

MARCH 2009 REPORT

April 8, 2009

Dear brethren,

My prayer is that you are all well and enjoying the richest blessings of our God and Savior. Here we are both well, although everyone here has had the cold/sinus/"flu"—all seem to be over it now. Tonight was the night for the newly hatched flying ants to leave their nest, seeking to build a new colony, so we have all the windows closed to keep them out—their wings are such a mess to clean up if they get in, not to mention their dead bodies.

We continue our slow progress at Caparra. Because of Christians from other places visiting we've had 17-20 in attendance in English, but usually back to our normal 10-12 on Wed. night. Gilbert & Pat Rodriguez moved back to Texas on the 2nd of April, so our membership dropped by one. In Spanish, both Bobby and Nicanor (Nicky) continue to help with the Lord's Table, but we can't seem to get both of them there at the same time—one will be absent this Sunday and the other the next. We began a survey of Genesis in both English and Spanish, which has gone well so far. Since the brethren know little about the Old Testament, this series is hitting the high points—we're doing 2-3 chapters a week. I've been preaching about what it means to be a Christian.

I studied with Araceli and Angie one time this month. We are supposed to study on Tues. night—that's the only day besides Sunday that Araceli is off. Her Mom Nellie and step-father Mark also studied with us. Mark & Nellie are Christians, although Nellie was only baptized about 2 years ago. She doesn't read very well which hinders her growth. I did not make it to Ponce this month.

The Spanish speaking church had 10,000 tracts printed this month (\$406) which a man we contacted in Nov. has offered to insert into the newspaper for us free. I called him before they were printed and he told me to bring "5,000, 10,000 whatever" but I've called him since and not gotten an answer. I'll call him again next week—this week is "holy week" in Puerto Rico. Most schools are out this week and many offices are closed Thur-Easter Monday. "Good" Friday everything is closed, so you may have businesses are just "not working" this week.

The church in Moca is working through some of their denominational baggage. The first Sunday of the March I preached there and we all ate at one of the family's house after services. They decided to invite us as they were walking out the door, so put some chicken out to thaw while they were gone, and then came home to prepare the soup. During that hour and a half we got a tour of the house and yard, then played pool in the basement for a while. A preacher from a church in Aguada came and began calling all the members, teaching them privately while Ed was gone. Among several false teachings he has (claiming to be a member of the church) is that women can preach, lead prayer, etc. Since most of the new Christians come from Pentecostalism this was appealing. A discussion (not a debate—he won't take a proposition) between he and Ed is scheduled for May 7th, from 7-9 PM, then for the 14th, "if we don't finish". The only format Matias would agree to is that each of them should take as long as they want to present their position. Once both have made their presentation, then they will take turns asking each other questions—no time limits on this either. Then the brethren present will submit written questions to be answered. Every time Ed or I are asked about the woman's role they seem "convinced" but within 2 weeks it comes up again. It is aggravating, to say the least. Part of the problem for one couple is that they view this as "church of Christ doctrine" not the truth, and are convinced the church cannot grow while holding this "position." Please pray that they may realize and accept the truth, not just "our" position.

We lost \$500 a month in support this month, which I need to replace. The church in Elgin, IL sent an extra \$50 a month for the next 3 months which will help. One of the batteries on our Prius (hybrid car) went out yesterday. It only took 3 hours of discussion with technicians to decide how to remove the car from the parking lot where it died, but our auto insurance has roadside assistance, so they paid for the towing. Being a hybrid you can't just "slip" it out of gear and towing it would damage the transaxle. I wasted a lot of time, but it could have been much worse—by the time we got it loaded the Toyota dealership had closed, so the tow truck went back to their lot and left the car on it all night. The dealership actually had the battery in stock (they were surprised at that) and it was the smallest of the batteries, so only cost us \$321—the big one costs around 8 grand. The car was back on the road by 4 PM today—some kind of a record in the islands.

Brethren please continue to pray for us. Joel Holt and his wife Anna are beginning to get commitments for their support to move here in July. The plan is for Joel to work with me here at Caparra, so he can get "broken in" to the culture, language (his Spanish is good, but each country has its idioms etc.) We look forward to their coming—we need help, so please pray that Joel will receive the support needed. Thank you all for your support.

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