

# Report for August and September

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Germantown, MD | October 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.

As the Fall season is now upon us, we also have many blessings and opportunities to be thankful for. In my last report, I told you about brother Wilmore Gregorio from the Philippines who was restored to the faith earlier this year. For about 2.5 years, Will was apart from his family due to COVID. Just this past month in early September, Will travelled to the Philippines to reunite with them and prepare for their interview at the US Consulate to determine if they could come back to the US with him. By God's grace and answered prayer, we now know that they will be able to come back with him and settle here at least for the foreseeable future. God is so good and we thank all of you for keeping Will and his family in your prayers.

Even so, the greatest good from all of this, we pray and hope, is yet to come. Will's wife and two kids are not Christians. Not only is he really excited that he will be able to be with his family again, but he is excited to bring them to services and expose them to the Gospel and God's people in the hope of converting them. Lord willing, we are planning to start a class for his kids as well as two others in that age range (young teens to young adults) that will be beneficial in supplying them the knowledge needed to know Christ.

As of now, we have not yet heard when they plan to arrive in the US. Please pray that their move to this country will be a safe one, that they will not have too much of a difficult time in adapting to the changing circumstances as they arise and that their hearts will yearn for the One who gives life and gives it abundantly. Please pray that our church family will be an encouragement and formidable support system for them as we seek to show Christ's love towards them even as it has been shown constantly to us.

In my last report I also told you about sister Reacheal Opuni (25 yo) who had recently come our way from New York though she is originally from Ghana, Africa. Reacheal has settled down in our area and placed membership with us. We are so excited to have her in our midst. She has gotten a part time job for the time being to help support herself and she has been very active in shining her light. Just this past Sunday, she brought a friend with her to services that she met at a convenience store. His name is Elijah. He is from the Ivory Coast originally. Elijah was with us for the whole service on Sunday and I spoke to him briefly afterwards. He told me he really enjoyed the simplicity of the service and how he was so encouraged without the need for added entertainment or "fireworks" so to speak.

Quite a few of the things we did he said were new to him. He said that back home in Africa where he grew up, he wasn't really religious per se but much of what he was exposed to seemed shallow and

indifferent. We extended an invitation to study the Bible with him and Reacheal noted that she was going to have some studies with him also to help him grow in the knowledge of Christ. He is planning to join us again this coming Sunday. Please pray for this new opportunity with Elijah. Reacheal has been such a blessing to the group since joining us and I must now tell you that she is doing all of this while actively battling severe insomnia issues.

For some time now, she has not been able to get much sleep if any at all. I honestly don't know how she gets along but she finds away by God's grace. What is amazing is that when she is at services, she is often one of the most attentive students in class and during the services as a whole. What a great encouragement. She has relied on God's grace and His providence. So far, the doctors she has seen have been recommending different sleeping pills to her. They haven't really helped. Her next course of action may be to undergo a sleep study to help determine the cause. Please pray for our sister Reacheal and pray that she will be able to carry out her daily activities to the best of her abilities as she navigates a solution.

One of our members, David (and his wife who is not a Christian), recently adopted a 13 year old boy from Ohio. His name is Kaiden. Several years ago, David and his wife adopted a young boy in a similar situation. His name is Jonathan. Jonathan is now 18 years old and Kaiden is his new little brother. Kaiden has been here now for three weeks and has adjusted fairly well. He and Jonathan get along really well and David and his wife are thrilled to be able to give Kaiden a home and an upbringing that he did not have elsewhere. Jonathan is really quiet whereas Kaiden is more outgoing and outspoken.

We are planning to start a class in the near future for Will's kids and David's kids that will begin by simply touching upon the very fundamentals of God and the Bible. None of them are Christians and this would be a really good starting place to develop their minds and hearts towards spiritual things. I ask that you keep this opportunity in your prayers as we seek to emanate God and His word to them in a way that motivates them to desire for the heavenly things and to challenge their thoughts about sin and evil. I also ask that you keep David in your prayers. David has an extremely busy schedule and he isn't as involved with spiritual things as he should be sometimes but he has a genuine heart to do what is good. Pray that he will be a good example to his wife and kids of what it means to be a Christian and that there is no better way except in Christ.

Our meetup Bible study continues to take place every Thursday at a local Panera Bread. We began this meeting at the start of the year in order to add another opportunity for Bible study but also to provide a more casual environment by which others could come and join us to learn more about God. We have studied through Mark and Hebrews and we are now in Ecclesiastes. We have had a number of visitors come and go but we haven't had any real serious students come constantly or come to our services as a result. I am starting to wonder if this is due to a shift in more virtual meetings as opposed to in person meetings. I say that because we have quite a few group members in the meetup app but many of them have never actually attended a study.

Many groups in the meetup app have shifted away from having in person meetings to doing virtual meetings alone. I spoke to a neighbor friend of mine recently who belongs to fairly large Methodist

church in this area. He told me that they have about 350 members but since things have “opened back up” from COVID, only about 30-50 come regularly in person. All the rest have been joining virtually. I think there are really good benefits to having virtual mediums in our work of evangelism and spreading the Gospel but I also think it can be a hindrance to intimate fellowship and community. We may re-evaluate the meetup study in the near future to determine how best we can help to reach out to others. Please pray for this weekly opportunity and that those who are seeking may find.

My wife and I are now less than 9 weeks away (plus or minus) from expecting our baby girl. This is our first child and we could not be more thrilled to welcome her soon, Lord willing. My wife, Sylvia, has been having quite a bit of back pain and ligament issues associated with her pregnancy. This may be normal for her or it may be due to her Lyme disease. We just don't know. We are very thankful to God that she is able to see a specialist who helps her to ease some of the pain and we do some exercises to otherwise ensure that she can get along to the best of her ability. Please pray for Sylvia that the remainder of her pregnancy will be well and that when the time comes, we will have a healthy baby girl. Please pray for me to be there for them to give them all the strength and nurture they need.

Lord willing on November 13-16, we will be having our Fall Gospel meeting with Trevor Trokey from Rapid City, SD. Our theme will be: Commonly overlooked/least talked about sins. The series will include lessons about the sins of pride, lust, gluttony, envy and laziness. We are very much looking forward to this time together and we ask that you pray that it will be a success yield much spiritual good.

We are now in Acts 22 of our overview study of the book of Acts. It has been such a rewarding time reading and studying about the growth of God's kingdom in the first century. The book serves as a constant reminder that we belong to a powerful kingdom that transcends this passing world. It has been a very active class in which many participate answering questions and making excellent points. When I designed the class, I wanted to do it so that the members would put the effort in doing their own studies at home without any added commentary from myself initially. Many have learned a lot and we all share out studies together when we meet and it's just so edifying to be able to reap the benefits of deep, rich Bible study.

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.