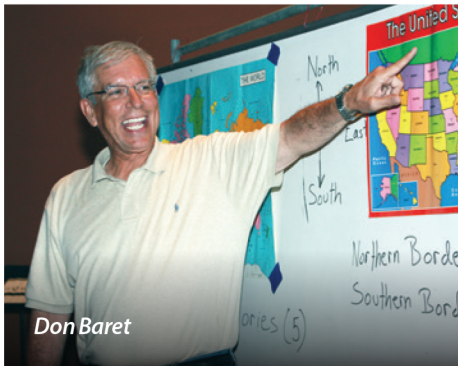


CROSSCULTURAL GOSPEL RENEWAL & GROWTH



CROSSCULTURAL GOSPEL RENEWAL & GROWTH



Mission to North America (MNA) coordinates the extension of the gospel throughout the United States and Canada by offering a wide variety of ministries to serve PCA churches. In this issue, Multiply asked Don Baret to tell his story of engagement with some of these ministries as they came together to facilitate cross-cultural gospel renewal and growth in two PCA churches. These churches, First Presbyterian (FPC) of Coral Springs FL and Lord of Glory Fellowship, a PCA mission church in Athens GA, serve in very different communities.

Don recently joined the MNA staff to serve as MNA ESL Ministries Assistant Director and MNA Media Producer following a career in media production. This new chapter in his life illustrates the goal of yet another MNA ministry. MNA SecondCareer assists gifted laymen and laywomen in answering God's call to serve in ministry, either part-time or by making a career change. Here is the story in Don's words.

In 2008 the leadership at FPC started noticing changing demographics around the church. Coral Springs is just 40 miles north of Miami, so it wasn't surprising to see Spanish families migrating into our area. We knew there was a need for gospel ministry among these new neighbors, but we were a single culture, English language church and did not know where to begin. Some of our church members sought the assistance of MNA in gathering demographic information, confirming that Hispanic immigrants were the fastest-growing group in the surrounding neighborhoods, followed by Brazilians



and Haitians. An MNA Hispanic American Ministries presentation during General Assembly in 2009 encouraged us to engage with these new neighbors through an ESL (English as a second language) ministry.

I volunteered to help launch the ministry and serve as the ESL Director. None of

us knew anything about teaching English as a second language. I remember thinking, where do I start? MNA ESL Director Nancy Booher took us through the initial steps. We didn't invent or create anything, we just followed her guidance and with the Lord's blessing, our neighbors actually responded! Ninety-nine students came to our first night of ESL classes in January 2010. The next week, forty-six new students attended! While the majority were from Hispanic countries, there were many from other nations as well, a total of 30 different nations over the years.

While students come to an ESL class to learn English, the ministry's purpose is to intentionally share the gospel of Jesus Christ. Nancy summarizes, "We share the gospel by deed in teaching English. We also share the Bible and our personal testimony, making sure the students understand that the gospel is for all nations, not just for Americans." Martha, an ESL



“WHEN I FIRST CAME TO AMERICA, I FELT VERY ALONE AND FRIGHTENED BECAUSE I DIDN'T SPEAK ANY ENGLISH. SOMETIMES I NEEDED TO GET TO A PLACE, BUT IT WAS NOT ENOUGH TO ASK WITH MY SIGNS AND MANY TIMES I GOT LOST IN THE STREETS.”

—Martha (ESL Student from Colombia)



“LAST YEAR WE HAD ABOUT 300 STUDENTS, WHICH MEANS 300 FAMILIES ARE BEING IMPACTED BY THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. I CAN’T IMAGINE WHAT GOD IS GOING TO DO WITH ALL THIS.”

—Pablo Toledo

student from Colombia, tells her story: “When I first came to America, I felt very alone and frightened because I didn’t speak any English. Sometimes I needed to get to a place, but it was not enough to ask with my signs and hands, and many, many times I got lost in the streets. I cried! ESL has been very useful to me. Now I can communicate easily with people. My teacher, Mrs. Diaz, is a woman with a very nice heart. At the beginning of class, she always gives us a part of the Bible. I’ve learned that I’m loved by God and he sent his beloved son to die for my sins, and I don’t feel alone anymore.”

Over the years, MNA Refugee and Immigrant Ministries Director Pat Hatch has helped address the questions our ESL



ESL fellowship time

students have about immigration and citizenship that go beyond our scope of knowledge. Often, our teachers and volunteers are the only help the students have. Each year, about 300 people from all corners of

the world come through the ministry at FPC. God has opened a new path to walk among the people of the nations right in our own communities. God has indeed brought the world to our doorstep.



