

A REPORT FROM LEE AND MARCIE TOSTI
GREATER PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND
OCTOBER 15, 2021

I thought it would happen, but I didn't think it would happen so quickly. The question was whether anyone with whom I had studied in Ithaca still had my information and would contact me after we moved away. Well, we arrived in Rhode Island the first day of this month, and Joe Giordano texted me eleven days later: "Hi Lee, sorry I haven't been in touch....I've been 'working out my salvation with fear and trembling.' Your teaching had a profound effect on me and I would welcome a chance to read with you again...!" So Joe and I were back at it Wednesday morning, this time studying James over Zoom.

Some of you will remember that Joe and I studied for months in Ithaca, and he had SEEN(!!!) the truth about baptism, and he had even gone to his "pastors" and ruffled their feathers about their church not teaching about baptism, and I was expecting him to call me at any moment to put on Christ in baptism, only to see him retreat to believing that he had been saved at the point of faith and from studying with me. Well I appreciate his generous words about "my" teaching (all glory to God); but let's pray that this time Joe truly lets God's teaching have its profound effect on him!

This one also encouraged us: "Hi, my name is Akiva. I saw your flyer for Bible study. Do you have a group that meets up?" I received this message nine days before we left Ithaca. So I put him in touch with Nathan Quinn (one of the evangelists who works with the church in Elmira, NY, and just down the road from Ithaca) and then Akiva visited the very next assembly of the church. Last I knew, at first he accepted an offer from Joe Works (the other evangelist in Elmira) to study privately but then he turned it down because he's a farmer and this is his busy season. We'll see what happens. But what really impresses me is that, that flier Akiva saw—I had put it up way back in December! I'm thankful that the owners allowed the flier to remain on the bulletin board for ten months; and you never know how long it will be before something you've done bears fruit. So put up your fliers!

"Are you a man of faith?" I asked Andrew, a Rastafarian-looking dude at a storage facility who had asked if I had a cigarette that I could give him. "Yes," he said, "But I don't like it when people say 'Jesus, Jesus, Jesus' to me." So I didn't say "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus" to him. What struck me about him—and it also struck Mr. Haven Starr of the church here in Rhode Island, who was helping me unload and who had also, independently, engaged with Andrew— was that he had reasons for not believing several truths we discussed. This is to say, while Andrew had come to the wrong conclusions, he had done his homework — for several topics. I am hoping (wishing?) that maybe he has chosen all the wrong answers simply because he's never really heard true answers or given them due diligence. I suspect that, given his life-choices, things are going to become more difficult and discouraging for him. And maybe this will shock him into reconsidering. In the end I did not get his number, but he got mine.

"Are you a pastor?" Joe (another Joe! I can't escape from Joes) asked me yesterday in Burnside Park in Providence. I had been sitting there with my sign, looking for Bible studies. I've also been on Thayer Street, which is a popular place up on College Hill, near Brown University and Rhode Island School of Design. Providence is also home to Johnson and Wales University and Rhode Island College and one or two others; so I look forward to infiltrating those societies. Anyway, Joe and I talked for twenty minutes. While Joe is a believer, he has neither been to a church nor read a Bible in years. When it became clear to me that Joe was more interested in kind-of talking about spiritual things rather than really talking about spiritual things, knowing that he has cancer, I tried to plant seeds about seriously preparing for the judgment to come. "Everyone must face God in judgment," Joe said emphatically. "How can you know if you're prepared if you have not read His book?" was just one of the things I said to him. Joe claimed not to have a phone — not even a land-line (wonder of wonders); I still gave him my flier....

So now the Tostis are in Rhode Island, and we're in it for the long haul (Lord willing). We are temporarily living in a house owned by some generous Christians (as they prepare to sell it). We have a contract to buy another house, and we're scheduled to close November 15. But more importantly, we're settling in with God's holy ones here. They have been very welcoming. And I am gearing up to begin teaching and preaching in November, which I look forward to. Though for now I am enjoying being fed by the teaching that is already happening here.

Until next time, what a blessing it is to be a servant of the Most High God. And what a blessing it is that God has given y'all to Marcie and me! We thank you and pray that we are as worthy as we can be of such attention. I hope you are encouraged.

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Burnside Park

The soothing noise from the fountain drowns out the chaos of the city. Look carefully and you'll see a rainbow. (And the figures are fully clothed!)

Downtown, just across from a major bus stop, and not far from the Amtrak station and the State House, passing through the park is an eclectic mix of business men and women, parents with strollers, teenagers coming from school, homeless and more.



Exploring the State House grounds