

Report for June and July

Germantown, MD | August 1, 2022 | 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.

June and July have come and gone but not without many blessings in between. I'd like to share about Wilmore Gregorio first. Brother Will came to us in early January this year. He is 40 years old. He told us how he had come to the US in 2019 for his job and that he was converted many years ago in the Philippines but shortly after, he left the Lord. Over the years, he realized that he was looking for satisfaction and meaning in all the wrong places and he realized that he needed to return to The Father. He looked for a congregation meeting near him and that's how he found us and since then, Will has not only been restored but he has grown tremendously.

Not too long after his restoration, Will participated in our monthly song service by leading a song and reading a pertinent scripture. If you met Will, you would know that this was not easy for him at all but he did it because he wants to glorify God and challenge himself to grow in more areas of his spiritual life. I am so impressed and encouraged by his obvious hard work in Bible study and it shows not only when he gets up to lead prayers or read scriptures, but he always texts me asking questions and making excellent points from his daily Bible study. He has brought such a passion to our group that has really resonated with us and challenged us to not let our own guards down but to keep pressing on to maturity and the ultimate goal.

Will is a software engineer and he is able to do this from home. It's a very demanding job since he works very long hours and he often does this at all hours of the day because he works with people from all over the globe including places in Asia. He is highly valued by his bosses and this is why they brought him to the US in 2019. He is married and has two teenage kids. He came first by himself with the intention of getting affairs in order for his family to follow thereafter. However, in 2020, COVID hit and so, for the past two years and more, they have remained in the Philippines while he has been over here by himself. I cannot imagine how hard it must be for all of them but alas, God has answered our prayers.

Just recently, the US consulate in the Philippines opened back up and Will's wife and kids are currently in the process of getting their paperwork in order so they can come to the US in October or November of this year. Wilmore will travel at that time to go and bring them back with him. We are so thrilled for all of them that they will be able to be together again but there's something more important to be excited about. Will's wife and kids are not Christians. His wife's family are predominantly Catholic and they haven't shown much interest in the faith thus far. Will, of course, has been active in telling his family about the Gospel and Christ but we are all praying that their coming to the US and subsequent coming to worship with him will soften their hearts and inform them more about the way to

salvation in Jesus. The church is looking forward to encouraging them and having an impact on them to that very end. I ask that you please remember Will and his family in your prayers that there will be no hiccups with their intent to come to the US and more importantly, that this can lead to their conversion to Christ down the road.

I'd like to tell you secondly about Reacheal (pronounced Rachel) Opuni. Reacheal is 24 years old and she recently moved to our area from New York. Originally she is from Ghana and she hasn't been in the US very long. She was first in New York because she had some extended family there but she is now in MD to become a nurse. Reacheal is a Christian and she was raised in a Christian household. Her parents and siblings are all still in Ghana. Upon arriving to MD, Reacheal immediately looked for the nearest congregation of faithful saints and she found us and came. Her first visit was three weeks ago. Since then, she has been actively looking for a job in the medical field while also being very active with the church. If it all works out well, Reacheal will stay here and become a permanent part of our group.

She has a really outgoing personality that really brings spark and energy to the group. Her Bible knowledge is extensive and in a class not too long ago, she made some excellent points from Acts 5. She is hard at work getting to know the members and spending time with them. She has done all this while suffering from insomnia. When she first came, she did not tell us about this because at first, she thought it might be nothing. However, after some time, she realized that her sleep issues were getting worse. She has been seeing some doctors to determine the problem but in spite of this, she comes to services and she goes about her daily activities with much effort. I don't know how she does it but she says she doesn't have a choice. Please pray for Reacheal. We are truly excited to have her a part of the group here.

Speaking of Ghana, I'd like to tell you briefly about Ben Baidoo and his son Clyde. On Sunday July 24, they walked through our doors. They are also from Ghana, and like Reacheal, they are Christians and have recently come into the area. Montgomery County is home to a large population of Ghanaians and it's such an excitement that we've had three different individuals from there, all Christians, come in contact with the group. There is a real possibility that Ben and his son will become a part of our group as well but we haven't had the chance to talk in detail just. Ben mentioned that he is glad he found us and that they will be back. Besides his 19 year old son, who was with us, I don't know much about their family background as yet.