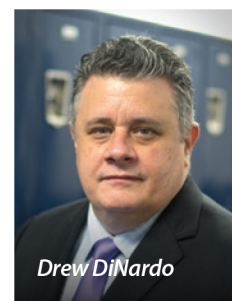
Pablo Toledo

In the second year, FPC called Pastor Pablo Humberto Toledo as the Assistant Pastor for Spanish and ESL Ministries. Pablo was born in

Guatemala and came to Miami at the age of 13. He is a graduate of MNA LAMP (Leadership and Ministry Preparation) Seminary and ordained in the PCA South Florida Presbytery. As teachers shared the gospel in ESL classes, they invited those attending to events in the church and a Bible study was soon begun. Many had never opened a Bible before they came to ESL.

From that first ESL Bible study, the FPC Spanish Congregation began to form, as Pablo describes: “We moved the Bible study to Sunday mornings and invited them to stay for the service that we were translating into Spanish. Then in 2015 we began a Spanish language worship service, and they became members of our church and of course believers in Jesus Christ. It’s amazing the impact. Last year we had about 300 students, which means 300 families are being impacted by the gospel of Jesus

Christ. I can’t imagine what God is going to do with all this.”



Drew DiNardo

Senior Pastor Drew DiNardo believes the entire FPC congregation has been richly blessed by the ESL and Spanish language ministries, giving church members

an opportunity to participate in an outreach ministry. Even when the new diversity sometimes makes it difficult for some members to adapt, Drew explains, “It gives us the opportunity to remind each other that we are all one in Christ. Faith is not based on someone’s nationality. This is helping our church go beyond the politics of immigration and ask instead, ‘How do we as Christians minister to people crossculturally?’”

Reflecting on our church’s experience in south Florida in a conversation with Pastor Parker James recently, I was struck by similarities with Parker’s crosscultural mission church in the very different community of Athens GA. Even before they met, PCA church planter Parker James and his wife Adelle each had sensed the Lord’s call to world missions. They had studied Spanish in school, and both thought they would serve in a different culture in some distant part of the world. But what they didn’t know then was just how God would fulfill their calling.



Their first experience with crosscultural ministry came when they were students at the University of Georgia and had just started dating (2000). They were asked to lead a children’s ministry for a Spanish language church plant in Athens. Parker remembers, “God began giving us a wider vision of what was possible through the crosscultural unity of his kingdom.” While enrolled at Covenant Seminary, they served on the church launch team for New City Fellowship South in St. Louis MO, established to take the gospel into the multicultural neighborhoods of south St. Louis. Parker and Adelle saw that the nations were at their doorstep. Parker remembers, “We knew then that we were called to hold up the light of the unity of the body of Christ here in this country, experiencing gospel renewal through the unity of the body of Christ – that Christians should be known by our love and not our lack of love along racial and ethnic divisions.”



Left to right: Lora Smothers; Lorrie Deringer, a leader with Parakaleo Church Planting Spouses Ministry, and Adelle James. All three participate in a local Parakaleo group that offers support and encouragement to church planting wives.

In 2013, Parker was serving as pastor of The University Church in Athens (2008-2016) and preaching kingdom reconciliation when one of the elders approached him about going forward to plant a new congregation which would take strides in bridging historic boundaries, stating “Athens needs this.” Twenty-eight percent of the more than 125,000 residents of Athens are African American, another 11% are Hispanic, and 5% Asian, yet there is little racial unity within churches. The



University Church sponsored Parker and Adelle to attend the MNA Church Planter Assessment Center in 2014. Their vision was going to require special gifts, experience and abilities. Parker also started attending the annual Leadership Development Resources (LDR) conferences developed by MNA African American Ministries Coordinator Wy Plummer. LDR’s purpose is to invite African Americans to consider joining in pastoral and other church leadership roles in the PCA. For Parker, those conferences were important learning opportunities.

While he had the vision to plant Lord of Glory, he realized he needed to listen and follow first, before he could lead the new church. Parker and Adelle also learned much from key mentors such as MNA Urban and Mercy Ministries Coordinator Randy Nabors and his wife Joan, Barry Henning, Suzanne Bates, Joyce Heard, James Ward, and Carl and Karen Ellis.



Parker began looking for partnerships for the ministry. God led him to Hill Chapel Baptist Church, an historic black church in west Athens. In 2016, Pastor Benjamin E.V. Lett and the church leadership welcomed Parker, Adelle and their children into fellowship, also providing a location for Bible study and offices. In 2017, the Lord brought Solomon Smothers to Lord of Glory Fellowship. Solomon and Lora Smothers had been one of the first black families to attend the Bible studies. They had come because they shared Lord of Glory Fellowship’s vision of bringing diverse people together through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

(continued on reverse)

“WE KNEW THAT WE WERE CALLED TO HOLD UP THE LIGHT OF THE UNITY OF THE BODY OF CHRIST HERE IN THIS COUNTRY, EXPERIENCING GOSPEL RENEWAL THROUGH THE UNITY OF THE BODY OF CHRIST.”

