

Report for October

Germantown, MD | November 1, 2021 | John Pollard

Brothers and Sisters,

I hope this report finds you all doing well physically and spiritually. My wife and I express our gratitude to you for your prayers, love and support of our work in MD. We appreciate it greatly. If you have questions about the information in this report, please feel free to get in touch with me.

In my last report I wrote about Zourea and her sister who had visited with us on a Wednesday night in September for Bible study. Since then, they have not returned but several of the members here have been in contact with them in order to spark encouragement. Zourea, in particular, will not be having her job much longer due to issues related to COVID. She is essentially the sole provider for her family and she's been vigorously looking for a job. Her husband lives overseas and she has two kids.

We have been offering to help in any way and more importantly, to talk to her about God. For now, she has stated that she doesn't have the time but would like to in the future. I know she is feeling a lot of pressure all around her so I would ask that you pray for her situation and more importantly that this door of opportunity won't be closed.

My wife and I have now been with the brethren here for a year and a half. When we joined the work, it was in the heart of the COVID pandemic which sparked some issues among the brethren here. COVID has certainly caused its issues in churches all across the world as I imagine might very well be the case even in your own local congregation. In addition to this, we were dealing with other difficult issues as a church that took time to work out. The combination of these aspects made it especially hard for the relationships in the church to thrive.

However, God has been merciful and abundant in His blessings and we were able to overcome these issues, and for the last several months now, the church has seen some significant growth among the members of the church. That is, many are spending more time with each other where this was a rarity before. Others are reaching out to see how they can be of more encouragement and help. More Bible studies are happening with each other than has ever happened before. This is not my observation. I have been told this from the members themselves. It is immensely encouraging to hear.

Overall, the environment has become much more of a close-knit community which has been tremendous. Though there is much improvement and work to be done in the future, the core of the church is doing spiritually well and this is all thanks to Gospel of Jesus Christ and the attention it has been receiving. When we were having difficulties in the past, I realized that many of us were distracted from the Gospel and its fundamental spiritual aspects. Certainly, when problems and difficulties arise, it becomes harder to keep our focus on the prize.

Nevertheless, having worked out these issues to the best of our abilities according to God's word and with His help, we have together grown through these issues and I think many of us, if not all of us,

have been made better as a result. In some sense, then, we have learned to appreciate passages like Jam. 1:2-4 and 1 Pet. 1:6-9 even more since the trials have made us better for God and better for each other. Please pray that our spiritual growth as a church will only continue and that in turn, we can share these experiences with each other to lead them out of their difficulties and into the fold of Christ who can give them eternal rest.

As I write this report, final preparations are being made for our upcoming Fall Gospel meeting that will take place on Nov. 7-10. Our guest speaker is Gabe Chaves from Mauriceville, TX. Gabe and I went to Florida College together and he is a dedicated servant of our Lord. We are excited to have him. Flyers have been handed out and families and friends have been invited. We are praying that God will be glorified in this and that much good can come from it.

In addition to holding the meeting in person, we will be offering a zoom link so that others who can't or choose not to join in person can listen in. If you are interested in listening to a couple of these lessons, please visit our website during the dates of the meeting for the zoom link. Recently, we established a Facebook Page for the church as a way to note our presence in the local community here and to provide an additional tool for evangelism. I ask that if you do have a Facebook account, that you please like and share our page. This will really be helpful.

Last month I mentioned that we recently started to have a weekly Monday zoom session for additional edification. This has been really great so far as it provides a spark to our weeks as it begins. It is also a good opportunity for visitors, family and friends to join in and see what the church is like outside of a regular service session. We are making our way through the Gospel of John for our Bible classes and the classes have been really interactive so far with many great questions and comments being made.

After finishing up our series of lessons on love, I preached a lesson on whether or not Christianity is intolerant. Sometimes Christianity is criticized for being narrowminded and stereotypical. I addressed some of these claims in the lesson and demonstrated that there is no other worldview that is as welcoming and forgiving as Christianity. The lesson was well received and several commented that it could help them in their conversations with families and friends.

God is good and we thank you once more for your willingness to support us in these endeavors. The brethren here greet all of you and we pray for the work and the brethren in your respective locations.

Thank you for reading this report and may God bless you.