much more than was required of him. Nevertheless, when his visa expired, he, his wife, and two children were told they would have to return to Mexico to await final approval. They owned their home, their children were established in school, their friends were here, and most of the church's members had come to faith under Carlos' ministry. Many would say they had every reason to stay and disobey the government. Carlos, however, did the right thing and took his family back to Mexico.

Catching a Vision

They went there to wait, but the Gospel would not wait. Everywhere Pastor Carlos looked,

he saw lostness, and he heralded the Good News as a faithful steward. While in Mexico, he helped start five new churches near his hometown. The leaders Pastor Carlos taught and developed there had to assume leadership roles quickly. Through this experience, Carlos caught a vision that led him to start the School of Leaders when he returned to Lynchburg. At the school, rising leaders are trained in sound doctrine and how to start small groups. Some groups will become churches, and all will focus on equipping disciples and new leaders. Currently, Pastor Carlos is training nine leaders to evangelize the lost and start new groups. Two new areas have been identified as needing Hispanic churches, and some of the newly trained leaders will plant these new churches this year!

Pastor Carlos Payan chose to do the right thing God's way and live a life of integrity. When asked how his children have handled these difficult days, he acknowledges they are both honor students—in Mexico *and* in America. By watching their dad lead a God-honoring life, the Payan children have learned how to be faithful through the trials. Are *you* leading with integrity?

RESOURCE

Websites:

www.virginia.edu/uvatoday/newsRelease.php?id=4308

www.pewhispanic.org/states/?stateid=VA

SBCV Contact:

Call 888-234-7716 for details from your region's missionary.

Consider:

Are you honoring God by living a life of integrity?

