

Work in Puerto Rico

October 2008

Dear brethren,

October was certainly a busy month although I know the calendar says it's over, I'm not too sure yet. Seriously, I know it is but yesterday, Sunday Nov. 2nd, I drove almost 300 miles—we left home at 8:30 AM for services at Caparra from 9-11 AM in English, then 11:20-12:20 in Spanish (had to leave early) so I could pick up Juan and Amanda Vargas so we could be in Moca at 4 PM (to show them where the church meets—they'll drive themselves the 45 minutes each way from now on). We left Moca at 6; I dropped them off and got home at 9:30 PM. That was typical of all of October.

As I mentioned in my last report we began helping these brethren in Moca in Sept. The first Sunday in October the Moscoso's planned to withdraw their membership from the liberal church in Aguadilla and announce they were beginning a church in Moca, but it didn't quite work out. I wasn't there, so don't exactly what was said, but I was denounced as a false teacher during the announcement period at the end of services and Carlos was not allowed to make his announcement. It did get made finally, but you can imagine the ruckus. That Wednesday night the class title was "What to do after you've listened to a false teacher" and you can guess who it was directed to. Carlos and Ramona were both very hurt and a bit confused — they'd been worshipping there almost 2 years and had never seen this side of the preacher there. We had a confrontation with him that first Sunday afternoon, fortunately not while most of the visitors were there — he started before they arrived, stopped, then picked up again after everyone left. I believe the brethren in Moca (all 4 of them) are "over" this, but please pray for them as they begin this new work. They are trying to get some idea what they'll have to pay in rent for a meeting place, although I don't think they're quite ready for that. Attendance continues to be 14-18 and although there is always a first timer or two, there are 4-5 consistent visitors. Lucy is Ramona's older sister and she seems very interested. There is another couple who has been in a number of churches, but has always seen through them. There is also the daughter of Ruben & Maribel as well as a male friend, Dariel, who seems very interested. If the Vargas' begin meeting with them it would be a welcome addition — Juan used to preach before he went blind and his wife Amanda is a real stabilizing force. There are other brethren in San Sebastian (10 minutes away) who stopped meeting, so there is the hope they can be restored.

Because of the work that needs to be done around Moca and the fact that it's 2- 2 ½ hours away from Bayamon, Ed Rangel is planning to move there by the first of the year. This will be a shock to the brethren in Caparra — they know we're working in Moca, but don't know anything about Ed's plans to move. Please pray that this will not set the work back here.

The Gospel meetings we planned for the first 2 weeks in October went off well. We had 3 nights in the church building in Caparra (Sun.-Tue), the English Bible class Wed. night, and then 3 nights at Ed's house, on his covered patio. The 3 brethren each preached twice in Dorado (Sun.-Fri.) that same week, with Joe Carrasquillo, the preacher in Dorado, picking them up on his way each night. We passed out about 1200 flyers on Mon. morning around Caparra, about 1000 on Tues. morning in Dorado, and close to 2000 in the neighborhoods around where we live on Wed., Thur. & Fri. mornings. The 3 preachers who came to help — Valente Rodriguez, Javier Serrano, and Andres Pong were good workers, not only in the pulpit, but each morning as well. The results from these flyers were 3 phone calls around Caparra and 1 phone call and 3 visitors from our urbanization (neighborhood).

That Saturday 3 of us went to Ponce to help the brethren pass out tracts at the central plaza and then Andres preached at 6 PM. We came right home, as we had a full day planned for Sunday. Both Sunday's most of us went to Moca, after the 4 ½ hours at Caparra. Monday afternoon we passed about 500 flyers out in Moca, and preached Mon & Tue. nights — we had planned to preach Wed. night, but the hurricane was projected to pass right over the Metro area sometime Wed. night, so the wind was supposed to be gusting up to 60 mph in our area. Since Moca is almost 75 miles west it wouldn't be as strong there, but it would make it difficult to worship on the carport; besides, most people wouldn't leave their houses in that kind of weather. We thank God the hurricane passed well east of Puerto Rico — all we got was some rain the next day from the outer rain bands. The brethren in St. Croix (where it actually passed) and St. Thomas are fine — a few broken down fruit trees, but nothing more.

Joel Holt and his wife Anna arrived on the 26th to visit for a week. We put Joel to work immediately — he preached in English and Spanish at Caparra and then at Moca that afternoon. Yesterday he preached in both again at Caparra as well as accompanying Ed and I to Moca.

The brethren in Caparra continue to make progress — it's just little things, but they are growing. I think we're nearing the point that they can begin to effectively reach out to others so I'm hoping we'll have some contacts from them. Attendance in Spanish has stabilized at 15-20 again and in English is the same 11-13.

If the Lord wills, I leave for St. Croix Sat. to preach from Sun-Fri. It will be a joy to be with them again. his will be my last preaching trip for 2008.

My support for the October continues the same, for which we are very thankful. With all this "company" and the extra traveling to Moca and Ponce we've had extra expenses this month, which the Spanish speaking church helped us with. Tolls alone were \$50 more in October than usual. The tolls on each round trip to Ponce or Moca are a little over \$10.

Your brother,

Tol Burk
P.O. Box 50182
Toa Baja, PR 00950
(787) 998-2098
(787) 930-6341 cell
blog: caribbeanpost.blogspot.com