—Parker James

CROSSCULTURAL GOSPEL RENEWAL & GROWTH *(continued)*

“WHEN I SAW THE UNITY FUND, I THOUGHT THEY MIGHT ACTUALLY MAKE ROOM FOR A PERSON LIKE MYSELF. AND THAT’S WHAT I’VE RECEIVED, A GENUINE WELCOME.”

—Solomon Smothers



Members of the congregation at Lord of Glory

Solomon had served as a campus pastor and had been ordained in a non PCA church. He’s now completing his training at Reformed Seminary in Atlanta GA, and has begun steps toward ordination in the PCA under the care of the PCA Georgia Foothills Presbytery.

The 2016 PCA General Assembly called on MNA to launch The PCA Unity Fund, whose purpose is to renew “...our church’s commitment to develop minority leadership at the congregational, presbytery and denominational level and encourage a denominational vision for and commitment to a more racially and ethnically diverse church in obedience to the Great Commission...” For Solomon, the

Unity fund will potentially provide practically, offering the prospect of needed funds for a working man with a wife and two children. It also provides the welcoming encouragement he needs, “Just a resolution by the Assembly would have been a



Smothers & James serving communion together

nice gesture, but nice gestures don’t really change anything. But when I saw the Unity Fund, I thought they might actually make room for a person like myself. And that’s what I’ve received, a genuine welcome.”

In January 2019 Lord of Glory Fellowship launched weekly worship services, six years after the Lord first called Parker to plant a crosscultural church in Athens. Redeemer, another Athens PCA church, has been a significant financial supporter.

Pastor Hal Farnsworth affirms Parker’s vision for Lord of Glory: “We’ve started a sermon series called ‘Moving Toward Glory’ that’s getting the eyes of our congregation open to the Lord of Glory church plant. We want people to know about it and support it.”

Two churches in very different kinds of communities, one in Boca Raton FL and the other in Athens GA, both growing in gospel renewal through the unity of the body of Christ.

“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands.”

—Revelation 7:9

MNA serves PCA churches and presbyteries as they advance God’s Kingdom in North America by planting, growing, and multiplying biblically healthy churches through the development of intentional evangelism and outreach ministries. For a list of MNA staff, visit our website at www.pcamna.org. Material in *Multiply* may be reproduced with permission. Address comments to: Fred Marsh, Managing Editor. Writing and design provided by Big Bridge, Asheville, NC (thebigbridge.com). *Multiply* is published by MNA. [f](https://www.facebook.com/pcamna) [t](https://www.twitter.com/pcamna) [in](https://www.linkedin.com/company/mission-to-north-america) Find us at [facebook.com/pcamna](https://www.facebook.com/pcamna), [twitter.com/pcamna](https://www.twitter.com/pcamna) & [linkedin.com/company/mission-to-north-america](https://www.linkedin.com/company/mission-to-north-america)

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INSIDE MULTIPLY SUMMER 2019

- CROSSCULTURAL GOSPEL RENEWAL & GROWTH
STORIES OF TWO CHURCHES IN VERY DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES

From the Coordinator

“...The gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace.” —**Colossians 1:6**



Time for a little science quiz. What is a catalyst? A catalyst is a substance not necessary to the occurrence of a chemical reaction; but, when present, the catalytic agent multiplies the speed and efficiency of the reaction taking place. Catalysts help connections to be made and multiplied. Mission to North America (MNA) serves as a catalyst for the progress of the gospel in and through the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) across the United States and Canada.

MNA exists to make connections and provide resources for the progress of the gospel in and through the local church.

Inside this issue of *Multiply*, you will find two wonderful expressions of this kind of catalytic gospel engagement by MNA. First Presbyterian Church of Coral Springs FL, an established church, responded to the changing demographics around them, following the prompting of the Spirit to find ways to engage and welcome their neighbors. MNA has walked alongside FPC Coral Springs as they have made this journey, providing resources and partnerships with MNA ESL and MNA Refugee and Immigrant Ministry for new missional engagement in their community.

Lord of Glory Church is a new church plant in Athens GA, where church planters Parker James and Solomon Smothers are asking the Lord to build their new PCA congregation, as they nest during their pre-launch phase in an historic African-American Baptist congregation in central Athens. Redeemer Presbyterian Church of Athens has been a huge blessing to Lord of Glory, as have the resources of the MNA/PCA Unity Fund and the encouragement and mentoring of MNA African American Ministries leadership. Lord of Glory is now entering into its launch phase as a church plant. Please keep them in your prayers!

MNA offers a full array of ministry resources and leaders who are available to come alongside you in your congregation and community, as you seek to know and share the good news of Jesus and his kingdom. We encourage you to visit our website at www.pcamna.org to see what is offered and to connect with us. How is God calling you to step out into your community in fresh ways with the gospel? How might we help you or your church pursue these gospel initiatives? We would love to serve alongside you for the progress of the gospel! May the gospel continue to bear fruit and grow in all of our communities! Amen.

Paul Hahn
MNA Coordinator