

Report for October and November

Germantown, MD | December 30, 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 this year comes to an end and the new one dawns, it is our prayer that God will continue to grant us the richest of blessings via His Son and that we can all continue to share in them as His beloved children. We pray that the efforts in your respective congregations and communities yield much fruit as we labor in His kingdom. In our neck of the woods, the months of October and November were filled with much to be thankful for.

In my last report, I mentioned that we had been studying the book of Acts. We did an overview study that took just about 4 months covering about a chapter each time we met. It was a rewarding study. After this, we spent a couple weeks examining the texts that deal with our practice of collecting money for the local church to use in various ways. We spent several classes examining and re-examining some of these pertinent texts including Acts 2-5; 1 Cor. 16:1-4 and 2 Cor. 8-9.

This subject was a request by one of the members who wanted a better of understanding of how and why we collect the way we do. Admittedly, there are not a few things about the collection that I learned in my own study and preparation for this subject. As Peter states in 1 Pet. 3:15, it is important that we know and understand why we do the things that we do and sometimes it can be easy to just go along with certain practices and traditions without knowing why it matters and what it does to change our lives spiritually. I think it's fair to say that those two weeks of studying about the collection was challenging and very beneficial and I think we all learned something to help us appreciate it even more.

Our must current class now takes us into the tragic and messy world of the Judges. As I write this, we are 2 chapters into the book and it's been a beneficial study in so many ways already. I polled our members here and everyone stated that they had never really done an in depth study of the book. Others, in their blunt honesty, stated that they tried to avoid it at all costs. Perhaps that's not such a bad thing because, in some sense, we can study with a greater sense of appreciation of a book that we really haven't unpacked and appreciated before. We are learning so much already and not a few members have stated how excited they are that we are studying it now. God is good. Please pray that our study of Judges will help us to appreciate the gravity of sin and the richness of God's mercy.

On November 13-16, we successfully held our Fall Gospel Meeting with Trevor Trokey from Rapid City, SD. Trevor presented lessons for us around the idea of commonly overlooked and least talked about sins. He did an excellent job challenging us to think more deeply about sins such as gluttony, pride, enmity, idleness and lust. We had several with us who are not yet Christians that came and many

Christians from nearby churches who visited. It was encouraging and yet admonishing to hear these lessons. More often than not, we need our toes to be stepped on so we can keep drawing closer to our holy God and these lessons accomplished much in that arena.

Wilmore Gregorio and Family

In my last report, I told you about brother Wilmore who has been with us for a year or so now. He went to the Philippines to bring his family back to the US with him. I am happy to say that all went smoothly and Will and his family returned to the US in late October. His wife, Sheila, and two kids, William and KC, have been such a pleasure and blessing to meet. Since returning, they have been coming to services with him although they are not themselves yet Christians. At least, not yet.

We recently started a kids class that one of our older women has graciously volunteered to teach. Will's two kids, 12 and 13, have really taken a liking to her and to the content she has been presenting to them. After one of the classes, Will's son came up to him and told him they needed to get their own Bible to read and learn from. It brought such big smiles to all our faces when we heard that. We are prayerful that as we get to know them better and as we seek to have more studies with Will and his family, they will learn about Jesus and His ability to save and turn to His mercies in obedience.

Claire Palmer

Claire is currently a senior in high school. Her parents are both Christians who used to worship with this congregation here many years ago. They now worship with a church in Virginia. Claire is one of 5 siblings, 3 of which are not Christians including herself. Even so, Claire decided on her own in the late summer, that she wanted to come and worship with us and be a part of our group. She stated that she liked the atmosphere of the group. Since then, she has been coming to all our regular services and she makes the effort to join in other activities we have from time to time. When I am teaching or preaching, I notice how keenly she pays attention and how she is soaking all this information in.

We are hopeful that as we continue to associate with Claire and as she continues to learn, she will soon make the decision to commit her life to Christ. We try not to put too much pressure on her and we certainly are grateful that her parents have allowed her to come be with us. It's such an encouragement to see an 18 year old young lady be so involved and interested in spiritual things.

Julia Davis

Julia Davis is one of the newest additions to our small but growing group. Julia is in her late 60's. She is a Christian who was converted later in life and she found out about the Gospel via an institutional group. Interestingly, Julia, through studies of her own, picked up on some things the group she was with at that time was doing that was not biblically accurate. She continued to study and seek and found a church in the panhandle of Florida to worship with. That is where she had been living for several years. Julia recently lost of husband of some 45 plus years. It has been extremely hard on her as you can imagine so recently, she decided to move here to Maryland to be with one of her sons who is not a Christian and she is now worshipping with our church family. She is settling in fairly nicely and has been an integral part of our group since coming in late October.

