



## THE SUDDETH FAMILY MINISTRY UPDATE

### Encouraging, Equipping, and Entrusting National Pastors

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### Just a Normal Wednesday Morning

“I have never met a pastor” replied Victor. A short while later in the conversation I mentioned the word *Baptist*, to which he responded, “What is a Baptist? I’ve never heard of that.”

In the middle of my surprise (who has *never* met a pastor *nor* heard of a Baptist?) the Lord opened the door for the conversation, and Victor asked me to explain to him what I believed. Another surprise! As we talked over coffee, it was the first time Victor heard the gospel. Although Victor did not repent of his sins and confess Jesus as his Savior and Lord that particular morning, our hope is in the gospel and the fact that the Lord can save him at any moment.

There are at least three truths I was reminded of that morning. First, **the gospel is needed everywhere**. Although Panama is a “reached” nation, there are still people who have never heard the gospel, and it goes beyond geographical lines and social class. You see, Victor is 43 years old and a pilot with Copa Airlines. He’s formally educated, he lives in the city, he has access to the gospel, and he’s a neighbor. He doesn’t live a remote village hours away from civilization with limited access to the gospel. On the contrary, he grew up in a large city in central Mexico. He has had resources available to him, yet he had never heard the gospel. Once again, there are gospel needs everywhere.

Second, **the message of the gospel is powerful enough to stand on its own**. It is not a message from which we should shy away. It is the only hope we have. It can make spiritually dead hearts alive; the gospel gives life, and we need to faithfully share it with others.

Third, **all of life is ministry**. Thankfully, this particular Wednesday morning I was being obedient as a follower of Christ. As a shy person who has trouble speaking to a stranger in English, it was exponentially harder to ask Victor, a stranger, to meet me for coffee, especially knowing I would be stumbling through the conversation in Spanish. (If you’re wondering, no, we’re not fluent in Spanish; that’s still many years away.) Meeting Victor for coffee wasn’t a part of our “ministry” here in Panama. After all, we’re here to encourage and equip pastors and help strengthen the church. However, we need to be careful not to divide life into “ministry” and the “other stuff.” It’s all ministry when we’re committed to obeying Jesus.

### Prayer Requests

- For Victor, his wife, Sonia, and their son, David, to be saved. Thankfully, their family wants to get together with us soon. **Pray we will lovingly, clearly, boldly, and accurately share the gospel with them.**
- The spiritual health of the Panamanian church. As a part of life here, we are currently working with two local churches on a weekly basis. We’ve been encouraged and challenged as we read Acts (especially chapters 14-16) and see the necessity that churches are encouraged and strengthened in the faith (Acts 16:5).
- Clip will begin teaching some spiritual leadership classes in a local church this week.
- Some small, family health issues. There is nothing serious or major, but we would appreciate your prayers.

### Thank You!

As always, thank you for your faithful prayers and for your faithful, generous, and sacrificial partnership in the ministry. **We are honored to serve together with you in the gospel.**