If, in fact, they become a part of the group in the near future, we will have added 3 members in the last month and a total of 4 since the start of the year. God has been so good to us and he continues to bless us richly in varied ways. I'll keep you updated on Ben and Clyde and what comes of them in the near future. What is also exciting is that we have a family from Ghana who has been a part of the church for years now. As a result, there is a ready-made connection established between all of them because of their shared culture and citizenship.

Over the last couple months, we've had a couple visitors come in from the community noting that they were going around the community looking for a church to be with. We spoke with them and invited them to other studies and events and offered our assistance otherwise. We haven't heard from them

since but we pray that they will seek for the truth. We have a dedicated Thursday night Bible study we host at a Panera bread in our area. Every Thursday a few members meet and study a chapter of God's word. We have been going through Hebrews recently. We host this study via the meetup platform hoping that some from the community would come and join.

Since we started this earlier this year, we've had numerous visitors come and go and some who've come back once or twice. There was a mom and son who came and then came to our Sunday services as a result but after a couple weeks, they did not return because they disagreed with some teachings/practices. Interestingly, we frequently have people who become members of the meetup group but they don't actually come to the meetings. I'm not sure if this is normal or not but nevertheless, our prayer is that souls who are interested in the Gospel will seek and find and that our efforts would lead to some encouragement for those seeking.

At any rate, the studies are immensely beneficial to those present. We have been learning so much about Christ, our high priest, who is better and superior to anyone and anything we could imagine. We usually have about 6-8 members who come and we've formed kind of a core group and we're able to have great discussions that challenge us all to grow closer to God and His word.

In July, we decided to make a relatively big change to our weekly meeting schedule. We now meet on Tuesdays for Bible study instead of Wednesdays. At the end of May, I had preached a lesson on the importance of Christians being together and spending more time with each other. My wife suggested that we could change our Wednesdays to Tuesdays knowing that it may not have affected anyone in the group since all work from home now and do not otherwise have obligations on Tuesdays. After the church talked it over, it was unanimously agreed to for several reasons.

First, switching from Wednesdays to Tuesdays would give the members opportunities to go and visit with other brethren from churches in the area on Wednesdays should they decide to do so. Sylvia and I have been able to take advantage of this and we've been going to visit with a different group every Wednesday and it's been so refreshing for us to spend time with other Christians and develop new relationships. Typically, when we are with our local church, we are actively feeding. Being with other churches gives us the opportunity to be fed. It's a blessing.

Second, doing this switch gives other Christians in the area the opportunity to come and visit with us on Tuesdays since all the other churches meet on Wednesdays. Over the last couple years since I have been with the church here, we have noticed that many of the churches in our area are unaware that there is a work in Montgomery county. I am not sure why this is so since the church has been meeting for the better part of 17 years but even so, the switch is already reversing this as many are now aware of the work in Montgomery county and are taking an active interest in it by praying and vowing to come to Gospel meetings and so on.

Third, we do have some older folks in the church who love to come to the meetup on Thursdays. When we met Wednesday and Thursday back-to-back, it made it really difficult for them to get out. Now that we meet on Tuesday, they have an extra day and they consistently come on Thursdays to the meetup. The Tuesday switch has been such a blessing and I'm so thankful that the church agreed whole-

heartedly to move in this direction. It can be difficult at times to get out of our usual traditions but sometimes this is needed and it yields wonderful results. We pray this switch will continue to be positive in the long run.

We've been recently going through an overview of the book of Acts in our Bible classes and it's been really encouraging. Everyone has been very active in participating and making good comments and the class as a whole has refreshed us and reminded us of our duties and responsibilities both as individual Christians and a local church. While we all benefit from it, there are some newer Christians that this especially encourages.

Please continue to pray for our group as we grow closer to each other, God and His word. Pray that as we sow the seed, hearts might be softened and souls could be drawn closer to Jesus.

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.