

Puerto Rico Work Report (February-March 2024)

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Greetings brethren in Jesus our Savior,

The Lord's work is abounding here and there are new opportunities nearly everywhere we look. We give thanks to God for the open doors that He continually provides. We constantly pray that God will send us more workers and helpers here in Puerto Rico. For truly the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Brother Joel Holt and I have been trying to reach out to more people to help find anyone interested in the Spanish work and especially the work here in PR. If you know of anyone who might be interested in Spanish work, please give them my contact information. We are in desperate need of more workers and pray that the Lord of harvest will send more helpers. We pray that that God is blessing your work and as always, we are thankful for your fellowship in the gospel. We are excited to share with you the progress of the Lord's work here in PR.

The Work Continues to Grow!

In December and January, we were blessed with 4 baptisms in Arecibo. I have been trying to help these young Christians grow and become more grounded in their faith. I have been providing bible studies with the two couples and I have been impressed by their dedication and growth so far. In February God opened a door for new studies with Alvaro's older brother, Joel Jirau. I had studied with Joel several times over the past year, and he had been attending our Sunday services with regularity, but in February he expressed interest in being baptized. I went to study with him and after two studies he decided to be baptized into Christ, praise God! Joel has been faithful in his attendance and is learning a lot from bible classes. Joel works at the bakery that his brother Alvaro owns. I often frequent the bakery as a meetup place for bible studies. I often find Joel there and I have many studies and conversations with him in addition to my other studies at the bakery with members and visitors. Joel is a very kind man in his 60s and he has been an encouragement to me. Even though he has had a very difficult life, his example shows that it is never too late to be born again and obey Christ. We give thanks to God for our new brother in Christ!



Alvaro, Joel Jirau, and me after Joel's baptism

In March we were blessed to have a young brother named Dylan Cunningham come to visit us. Dylan is in a preacher training program at the West End church of Christ in Bowling Green, KY and he is a friend of my youngest sister, Becca. Becca mentioned to me that Dylan was interested in the Spanish work, so I called him, and he made plans to visit us. Dylan is a talented young man with a keen mind, and it was very encouraging to have him visit us here in PR. We hope that Dylan will consider helping with the work in PR after his training program is complete. Dylan also had the opportunity to meet brother Joel Holt in San Juan and both Joel and I were greatly encouraged by Dylan's interest in Spanish work. Dylan's visit helped Joel and I realize that we need



Lunch with the Moscoso's & Dylan Cunningham

to be actively seeking more workers to come to help with the Lord's work here in PR. So, both Joel and I are going to try to get out the word more this next year and try to find some brethren who are interested in Spanish work to come to learn and work with us.

Over the past few months, I have continued to teach the adult class in Arecibo on the topic of the Holy Spirit. The class is going extremely well, and the brethren have been growing a lot in the class. It seems that even some of the brethren who were initially skeptical about the class are now starting to see the great benefit and growth that the class has

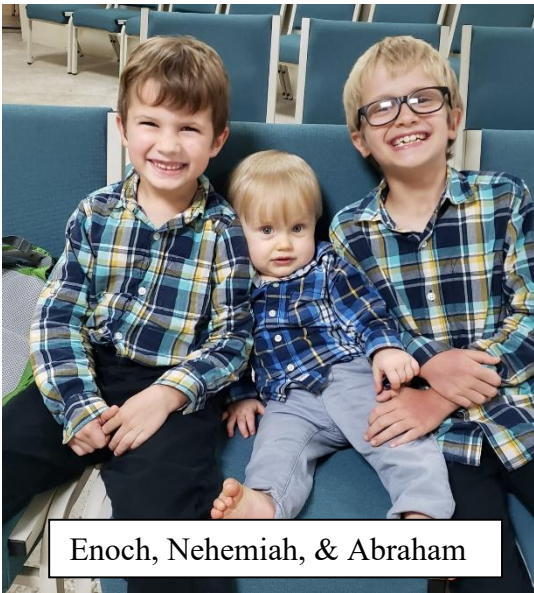
helped promote. I have been working on trying to get the brethren to choose new material for the next class, but it is a slow process because the Puerto Rican brethren have typically never planned ahead for any classes. This change of perspective is not an easy one for them to adopt. Nevertheless, we are making progress along the teaching and bible class front. At the end of February, we had a dedicated study on the topic of Marriage & Divorce at Arecibo. It was a challenging study, but I am very pleased to see the openness and good attitudes of the Arecibo brethren in these difficult discussions. We are planning on having more studies in the future on MDR because there are still many unresolved issues, but I am hopeful that they will continue to go well and that there will be growth for all as we tackle this challenge together. Additionally in San Sebastian, we started a very interesting and thought-provoking study on the topic of the collection ("la ofrenda" in Spanish). With the long history of institutionalism on the island the issue of the collection has been a touchy topic, but I have been slowly working through the biblical texts on the collection and have tried to lay the groundwork for future discussions. Many brethren from different areas of the island have expressed interest in studying the collections so I am hoping that the material that I am developing in San Sebastian can be published and used throughout the island. This is obviously a rather challenging goal, but I pray that God helps me and gives me the strength to help lovingly exhort the Puerto Rican brethren on this topic and encourage them to return to the simple biblical pattern that God has established for us.

Over the past month we have had opportunities to help serve other brethren with various projects. One of the bigger projects was helping sister Elba Torres from San Sebastian clean and reseal her roof. Through my time here in PR I have had the opportunity to reseal about 7 different roofs. So, it is a blessing to be able to use some of that knowledge to help the brethren here.

My two older sons, Abraham and Enoch, went with me to San Sebastian to help at sister Elba's house. It was a great opportunity to teach my sons about service and to help a sister in the faith. Additionally, this past month we hosted a get-together at our house to celebrate the 1st birthday of our youngest son, Nehemiah. We had about 25 Christians come, and it was a great blessing to share that time together. I am very thankful for Kaitlin's dedication to hospitality. She sets such a great example for the brethren here in PR.



Abe & Enoch helping clean Elba's roof



The past month also brought many chances to study with some of the younger Christians in PR. Sadly the demographic of Christians from ages 15-30 is almost non-existent in Puerto Rico. What makes matters worse is that the very few Christians that are in that age bracket are extremely weak and being tempted to go astray. Kaitlin and I have been working on trying to encourage and exhort some of the younger men, but it is so difficult to convince them when they are so embedded in the cultural assumptions and practices of the world. We pray for wisdom and courage to help reach these few young Christians in PR.

Brethren, we want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your fellowship, generosity, prayers, and support for our work here in Puerto Rico. We pray that God will protect and guide you as we all face new challenges and horizons. If you have any questions,

comments, or doubts about our work here in Puerto Rico, please feel free to contact me at any time. May our great God of comfort and power always bless and keep you in His gracious care!

Grace be with you,

Caleb B. Westbrook