

## Vision of Wholeness

Rev. Nora Jacob and Rev. Al Lopez

UrbanMission, Pomona, CA

2015 Hope Partnership Leadership Academy Participants,  
NBA Incubate Social Entrepreneur Cohort

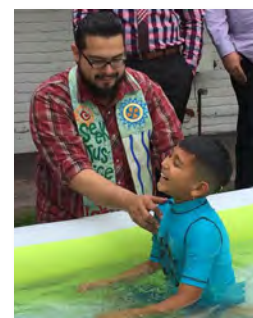
Early in 2013, Al Lopez, a Disciples seminary student, was called by the Southern California-Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ to plant a new UCC/DOC church. He envisioned an unusual way of doing church planting. Al's premise was that those who did social justice work together would eventually attract and grow a worshiping congregation. Its individual ministries would be self-contained but interdependent, funded primarily through social entrepreneurship rather than traditional means.

UrbanMission was planted in a Conference-owned empty church building in South Pomona, California. A few neighbors, who turned into the first partners (aka "members"), walked in and offered to help restore and transform the building.

Meanwhile, at the Disciples Seminary Foundation, Al connected with two other Claremont School of Theology students with whom the UrbanMission ministries collective would begin. Stephen Patten, a longtime educator, was passionate about food justice, community wellness, and sustainability. Nora Jacob, a mid-life career changer, was ready to begin ministries of restorative justice and reentry services (particularly housing) for those coming out of jail or prison.

Today, UrbanMission offers a gathering each Sunday morning with an average attendance of 20; an Open Table meal each Sunday evening for 50-75 community members; a food pantry and clothing/shoe locker; and a monthly reentry resource fair for people returning home from prison/jail. We've baptized 20 new and returning followers of Jesus Christ...began a community garden...and established a new nonprofit, Pomona Valley Reentry Coalition. We are involved in partnerships with more than two dozen nonprofit and faith-based organizations.

We look forward to cementing a new affiliation with the NBA Incubate Initiative, with an aim to incorporate UrbanMission Community Partners as a nonprofit organization committed to carrying out our vision of wholeness in our part of a fragmented world.




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*This blog is part of a series of reflections highlighting the ministries of the **NBA Incubate Initiative**. The NBA incubates new ministries, supporting social entrepreneurs of faith who are serving their communities in a variety of innovative ways and empowering these Disciples-led health and social service projects to focus on growth, impact, and sustainability. Learn more at [nbacares.org/incubate](http://nbacares.org/incubate) or by contacting Rev. Ayanna Johnson Watkins, Director of the NBA Incubate Initiative, at [awatkins@nbacares.org](mailto:awatkins@nbacares.org).*