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A member of an evangelical Christian church near San Cristobal, Chiapas, worshipped during a service last November, when a team from Norvi Mayfield Ministries visited. (Photos by Craig Bird)

'Fear of God enables him to fear no man'

By Craig Bird

Special to the Baptist Standard

SAN ANTONIO—A half-dozen Texas Baptist churches heard the voice of the persecuted church recently when Moises Guillen Solis Dominguez challenged them not to forget Christian brothers and sisters in Chiapas, Mexico.

Dominguez spoke at First Baptist Church in Gonzales, First Baptist Church in Lumberton, First Baptist Church in Silsbee, First Baptist Church in Kountze, South San Filadelfia Baptist Church in San Antonio and Nueva Jerusalem Baptist Church in Houston. He was sponsored by Norvi Mayfield Ministries, which has been working in Chiapas for years.

"It was amazing to meet ... a man whose fear of God enables him to fear no man," said Lori Moody, women's ministry coordinator at First Baptist Church in Silsbee. "I was overcome with emotion as we surrounded him, laid hands on him and prayed. I believe God is doing a great work through him in Chiapas."

The southern Mexican state has the highest percentage of evangelical Christians—and the fastest growth rate—in Mexico. Evangelicals there also face the most intense persecution from leaders of the traditional sun-worship religion.

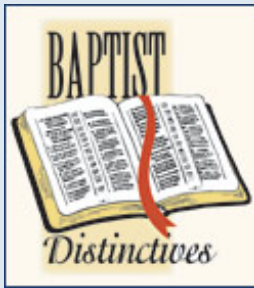
The last assassination of a pastor occurred in 2003, but evangelicals still are evicted from their home villages, their children denied places in school and they even are barred from buying or selling at the local market and cut off from public electric and water supplies.

Dominguez, who became a Christian at age 8 by reading gospel tracts others in his village discarded, began starting churches among the Choles tribe of the Mayan Indians in 1966 as a 15-year-old preacher. In 10 years, he organized 40 congregations that still are alive and growing, he said. He then moved on to other ministries, primarily in Guadalajara, where he and his family worked with street children and people addicted to drugs and alcohol.

But he felt God calling him back to Chiapas, and



Members of South San Filadelfia Baptist Church in San Antonio surround Chiapas Mexico pastor Moises Guillen with prayer after hearing his report on the persecution of evangelical Christians in the southern Mexico state. The church also took up a collection to purchase Bibles (for \$8 each) in the Mayan dialect spoken in the area.



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he returned to the area in 2002 without any church committed to supporting him.

When Pastor Mario Mendez was killed in 2003, Dominguez and his wife journeyed to the mountain village where he had served to provide comfort and support—even raising funds to buy a small cinder block building for the congregation to replace the wooden structure a mob had torched.

“The people begged me not to leave them. They felt other Christians had forgotten them and didn’t care what was happening,” Dominguez said. “So, even though the assassins were—and still are—at large, we agreed to take over Pastor Mendez’s ministry of eight churches.

“Today, we hold monthly training sessions for pastors and other church leaders. Despite the hardship and danger, people are turning to the Lord. Some estimates are that 50 percent of all the Mayans in Chiapas are now evangelical Christians—which is why the resistance is so strong and brutal.”

Norvi Mayfield Ministries is partnering in the training effort.

Mayfield, a Mayan Indian from Honduras who is a member of First Baptist Church in Gonzales, shares Dominguez’s urgency to “reach people and train them.”

“We have children as young as 12 coming and saying, ‘Teach me what the Bible says and what to do, and I will go tell my village the truth of the gospel,’” she said.

Mayan Christians are not afraid to suffer for their faith, she pointed out, but they do fear two things. One is that there will not be solid training available for their children.

“They say, ‘We will be honored to die for Jesus, but we yearn to know that if we fall, there will be others to raise our children in the faith, to give them solid doctrine so they’ll know what to die for, too,’” she explained.

Second, they hunger to know they are prayed for fervently and consistently by Christians in what they call “the free church.”

“When I am returning to Texas, they always beg me: ‘Don’t forget us when you leave. Tell the Christians in America that we can feel the strength of their prayers. And we can feel when they forget to pray.’”

For more information about Dominguez’s work with Norvi Mayfield Ministries, visit www.norvimayfieldministries.org.

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