

Jamil Ribeiro is a native of Brazil. He served as pastor of Riverside Baptist Church, Miami Hispanic and Brazilian congregations. In 2025, Ribeiro returned to Brazil to minister to Hispanic immigrants. His wife is Elzely Ribeiro.

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From Miami to Curitiba: Pastor Jamil Ribeiro called to minister among Hispanics in Brazil
Written By: Keila Diaz
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MIAMI—After more than three decades of ministry in Miami—serving both the Brazilian and Hispanic communities—Pastor **Jamil Ribeiro** is following God’s call to return to his **hometown of Brazil**. But this time, he’s not going to minister in his native Portuguese language. He’s going to serve in Spanish.

Later this August, Pastor Ribeiro and his wife, **Elzely**, will relocate to Curitiba, a city in the Brazilian state of Paraná that is now home to more than 100,000 Hispanic immigrants. With decades of experience leading multicultural congregations in South Florida, Ribeiro is uniquely equipped to step into this mission.

“For many years, I pastored both the **Hispanic and Brazilian congregations at Riverside Baptist Church in Miami**,” he said. “Our church became a place where more than 15 nationalities worshiped together in harmony—not because we all spoke Spanish, but because we shared Christ.”

That experience, he believes, was preparation for what God is now calling him to do: reach and disciple Hispanic immigrants in Brazil.

Brazil has experienced a striking shift in immigration patterns over the past decade. Not only has the total foreign-born population surged, but the origin composition has tilted overwhelmingly toward Latin America—especially Venezuela, which accounts for hundreds of thousands of recent immigrants. Other Hispanic-origin populations, such as those from Argentina, Mexico, Paraguay, Bolivia, Haiti and Colombia, also contribute significantly to this evolving demographic landscape.

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A different kind of missionary

Rather than planting a single church, Pastor Ribeiro will serve as a catalytic missionary. His mission is to identify and disciple Hispanic believers, connect them with local Brazilian churches, and encourage those churches to provide Spanish-language services for the growing Hispanic population.

“In the same way many American churches here in Florida open their doors for ministries in other languages, we want to inspire Brazilian churches to do the same,” he said.

Ribeiro’s role will include leadership development, cultural bridge-building, and evangelism. He’ll also help immigrant families navigate the challenges of resettling—offering guidance on housing, documentation and community integration.

A partnership born from experience

This new ministry was initiated in partnership with the Convenção Batista do Paraná (Baptist Convention of Paraná), which extended the invitation to Pastor Ribeiro after witnessing his work in Florida. The convention has committed to providing health insurance for the couple, while Igreja Batista Bacachería—a local church in Curitiba—has pledged partial financial support for housing.

Still, much of their support will come from individual partners in prayer and giving. Pastor Ribeiro is not going through a traditional mission agency but is instead raising support directly from churches and friends.

“We’re trusting the Lord to provide,” he shared. “We’re going as independent missionaries, but not alone. We’re inviting the body of Christ to join us.”

How to get involved

Supporters can learn more and give at pastorjamil.com, a website being developed by his son. There, visitors will find regular updates, financial giving options, and ways to pray for the mission.

Prayer requests include:

- A suitable and affordable place to live in Curitiba
- Favor and trust with Brazilian pastors as they build this new model of ministry
- Fruitful discipleship among the Hispanic immigrants arriving in Brazil

“We’re not going to start a separate church,” he emphasized. “We want to see Brazilian churches open their arms to this new mission field in their own neighborhoods.”

With 44 years of marriage, 12 grandchildren and a lifetime of ministry behind them, Pastor Jamil and Elzely step into this next chapter with joy, faith and a deep desire to serve.

“We’ve seen God at work in Miami,” he said. “Now we’re ready to see Him move in Curitiba.”