

Cross-Cultural Ministries

Latins United



THE FRUIT OF OUR LABOR

*You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands;
you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you. Psalm 128:2*

At the end of 2016, we had our first Christmas dinner at Avery Presbyterian Church. This was to be the launching of our new Hispanic church plant in the Great Plains Presbytery at Avery. We had incredible support from Avery and our sister churches throughout the Presbytery. We were able to build a data base of approximately 90 families and we created a strategy to work with that information. We had 270 people participating in the dinner and we had a wonderful event which started us off on the right track.

Throughout 2017 we had several special gatherings to find out the interest of these families and how we could minister to them. We hosted a spring get-together where we had 60 people come showing interest in our ministry. From that get-together we started our Friday night family nights which turned into movie nights showing Christian based family movies. We watched AD, The Bible Continues mini-series. This was the opening to a regular Bible Study as it lasted approximately three months. We ended the year with our second annual Christmas dinner which was a special blessing. All the activities that we had during 2017 led us to accepting a group of about 20 new members on December 17, 2017. We had a beautiful bi-lingual service and were over-joyed to see the fruit of our labor. This service was affirmation that God's hand is on this ministry as we watched the body of Christ extend their love and the Kingdom of God throughout our community.

Newsletter
Spring 2018

*Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast,
immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,
knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*

1 Corinthians 15:58



A Look Back at what God Accomplished in 2017

This past year was really incredible and it was amazing to see how God worked in the lives of so many people. This time last year we delivered a semi-truck load of materials including construction materials, clothing, toys, tools and Biblical literature to the Christian Pastor's Alliance in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico near the Texas border. I was able to visit some of their churches and it was exciting to see what they are doing to minister to those people who are in so much need (both pastors and the people) that are living at the border. We also donated 50,000 New Testaments and 50,000 Gospels of John to the Mexican Presbyterian Church which will be distributed throughout Mexico. This was a very generous donation from Bill Sapp, founder of Sapp Brothers Travel Centers, which valued approximately \$35,000. Rev. Richard Waymire of Body Life

Ministries donated other Biblical literature that has been an amazing tool for the border ministry. We continue to try to build relationships with our Mexican brothers and sisters at the border.

I went to Uganda this past year as you may recall from the last newsletter to minister to the Sudanese people in the refugee camps in Northern Uganda. They are still in great need, and, as I write this newsletter, Healing Kadi is there right now with several doctors who will be there for an extended period of time to attend to those needs. They have set up a clinic to help in the medical needs for these people. Drs. Chuck and Debbie Tomek will be there along with other doctors for several weeks and they need your prayers. For more information or to donate to their cause, please contact Healing Kadi at www.healingkadi.org

Reaching the Bellevue Community

We also had special events such as:

- Legal counseling from local attorneys
- Vacation Bible School (VBS) with Avery Presbyterian Church
- Backpacks to all school children who attended the VBS
- Summer picnic with Avery Presbyterian Church where we had Hispanic and English musicians. Over 100 Hispanics from the community came to this event.
- Began Bible Study 101 as a result of our Friday family nights. This allowed us to help people understand salvation and God's grace instead of just a religion. We averaged around 25 adults and children although those numbers fluctuate drastically as people lack commitment. We need much prayer as this is a transient culture due to various reasons such as work, finances, etc. We minister to these people as Christ did to the crowd but only a few follow.
- Potluck dinner once a month on Friday nights which gave us the opportunity to invite new people.





Local Church

We were very blessed by having Pastor Abiud Lopez come from Mexico to help us in our ministry. He arrived here early in the fall with his family: his wife, Alma, son, Matthew, daughters Carolina and Amanda. They are an incredible family that God has blessed us with. The children are very musically inclined as they play guitar, violin, piano, accordion and they also sing. His wife, Alma, has a beautiful voice and she can deliver an incredible message. She is very involved in women's ministry.

Both Pastor Abiud and his wife have taken marriage counseling training which we are going to start offering classes to the community soon. These will begin around Valentine's Day with a seminar for couples which is much needed. Pastor Abiud has started offering music classes to teach mainly children guitar, piano, or whatever they are interested in. We could not have been blessed with a better pastor to help us with this church plant.

