

Monthly Report

Joel Holt

Caparra Terrace church of Christ, Puerto Rico

Iglesia de Cristo en Caparra Terrace, Puerto Rico

January/February, 2011

ATTENDANCE AVERAGES:

- SUNDAY AM: 12 (English); 11 (Spanish)
- MIDWEEK: 10 (English)

CONGREGATIONAL CLASS TOPICS:

- Sunday A.M. English - Overview of the OT Historical Books (We will soon start Luke)
- Midweek English – Study of the Church
- Sunday A.M. Spanish - Acts

SERMON TOPICS:

- Applying the Sermon on the Mount to Marriage
- Preventing the Erosion of Our Defenses Against Temptation
- Psalm 84:10 – Doorkeepers in the House of the Lord
- Surpassing the Righteousness of the Pharisees
- Benevolence and the Local Church

EVANGELISTIC EFFORTS/CONTACTS:

- We are still meeting once per month with the brethren in Juncos.
- Y.T. – Anna has studied with her a couple of times since the holidays were over. We fear her interest may be waning, but she keeps in touch with us, and still gives us chances to study with her from time to time, so we remain hopeful she will regain the hunger for God's word that led her to us in the first place.
- S.C. – She has been suffering some health problems in addition to her new work schedule, and has not studied with us in a while. We communicate regularly, and she has said that when she feels better she will get back with us. I think she is sincere in this – she is one that requires a bit of patience to actually get a study with, but when we study she takes things very seriously. In our phone conversations we regularly talk about spiritual matters that directly affect her life, so while we are not studying, per se, we are certainly applying the Bible to what she is dealing with, and I have seen her make some progress recently in understanding how seriously she needs to take applying every instruction of God to her life.
- P. – He has finally been released from house arrest, and is free to move about as he pleases. We are thankful for this. He was released this past Friday, and was at services on Sunday. As always, he still has a lot of tough decisions he must make in order to make his life right with God, but our studies continue each week and hopefully God's word will take effect in his life.
- G. – Studies continue with him, although his denominational background is a challenge to overcome. He is always excited to study with us.
- N. – N is a new contact we have made through A. A's mother lives around the corner from where N lives, and they had talked a couple of times when A had passed by on the way to pick up some food for his mother. One day A asked N if he'd like to come to services, and he has been coming ever since. He likes the fact that we focus only on what the Bible says instead of 'feel-good' stories or emotionalism. He has told me he does not plan to attend anywhere else, and is very happy worshipping with us. He recently had some questions for me about whether his baptism in the Baptist church as a child was legitimate or not, and we had a good mini-study on what would be necessary for him to be baptized into Christ. He has not committed to personal studies yet, but listens very well to what is taught at services, and recognizes that he is not right with God at this point. He has decided he wants to read through the gospels and find out what he needs to know about Jesus so he can obey. I will continue to try to get a personal study with him, but until then, it is no problem to preach to him what I would normally study with someone. Another benefit his attendance has produced is that A has been coming for every service and class since N has been coming. A has had issues with regular attendance since before we arrived on the island, but has made some big steps in dealing with them. He quit his job to be there each Sunday, but would only come for services and not for Bible class most of the time. However, by taking the step to invite N, he has increased his own commitment, and that has been a big encouragement.

INDIVIDUAL BIBLE STUDIES:

- Tol and I both continue to have studies with L G each week. We are taking him through an overview of the Bible to try and give him the big picture of God's plan and the story of the Bible.
- R M has slipped considerably in meeting with us weekly, and so we are not having those meetings as often. Please pray that he will recommit himself to those and to his work for the Lord in general. He is a very valuable asset to the group when he is working hard, and our prayer is that he will be able to see that more dedication to the Lord can be the solution for several of the big struggles he is having in his life right now.
- I meet most weeks for lunch with M F from the English-speaking group. He is growing in his abilities to lead in the congregation, as well as to teach and preach, and these meetings facilitate encouraging that from time to time.

NEEDS:

- In the last report I mentioned that we were losing a significant amount of support. We still need to make up about \$150 per month in order to regain all we lost from last year, in addition to the \$700 we have been trying to raise since we got here last year. We are grateful to a couple of congregations that increased the amount of support we receive from them, and also to some generous individuals who have begun giving us \$200 per month. We have been able to make up \$650 of the \$800 we lost. If anyone has information about a group or person we could talk to about additional support, we would be grateful if you would pass that along.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

- In the past couple of months, we have become aware that the work on the island will suffer the loss of two of its preachers. Nicolas Hernandez in Moca has been unable to get enough support to remain here, and will be moving back to Mexico next month. Tol and Dana Burk have also announced that they will be moving back to the States to take care of their parents, who are rapidly reaching the point where they need their children nearby for care. They do not know when they will be leaving, but are in the process of trying to sell their house. This is a significant loss, in that Puerto Rico was in need of additional preachers even with them here, but we are confident that the Lord will give the brethren here the strength to continue the work. My work load will double when Tol and Dana leave, but it is work that I have been doing during the times he has been away, anyway, so it is certainly something I feel I can manage. The harvest here needs laborers, and we ask you to pray that the Lord of Harvest will send good men here who can aid us in this work. Pray also for Nicolas and the Burks as they prepare for their moves.
- I mentioned in the last report that attendance has been an issue in the Spanish-speaking group, and I am glad to say that this has gotten better. As I mentioned earlier, A has been coming every time with N, and with the exception of one member, everyone else has been coming much more regularly. However, part of the problem was putting holiday planning ahead of spiritual commitment, so we will try to work on that this year, and hope for different results during the next holiday season.