

Unión Femenil Misionera to form national organization

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Since its relaunch less than four years ago, Unión Femenil Misionera de Texas has emerged not only as a growing network within the state, but also as an influence nationally, leaders of the missions organization noted.

UFM began in 1917 when representatives from seven churches met in San Marcos, seven years after the Mexican Baptist Convention of Texas launched. In 1962, UFM came under the umbrella of Woman's Missionary Union of Texas. In August 2015, UFM became an independent organization related to the Convención Bautista Hispana de Texas.

Since then, UFM has grown in its support for missions in Texas, as well as throughout the United States and internationally. UFM held its annual meeting March 1-2 at Agape Baptist Church in San Antonio, meeting separately from the Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas for the first time, noted Bea Mesquias, UFM executive director-treasurer.

Providing a national model

As Hispanic Baptist women grow in number throughout the nation, they are looking to Mesquias for leadership in helping organize and launch UFM in their states, Texas UFM President Silvia Aké said

So, Mesquias and other Texas UFM leaders started Unión Femenil Misionera Nacional, which will support mission work and develop leaders across the country, Aké said.

"I have gone and talked to other states where they said: 'We want to have a

board. Can you come and structure them?’” Mesquias said. “There are groups of women that can start their own organization in their state and form their own board. I would come to lead and help them organize.”

Mesquias plans to help UFMN until the national group finalizes organizing and finds a board and an executive director.

While other states may have groups of women who want support to mission work, they do not have the organization Texas UFM has, Mesquias said.

So far, women from Florida, California, Georgia, Arizona and Illinois have contacted Mesquias for help. Those states will be a part of the structuring of UFMN, which is set to have a board and meet for the first time in September, Mesquias said.

Growing as a national organization gives UFMN the opportunity to write and publish its own materials, which will correlate more to the missions activities and emphases in which Hispanic women are involved, she added.

UFMs organizing and developing in other states could help Hispanic churches organize and develop in those states as well, she noted.

“I just want to tell all the women and men moving forward, *adelante!*” Mesquias said.