

Broadcasting THE GOOD NEWS

Betty Backstrom

If you tune your radio to WFNO in New Orleans, Louisiana, you may hear the Reverend Samuel Calvo on his weekly show. Calvo is a General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) missionary and pastor of El Messias United Methodist Church in Kenner. He presents a weekly radio show on "LaFabulosa" WFNO-830 targeting Hispanic listeners. The program is part of a comprehensive Hispanic ministry that is drawing significant numbers of new people to The United Methodist Church each weekend.



Samuel Calvo

Sam, the former head of the Costa Rica Methodist Church, and his daughter-in-law, Mirabel Mojica Calvo, head this thriving ministry which seeks to serve the needs of the Hispanic population of the New Orleans area. Both are missionary pastors assigned through GBGM.

Mirabel, a native of Brazil, serves as chief Hispanic ministry consultant. But the family involvement doesn't stop there. Sam's wife Sarai, formerly a teacher in Costa Rica, works as a Spanish teacher for those serving the ministry.

Sam has helped to develop and maintain steady growth at El Messias. Sarai, in addition to teaching Spanish, serves as the Community Outreach Director for the ministry. It is standard fare to see a minimum of 40 visitors per Sunday from across metropolitan New

Orleans at El Messias.

The keystone of the Hispanic ministry is the community school, which houses GED classes given in Spanish. ESL (English as a Second Language) classes are also taught in keeping with the ministry's objective of helping

Hispanic persons acclimate to life in the United States. William and Betty Rowell of First United Methodist Church in Kenner have been dedicated to teaching those classes. The ministry also offers GED classes in English, U.S. citizenship classes, and assistance with immigration issues.

"Those classes have grown astronomically due to the popularity of the radio broadcast," said the Rev. Alonzo Campbell, director of Special Ministries for the Louisiana Annual Conference. "The ministry is currently seeking additional volunteers so that it can expand its capacity to transport people, offer ESL classes, provide translation services, serve as intake workers, and assist with health fairs. If a volunteer does not speak Spanish, we have tutors to help them learn the language."

Sam Calvo and his family are expanding their reach by using the airwaves, serving the needs of a growing Hispanic community in Louisiana. □

**Betty Backstrom is editor of the
Conference Newspaper, Louisiana Now!**

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