



Randy Schmor

NAB GATEWAY DIRECTOR

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PASSING THE BATON?

Prayer

- Upcoming ministry travel
 - Detroit, Michigan – NAB area churches Mission Conference – Opportunities to share about Gateway and preach.
 - Buenos Aires, Argentina – Iglesia San Justo Mission Conference and Hispanics for Christ (HFC) networking – Accompanying HFC staff for more Gateway development.
 - Chicago, Illinois – Blue Ocean (missional cohort); Bonfire (Blue Ocean alumni gathering); Mission Advisory Team (for NAB International Missions).
 - Hungary Team (July 2023) Prep and Training – I’m leading a team of youth / young adults to serve with our partners among Roma/Gypsy communities.

Praises

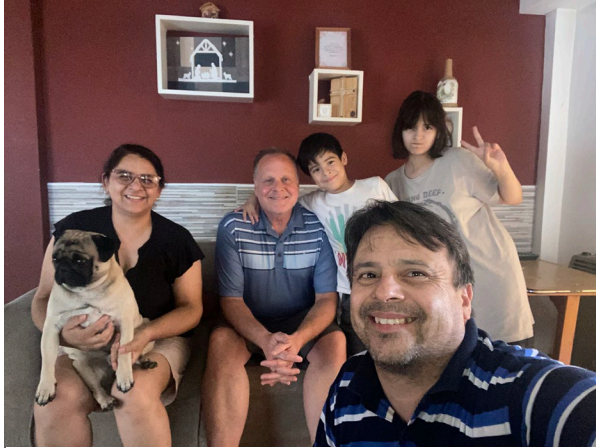
- Beulah, North Dakota – Sister-church partnership orientation at Immanuel Baptist (November 2022).
- Salta, Buenos Aires, Argentina / Asuncion, Paraguay – Potential/Current sister-church partnership visits with many leaders (January 2022).
- Sacramento, California – Best Practices in Short-Term Mission Team Leadership training at Creekside Christian Church in Elk Grove, six NorCal churches represented; sister-church partnership orientation at Sunrise Community in Fair Oaks, 25 leaders attended; Blue Ocean (missional/formational cohort) in Folsom.

And He was saying, “The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows—how, he himself does not know. The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

MARK 4:26-29 (NASB)

As I’ve continued to serve in global missions over the years, sometimes I’ll be asked regarding sister-church partnerships, why? Why should we partner in this way (with international churches outside of North America to do this)? And my mind goes to this quote from Ryan King that I came across some years ago.

A few years ago, while I was in South America, I asked a respected Brazilian missiologist and church planter his opinion regarding the claim that the era of Western missions was over and that it was now time to “pass the baton.” His response was gracious and sincere: “I’ve heard this before,” he said, “and my question is, why



Francisco (Pancho) Leyes and family in Los Ceibos, Argentina.

did you think the baton was yours to pass in the first place?” He’s right. The Great Commission doesn’t belong to any particular era or region of the church; rather, all churches at all times and in all places must endeavor together in making disciples of all nations. Our opportunity in light of these global trends is not only to send from our congregations but to partner with international churches in sending, supporting, and serving missionaries among the nations.”

Allow me to share some thoughts in regard to this quote:

“The era of Western missions was (is) over” – As the quote points out overall, the assumption that



Alcides & Blanca Gonzalez in San Lorenzo, Paraguay.

the church in the West (i.e., Europe and North America) has been somehow leading the charge of global missions may seem logical and apparent to many in our part of the world. In regard to the past 200+ years or so, this point of view would probably be the conclusion of the Protestant/Evangelical church. But it is, after all, a very short-sighted view that is a quite limited perspective that over-emphasizes economic strength, colonial pursuit, and even publishing, media, and communication. What this view doesn’t take into account, of course, is the preventient movement of the Holy Spirit and the unsung faithfulness of Christians in what we now refer to as the Global South, the current strength and existence of which largely came arguably from faithfulness within rather than heralded efforts without (from the west).



David Vargas in Campo Quijano, Argentina.

“Why did you think the baton was yours to pass in the first place?” – Spot. On. Perhaps “the baton” represents a misunderstanding of the sort of “race” that the West should have been running in to begin with. Maybe this always was a race that was being run as a team sport with everyone running. Rather than thinking we’ve been running a relay where would-be runners (the Global South) should have always been viewed as participants rather than spectators. One more thought from the quote. . . .

“Our opportunity in light of these global trends is not only to send from our congregations but to partner with international churches in sending, supporting, and serving missionaries among the nations.” – So we are being challenged to PARTNER – yes, even as sister-church partners



– with the WHOLE church (East, North, South) in all ways possible, sending, supporting, and serving missionaries from ALL nations, to ALL nations. Should we think the era of sending is over for the West? No. Not for a minute. But we also shouldn't act as if what is now the MAJORITY of the church in the rest of the world has some sort of "lesser" role to play compared to ourselves. After all, it is God's mission (missio Dei, not missio ecclesia) in which the GLOBAL church is asked to partner.

For the Kingdom,

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Lucio Gallo in Salta, Argentina.