Julia has a very vibrant and infectious personality. She encourages and she does it really well. However, because of the great loss she has experienced recently, she has had a lot of questions about the problem of evil, God's sovereignty, God's omnipotence etc. These questions are, in my experience, the normal doubts people who have experienced great loss or pain have. She is not doubting her salvation but she does have moments in which she wants to know why certain things have happened.

I do believe that, after having several conversations and studies with her, she is learning to let certain things go and trust that God does have her best interest in mind. She is working through the pain and hurt and I am grateful that she is willing to open up about this so that she can get encouragement and good advice that will help her persevere and go through this phase. The devil is always looking for an opportunity to cause us to turn away. I am glad that she is now with us and that we can be of some small help in her walk with our Lord. Please pray for her strength, increase in faith and comfort in the mercies of our God.

Lynnora Grant

Lynnora is also one of our newest additions to the group here. She is 28 and recently moved to Gaithersburg, MD from Texas where she was in college finishing up a degree. She recently got a job with the government here and found out about us through the internet. She is a Christian and was raised in a Christian household. She is originally from West Virginia. She was brought up in a kind of extremist environment. This has made her naturally more inquisitive about a lot of things which I don't think is bad.

She has had a lot of questions as she seeks to better understand her own beliefs and why she does the things that she does spiritually. This is admirable. She has chosen to forge her own spiritual identity and knows that will allow her to become stronger and more mature in the faith. She also has been seeing a young man for the last seven years who holds to some beliefs that are different than what she knows to be true. They have been talking recently about marriage and she has been contemplating what she should do.

He is not a Christian and she knows that he does not agree with some biblical principles so she is unsure whether to pursue the marriage. We talked to her recently about this and gave her some advice. She knows that they need to study more and talk more about these things before they can proceed. This is a difficult situation especially since they have been dating for such a long time. Please pray for Lynnora's walk with the Lord and pray that she will make the right decisions that will keep her on the right path.

Don Allen

In several previous reports, I have made mention of Don Allen. Don is a kind of modern day Apollos who knows and obeys much of the truth but needs to be taught some things more accurately. For much of this past year, we have been studying with each other, exchanging emails, calls, texts etc. about the Bible and other spiritual related things. He is seeking and he wants to learn more but sometimes he

finds some things really hard to digest and get over so he takes some time away to think, pray and study.

Recently, Don started coming in person to our meetup studies that we have every Thursday night which is a huge encouragement. You could tell how much he loved being there. He has not yet come to worship with us at our services but we are taking small steps in the right direction I believe. Don's family don't really share his concern for spiritual things and I do believe this affects him greatly in a negative sense. Please pray for him and our continued studies and exposures that it will lead to much fruit.

My Mom

Recently, my mom was diagnosed with an enlarged heart. My parents live in Belize where I am from. They are both Christians. My mom and I were both converted to the faith within two years of each other. We don't know how long she has had this but the cardiologist she saw was surprised she had even walked up some stairs to get to the office. They ran some tests and one of these tests indicated that she was in a pretty bad state. They discussed some possible surgeries and so on but settled on giving her some medication for a month to see if these "bad numbers" would come down.

I have a sister who lives in Houston, TX and she works in the medical field. She read the doctor's notes they gave my mom and thought it was pretty serious. My mom is scheduled to have a follow up with the doctor on Jan. 6 to see if these numbers came down. In the meantime, my sister is preparing to have my mom come to Houston for a second opinion provided she can travel there. My mom is 55 and without much bias, I can say she has been one of the strongest Christians I have ever known. She is handling all of this so well and she is optimistic. We don't know yet what the near future holds.

Please pray for the results on Jan. 6 to be positive. If she does have to seek a second opinion in Texas, please pray that she can travel there safely and pray that God's will be done.

Our newest addition

On Nov. 22, Sylvia and I welcomed our beautiful baby girl: Paige Abigail Pollard. Sylvia underwent a C-section and after several days in the hospital we went home. Since then, Paige has been such a blessing to us and our church family and we are so grateful to our God who His mercies and wonderful gift of life. Please keep us in your prayers as we continue to adjust to parenthood and raise our baby girl in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Please see some pictures below.

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.

