

# ROD & SHERRY BOYD

## PANAMA

Raising up Christian Leaders in Latin America

# PANORAMA

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## RETIRED... ON ASSIGNMENT

It's official... effective October 1st we transitioned to *Retired—On Assignment* status with Assemblies of God World Missions. We've settled in our home in Lynnwood, WA and look forward to you stopping by to visit when you're in town. Our *assignment* is to continue to provide support and leadership to the Latin America Resource & Training Center in Panama and to participate in ministerial training activities throughout Latin America as able (support and health). The *retired* status means we no longer receive salary or allowance, but does allow us to maintain our missions account and receive offerings so that we can continue to provide help for the Center and to cover ministry related travel expenses.

The last thirty months have been difficult for the center in Panama. We're grateful that the Lord faithfully helped us continue base operations and to complete nearly all center construction and grounds improvement. However, Covid prevented us from hosting training events and meetings, vital for the center's operational support. The Center is just now returning to host events and expand operations.

We are so grateful to more than 150 churches and individuals that have stood with us in prayer and financial support down through the years. We ask that you continue to pray for us during our transition, and especially for the center in Panama. We also ask you to consider continuing your support for the next several months as we finalize the remaining permits and permissions for the center and resume activities and increase center use.

This will be the last printed version of our Panorama newsletter. We will continue to send occasional email bulletins to all who stand with us in prayer and financial support. As our faithful Panorama readers know, in addition to reporting *what* happens in our ministry, we've tried to encourage you with *why* your partnership is so important in our ministry. Today, we went through our Panorama newsletter file and perused 30 years of articles and photos. With full and grateful hearts, we'd like to share some highlights and special memories in this last Panorama newsletter.

**Patchwork Quilt of Prayer.** At a Sunday night service back in February 1993, the women's ministries group from Coeur d'Alene First Assembly presented us with a handmade patchwork quilt. It was our farewell service as part of the pastoral staff, beginning our ministry as newly appointed missionaries. We slept under that quilt for many years, a constant reminder of the love and prayers that always covered us. We had some dear friends and personal supporters over for lunch a few weeks ago. The couple presented us with a beautiful handmade quilt. It was as if the Lord was saying to us, "See, I've had you covered from beginning to end!"

**How do you eat an elephant?** ... our Spanish teacher asked, "One bite at a time!" The process of learning a new language and culture is daunting, especially when you're in the middle of it. It all just seems impossible. Our year of Spanish and missions study in Costa Rica laid the necessary foundation. Immersing ourselves in missions work and culture in Panama, especially teaching, helped us to become competent by the end of our first term.

**Thank you Speed the Light!** The youth of the Northwest Ministry Network provided three STL vehicles for our family over the course of our thirty-year missionary career: 1993 Mitsubishi Montero, 2006 Toyota Prado and 2017 Nissan X-Trail. STL has also provided us

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with other ministry equipment... video projector, copier, sound system, even a dugout canoe and outboard motor!

**Kuna Indians.** During our first two terms we opened a Bible school in the San Blas Islands for the Kuna people and helped build two churches and rebuild a third on the islands. During one teaching trip to Playon Chico, Rod became sick. Normally we slept in hammocks, but the pastor and his wife gave up their bed so Rod could rest better and recover.

**Mountain Top Experience.** In 1996, a few months before opening the Duima Good Shepherd School, our family traveled with members of our national school commission to the site of the new school in the mountains of northwest Panama. Aixa, the director of the Doleguita school near David, and a large team from the Refugio Divino (Divine Refuge) church met us at the trailhead. They had gathered clothing and food for the families near the school. Days before, radio ads had announced the food and clothing distribution in addition to announcing pre-registration for the school.

There were several families there when we arrived and more than two dozen children were registered for school. Our smaller group had to travel back to Panama City, so we decided to leave before the larger group from the church. It was a *very* rainy day. Rod and Augustin lead the group down the mountain, followed by Sherry, Stephanie, Jennifer, Maximiliano and Pedro. Sadly, the rest of the group didn't keep up with Rod and Augustin and became separated. They finally showed up two hours later! It was scary then, but we laugh about it now... washing the mud off in puddles and cleaning up at a nearby pastor's home. You can read about it on our Panorama website at [www.boyds.org/199606SchoolsMountain.aspx](http://www.boyds.org/199606SchoolsMountain.aspx).

**Good Shepherd Schools and LACC/ChildHope.** There is so much to tell in a short paragraph! There were 1,200 children in six schools when we arrived in 1995. Before Covid we had nearly 10,000 children and youth in 35 schools! We're thankful to have been a part of this move of God. We were able to help build dozens of classrooms in more than a dozen schools. We were privileged to be part of the LACC/ChildHope leadership team, providing oversight to our Central America school family, empowering an international team of leaders and launching the CIECAD congresses. Even more special was ministering to hundreds of children, personally sponsoring several children so that they could attend a quality Christian school. We started by sponsoring Janeth for 11 years, several since and are now sponsoring Janeth's daughter Danna!

**Teams, teams, teams.** Most of the classrooms and schools were built by teams from our churches in the US. We were privileged to serve as their host, coordinating their efforts and letting them loose to build! Undeniably, these teams were a significant catalyst for the growth of Panama's schools. They loved us and they loved all the kids whose lives they touched. Seeing the need motivated them to become lifelong sponsors.

**Little Davey Project.** David and Deborah caught the vision to help poor children like Aldo to learn to use computers and empower their dreams. During the course of fourteen trips—most to Panama, but also to Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic—the outfitted dozens of computer labs with nearly 1,000 computers!

**LARTC... From Vision to Fulfillment.** Paul's words to Timothy have guided our ministry, *"The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others"* (2 Tim. 2:2, NIV). Our early involvement in (1995-2003) and subsequent leadership of (2003-2018) the Panama Resource & Advisory Center, convinced us of the strategic importance of ministerial training. More than 15 years ago, the Lord birthed the vision for the Latin America Resource & Training Center (LARTC), a headquarters in Panama to empower leaders, train teachers and develop and provide essential resources for them. Our vision for the facility has essentially been fulfilled. The legacy of the Center serves as an endowment to assure the training of thousands of Timothies who will train tens of thousands more!

**THANK YOU** for standing with us in prayer and financial support down through the years. We conclude this Panorama, volume 30, number 2, giving thanks to God for the privilege of serving Him in Panama and Latin America these 30 years and thanking Him for His call, care, provision and blessing on our family and work. To God be the glory, great things He has done!

Rod and Sherry

