No Better Time

Jonathan Stanfield 3 May 2023



It's wonderful to be back on the island after a fruitful time in the US with our Four12 partnering churches. All over the world, it feels that God is breaking through in ways we haven't experienced for a long time. Even in a short three weeks, we experienced so much life, fruit and breakthrough.

Heritage, the host church in San Clemente, had become stagnant and was marked by division and conflict. Now, after a season of pain, prayer, hard work and reconciliation, there have been weekly salvations, new leaders ordained, and significant new church growth, as the church is healthy and positioned for the commanded blessing of God. Up to 70% of the church wasn't there 4 years ago.

For instance, Christian was supernaturally drawn to the church building on Sunday morning, just over a month ago after his release from prison, and as the Holy Spirit moved upon him powerfully on his first Sunday service, he surrendered his life to Jesus and was baptised on Easter Sunday. They have seen weekly public responses to the Gospel for over a month.

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We were also joined for the Equipping week by Josh Gen Upstate, the Four12 partnering church in South Carolina, where our former deacons Randy & Mary Frankwick are now living. It was amazing to see how a church planted during the pandemic has grown and is now thriving under the leadership of Steve and Lynn Moss. Annette and I have been invited to minister and ordain elders at the end of the summer.

We also planted a new church on Easter Sunday, just up the coast towards Los Angeles in Newport Beach. Chad and Janet Leeper had been seeking God and we had thought the plant would happen later in the year. But the Holy Spirit led, and during our visit, this brand new church launched. I caught up with Chas during the week and, without a proper venue, advertising or even much of a strategy, last Sunday they had 31 adults and 21 kids who attended their home venue – all down to "holy gossip". (Read their amazing story here).

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What has encouraged me the most, upon our return to Living Hope, is how God has been moving so powerfully in our absence. Every congregation is experiencing the life of God and new people are checking us out on Sundays in numbers that we have never seen before. God is at work. For so long on the island, even though we have consistently planted out new congregations, it has felt as if we have been preaching the word "out of season"; however, it now feels that the spiritual climate has changed and it is "in season".

There's no better time than now for us to step out in faith and partner with God in reaching new folks with the Good News, inviting them to church and bringing home the prodigals.