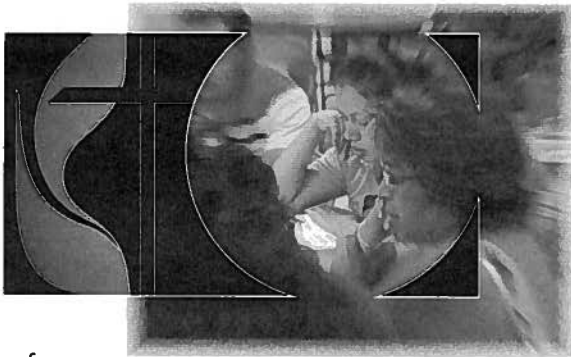


IN MISSION & MINISTRY
**United
 Methodists
 at Work
 Calling New
 Disciples**



On an urban corner just north of downtown Wichita, two congregations are working together in an innovative way to bring new people into relationship with Jesus Christ.

“...we’ve blended it all together.”

The El Mesias UMC congregation moved in with the St. Paul’s UMC congregation two years ago, and the two congregations have been sharing in mission for Christ ever since. The congregations share all parts of the church building and worship together quarterly in a combined, bi-lingual service.

“You cannot distinguish the building from El Mesias to St. Paul’s anywhere in here because we’ve blended it all together,” said Danny Bye, member of St. Paul’s.

This year, the congregations have one more thing in common—they now share a pastor. After just a few months in the appointment, Pastor Tim Jepsen spurred both churches into jointly hosting free English classes for Spanish-speakers. The classes draw nearly 200 people every week.

“We’re extremely excited, and this has just injected some new life into both congregations, which is what we were hoping would happen,” Jepsen said.

This isn’t the first time Jepsen has seen this happen in his ministry. When an Hispanic and an Anglo congregation work together, not only are stereotypes broken down, but both congregations become excited about and committed to their shared ministry.

Pastor Tim Jepsen leads singing at an ESL class.



**Partners in
 HISPANIC MINISTRY**



“...so we’re reaching out to our neighborhood.”

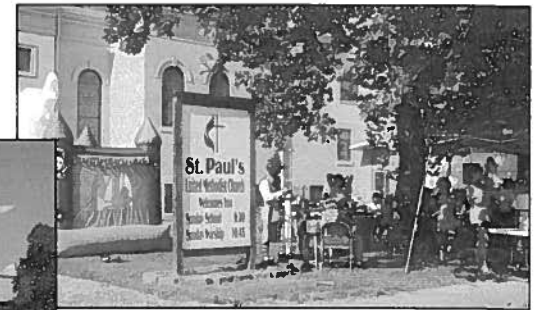
A common stereotype Jepsen is working to break down is that all Hispanics are Catholic and that reaching out to Hispanics is therefore useless.

“When I was a child, Mexico was 93 percent Roman Catholic. Right now, it’s probably about 57-58 percent evangelical, so there’s been a flip-flop in my lifetime. Guatemala, same story, even higher numbers; closer to 70 percent evangelical,” Jepsen said.

Bye justifies the churches’ outreach to Hispanics in a different way.

“Well, that’s our calling—our assignment from Jesus. He said, ‘Go and make disciples of all nations,’” Bye said. “Well, our little nation is right here in this community. And St. Paul’s realizes that the neighborhood has changed and the people living next door are primarily Hispanic people, so we have to reach out to them. Our mission is to teach, share and witness the love of Jesus Christ, and nowhere in that mission statement or in Jesus’ commission does it say ‘to whites only.’

It says we have to reach out to all nations, so we’re reaching out to our neighborhood.” ■



Combined congregations of El Mesias and St. Paul’s United Methodist churches.



United Methodists at Work ...

The El Mesias congregation is supported through the Hispanic Ministries portion of the Kansas West Conference mission and ministry budget. Through your church’s commitment to paying its share, you are calling new disciples to Hispanic congregations like El Mesias.

Learn More About Hispanic Ministry...

www.kswestumc.org/hispanicministry