

History Highlights



Fill the Fields, Not the Pews

Our founder Pastor Von wanted people everywhere to know about Jesus. Sometimes he criticized the church for gathering all the lights in one place instead of being candles in the darkness (Matthew 5:15). So it's not surprising that so many who came through his program of discipleship and service or who simply heard him speak answered the call to become missionaries, pastors, youth pastors, and leaders for Christ. A list of those who began a life of service would overflow this paper, and the multiplication effect would fill a book. Here's just one example of the many who were called to fill the fields:

Rafael López, more commonly known as Rafa, had an early connection to Von. He was a small child in an orphanage Von used to visit. After that, a relative took him to the U.S. where he was raised. However, he made some unwise choices growing up, and eventually landed in jail. California's "three strikes" law made his third offense a felony. After serving his time he was deported, where the Mexican authorities determined he was wanted in Chiapas. After a month in jail there, he was released – the warrant was for a different (and much shorter!) Rafael López. Alone in southern Mexico with only the funds his fellow inmates had contributed, he called his brother Efren who was on staff with Spectrum and made his way to Tijuana. Once in town, he went with Spectrum to its

activities, became the live-in watchman for the dorm property, was instrumental in the construction of the dorm, and spent time translating for Von and talking with him on the two-way radio as Von drove home late at night. As those with Spectrum cared for Rafa and shared with him, God began to work on his heart. The resulting transformation was so complete that Rafa applied to Bible and missionary school. After his schooling he fulfilled a promise to a friend and classmate and served with the Mixteco migrant farm workers four hours south of Tijuana for a few years. Then he began serving at an orphanage in the same area. He met his future wife there, and they married and had a daughter. Rafa's earthly ministry ended abruptly in April of 2018 when he passed away.

Although in recent years Spectrum has placed a higher priority on strengthening the local churches in the neighborhoods we serve, we do not aspire to fill pews in those churches. Rather, we desire that these churches care about the people in the community, that they reach out and share the gospel with them, and that they are equipped and willing to prepare new believers for a life of service for Jesus in the fields.

