

Missionaries' work in Honduras bears fruit in Dallas

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Missionaries from the United States planted the gospel seed when they arrived in Honduras 60 years ago. Now their labor continues to bear fruit through the ministry of Ricarte Espinal, pastor of Iglesia Bautista La Promesa in Dallas.

"My dad had a house in a ranch outside the city when the missionaries arrived, and he took them there," said Espinal.



Ricarte Espinal came to Iglesia Bautista La Promesa in Dallas eight years ago, a congregation that is part of Gaston Oaks Baptist Church. (Photo courtesy of Ricarte Espinal)

Espinal's mother helped missionaries start the ministry in Honduras and

continued it after they left, he noted.

The involvement in ministry of his parents marked his and his brothers' lives, he said. Now two of his brothers are pastors, as well.

"All of this began from the seed American missionaries planted," Espinal said. "They came, and they began the work."

In 1986, Espinal came to the United States with the goal of going back home after one or two years, but that plan changed when God called him to serve in Texas, he said.

Before accepting the pastorate at La Promesa eight years ago, Espinal worked full time as a construction sub-contractor and participated with the music ministry of First Baptist Church in Duncanville.

Both Espinal and his wife continue to work full-time outside the church, and those jobs demand a lot of time, he said.

"One has to listen to the voice of God," Espinal said. "When God calls you, then you have to also take the challenges."

And while ministry demands much of the little time he may have, Espinal said, he is in a place where God is at work.

"We became a missionary group," Espinal said. "We could call it a church, but we do a lot of mission work. There are seven congregations working together now."

On Sundays, about 800 people attend those seven congregations, and during the week, close to 1,500 people go to Gaston Christian Center, where several ministries are housed, he remarked.

The mission work of La Promesa can be seen internationally, also, since the church ministers in Latin American countries like Mexico and Nicaragua,

Espinal noted.

La Promesa's congregation is small, but it is very involved in missions, he said.

"We could be doing something by ourselves, but together we can do what Jesus called us to do," Espinal said. "Jesus called us to reach others with the Good News.

"It is not about the number of people you have, it is about what you can do with them," Ricarte continued. "Jesus did not have a big group, he had 12 disciples and that is the group he sent to do his work."

As a Christian responds to God's call, the only things needed are the vision of God, the direction from God and the love to do what God has commanded, he added.

Ministry and missions are not just about the number of people in the church, but it also is not about money, either, Espinal said.

"At La Promesa, we know our calling does not require millions, but it does require giving what we have," he said.

As Jesus taught with the parable of the talents in Matthew 25, those who use what they are given are the ones who are blessed with more, Espinal said.