

# Pastor helps Caldwell mission gain vision for community ministry

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CALDWELL—Four years ago, when a Baptist mission congregation in Caldwell was almost ready to close its doors, the congregation called Ruben Burguete as pastor to help bring a new vision.

Iglesia Bautista Emanuel had experienced multiple pastoral changes through the years, and its members lacked a clear sense of how to be involved in ministry in their area.

Now the mission plans to constitute as a church soon, and Burguete noted the congregation is involved deeply in the community.



Ruben Burguete

First Baptist Church in Caldwell started the mission about 40 years ago. So,

Burguete insists he simply is “harvesting from the labor others have done before.”

He also expressed appreciation for the support First Baptist has provided, even when it means the mission provides culturally contextualized ministry that may be unfamiliar to the sponsoring church.

“It is different to do ministry in a Hispanic congregation, and they know not everything has to be done the same way,” he said.

Burguete works part-time at First Baptist, where Pastor Steven Johnson has served as his mentor in ministry.

“I don’t know if I would still be here without his mentorship,” Burguete said.

Burguete and his wife, Karem Salinas, both originally hailed from Mexico. They lived in San Antonio and several Central Texas communities before moving to Caldwell.

Through it all, Burguete and his family have learned to discern how to remain faithful to God’s calling wherever he leads.

In Caldwell, Burguete said, he was able to gain the trust of the congregation readily. Most of Emanuel’s members accepted Christ as Savior at the church, he noted.



Members of Iglesia Bautista Emanuel in Caldwell feed workers who are at a job site near the mission. (Photo / Ruben Burguete)

Caldwell is a community about 4,000 people, one fourth of them Hispanic, and about 300 are first-generation Texans.

To meet their needs, Mision Emanuel has partnered with other organizations to provide English-as-a-Second-Language and high-school-equivalency classes.

The congregation soon will begin offering citizenship classes, he added.

The mission increasingly is opening its doors to community ministry, and it already is experiencing growth, Burguete said.

None of it would have been possible without his wife's support, he noted.

"She has chosen to be supportive of me and of the ministry we are doing," he said, noting she has reminded him God has called them to Caldwell, and they will have all they need until God calls them somewhere else.

Burguete views his calling as pastor to equip others step up and lead when necessary. So if God calls the Burguetes somewhere else, the congregation will be more than ready to continue the vision they have received, he

added.

“Even though Caldwell is a small town, the Hispanic population here is growing,” Burguete said. “We want to have people here ready to serve as soon as God calls them.”