Avery Presbyterian Church has also embraced our ministry in the most incredible and loving way. We have full use of their facilities and we are always able to draw plenty of volunteers from their congregation for our activities.

During our Friday night Bible studies, it is Avery volunteers who watch the children while we do our study. And during our 11:00 worship service our children join the regular Sunday school classes. We are not just doing Hispanic ministry, but we are integrating two cultures and two congregations. I attribute at least 80% of our success with this church plant to the involvement and support of Avery Presbyterian Church and the support of our Presbytery. This is a perfect example of how the local church responds to the needs of this local community. The Holy Spirit is definitely at work as the body of Christ embraces the community as Christ would do. Regardless of color, race or financial status, the local church reaches out to those

who are in need of the Gospel. We are enabling the church to be instrumental in this ministry in a way that displays the true and correct model of the church. I believe that Avery Presbyterian Church will be the model for future cross-cultural EPC church plants.

This is not to say that we have not had our struggles. And to be sure, future church plants will most likely have similar struggles. Anytime you are working for the Kingdom you will surely be confronted by the enemy. But we continue to be faithful as we fully rely on God for Him to defend His church.



Our challenges lie ahead as we are working to help the people understand the difference between a religion and a relationship with Jesus Christ. When they began doing Bible study, all of our people did not believe that if they were to die that they would go to heaven. Yet they had been church attendees for years in both Catholic and Protestant churches. They did not understand salvation. This is an on-going process and will take some time to accomplish. Their lives are being changed, however, and we have had incredible testimonies of the changes that they are experiencing and the spiritual growth they are having.

We also had meetings in homes that are typically called **Posadas**. We met nine different nights at different homes before Christmas. It gave us an opportunity to meet new people at their homes and bring the true meaning of Christmas to them. We had up to 40 people at our last meeting.

We continued to work through the school system to get new names to add on to our data base for our year end Christmas dinner that we had on December 16. We had approximately 45 families with a total of 220 people. We had to scale back this year due to fire codes. The maximum capacity is 220 and last year we were over by about 50 people!

Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Ephesians 6:11-13



Looking ahead at what God will accomplish in 2018

Now the real work begins as we enter into this New Year 2018! Our goal for 2018 is quality and not quantity. As we begin to help people change their values we want people to understand that Christianity is a lifestyle that reflects on everything you do. We will be once again working on the data base to build more relationships as well as build up our ministry.

I believe that at this time Pastor Abiud and I need to focus all of our attention on this church plant. Please keep us in your prayers. My family is very happy because I'm not traveling as much as I used to and I'm able to be at home and be a blessing to them.

Due to the lack of finances, we are sadly unable to continue our radio ministry after being on the air for 12 years. This was a very important ministry that reached many people, but we simply cannot afford it any longer. If, however, we can raise enough money by March 1, 2018, the radio station will honor my grandfather rights and continue to offer us the same price as in the past. But if we do not raise the money by then we will be off the air indefinitely.

I will be available this year to visit or consult with any of our EPC churches for Hispanic ministry or to join them on short mission trips. However, my main focus for this year is local.



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As far as my family goes, the children are doing well in school. Danny is having challenges in high school so please keep him in your prayers. He is struggling with peer pressure and values as are David and Sophia as they enter their teen years. I believe this is normal where their friends become more important than their family. We need to pray that we can continue to impress our Christian values upon them so those values will be with them the rest of their lives.

Your prayers for our ministry and my family as well as your financial support are extremely important to us. Please consider donating to this very important ministry that is changing lives in front of our eyes. Please call John Bueno at 402.350.3815, email him at johnbknox@yahoo.com or send a check to 2906 S. 165th Ave., Omaha, NE 68130. We will soon be offering online payment on our website and Facebook page!! Also we will soon have a brand new video on our Facebook page and website which highlights our ministry. If any EPC churches want to help financially with our Hispanic church plant, please contact Great Plains Presbytery directly.

Blessings for a wonderful 2018!

John

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