

## FACES IN THE CROWD

## Missionary partners with Katy church to help immigrants

■ For 20 years, Keith Boudreaux has been teaching English classes

By **KIMBERLY PIÑA**  
CHRONICLE CORRESPONDENT

Keith Boudreaux never expected to be a missionary in America until he saw a need for helping Chinese immigrants learn English.

"I've always been involved in cross-cultural missions and I thought we'd go to another country," said Boudreaux, 51, who lives near Westheimer at Texas 6. "There are such large populations of immigrants here and they need help."

An ordained Assemblies of God minister, Boudreaux has been teaching advanced English classes for 20 years to mostly Chinese immigrants, as well as people from India and South America.

For many years, Boudreaux has taught the classes at Calvary Church in Sugar Land, at the West Houston Christian Center and Braeswood Family Assembly of God Church.

Boudreaux and his wife, Celeste, who both have two grown children, began their Chinese ministry in Houston's Chinatown near Bellaire, he said.

Now, he is offering classes in the Katy area where an increasing number of Chinese immigrants are moving.

"When we first started 20 years ago, Chinatown was a lot smaller than it is today," he said. "It's really exploded and the Chinese population has moved out to Sugar Land, Katy and other areas."

Family Life Assembly of God in Katy, which has supported his missionary work for about seven years, will host the classes this fall. The church is located at 1012 S. Mason Road, but is in the process of building a new facility on Roesner Road.

"Keith is passionate about



SUZANNE REHAK: FOR THE CHRONICLE

**ENGLISH TEACHER:** Keith Boudreaux is starting English-as-a-second language classes for Chinese immigrants at the Family Life Assembly of God Church, 1012 S. Mason Road, Sept. 14.

### KEITH BOUDREAUX

■ **Age:** 51

■ **Occupation:** Minister

■ **Residence:** Westheimer near Texas 6

■ **Fast fact:** He started teaching English to Chinese immigrants about 20 years ago.

■ **Details:** For information or to volunteer, call 832-260-3227.

what he does, and he loves Chinese people," said the church's senior pastor Albert Cortez. "We'd love to host the classes and use our building as much as possible. It's just a great opportunity."

Missionary work for Boudreaux began in the late 1970s in Europe, where he and his wife worked until he returned to the United States to complete his education. He served as an associate pastor before becoming a full-time

nationally-appointed U.S. missionary.

Financially supported by churches, Boudreaux has written 12 textbooks. He teaches weekly and also organizes classes to be hosted at available churches.

Using a Bible-based curriculum, Boudreaux and volunteer instructors teach students English through discussions about moral and social issues and biblical studies.

Boudreaux said lessons are from the Bible and help teach students about Christianity. Many students, who have been raised as atheists, Buddhists or secular people, are open to learning about Christianity, he said.

"Many of the older generation of Chinese immigrants were disillusioned with Communism," Boudreaux said. "But with the Gospel, it brings hope to people and through our friendships and the classes, some of the people did become Christians."

While the classes are open to anyone, Boudreaux said mostly new Chinese immi-

grants are interested in learning English at a more advanced level to further their education or work.

The classes will help prepare students for the Test of English as a Foreign Language, an exam required by universities, he said.

"It's a very popular class because there's a great need for that," Boudreaux said. "For people from other countries, they want to understand how America works, and they're always interested in politics, economics and business as well as in the religious aspects of life."

Teaching English to new immigrants has opened the door for new friendships, he said, and allows students to practice their English with American friends.

"I find it very interesting to talk with people that are from other countries because they always have a different perspective on things," he said. "I've really enjoyed the work we're doing. It's a lot of fun and we've made a lot of friends."