

Puerto Rico Work Report (October-November 2023)

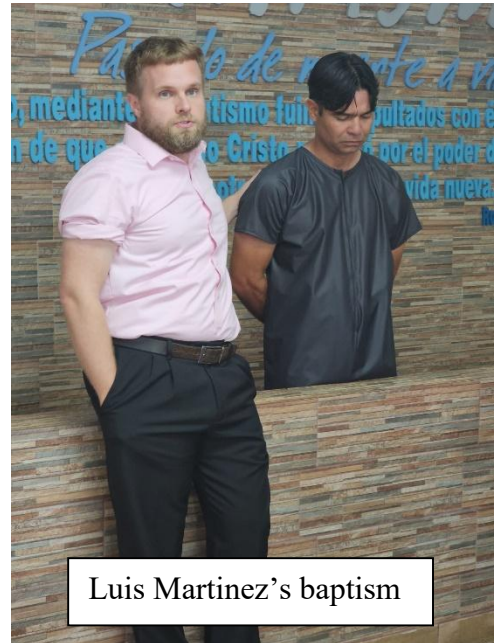
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Greetings brethren in Jesus our Savior,

The past two months have been quite a blessing for our labor here in Puerto Rico. I do not recall a time that has brought as many open doors for us. Even though the work has been abounding, these past two months have been extremely challenging for me personally. My health has not been good, and I have continually struggled with sickness and fatigue. Nevertheless, I give thanks to our faithful Father for the strength to continue on and for the numerous open doors that He has given. I hope to get some test results back soon and hope to find a treatment plan moving forward. Thank you for your thoughts and prayers for the work here, for my family, and for my health. Even though my health has been a challenge, the work has been growing more than before.

The Abundance of Work

We will start with the most exciting news; I am pleased to announce that Luis Samuel Martinez has been baptized into Christ and is our new brother. Luis first visited our services in early November when brother Roger Polanco was preaching here in Arecibo. Luis continued to visit us over the following weeks, but this past Sunday after my sermon in Arecibo he decided that he wanted to be baptized. I had the great honor of baptizing him and we are very excited for brother Luis' obedience. Luis is a dairy farmer in Hatillo, and his wife and four kids were at our church services



Luis Martinez's baptism



Brother Luis with his family after his baptism

when Luis was baptized. It was very encouraging to see that Luis did not put off responding to the gospel as some others have done here, rather when he knew the truth, he was decisive in his repentance and obedience. He has been a great example for many here in Arecibo and we hope and pray that he continues to grow in strength and in knowledge in the Lord's work. Please pray for our new brother in Christ.

As I mentioned, we were blessed to have brother Roger Polanco visit with his family and with his in-laws (Dixon and Nancy Churchill). Roger preached a short gospel meeting with the church at Arecibo. Roger did an excellent job and we had very good attendance for each of the studies. The first night of the meeting we had around 45 people in attendance. I had been working for a long time to get the meeting with Roger set up. As most of you know my history with the group in Arecibo has been quite tumultuous, to say the least. Having Roger in for a meeting took a lot of patient work and planning. I give thanks



My family with the Polanco's and Churchill's

to God to see the change in the church at Arecibo. About a year ago the men of Arecibo were wanting to excommunicate me, but now they are willing to receive faithful gospel preachers on my recommendation for a meeting. Progress indeed, praise be to God. Roger's teaching was really well received, and he also had an opportunity on the Saturday he was here to teach a young-people's bible study where we had about 40 people attend. The brethren here really like and appreciate Roger's work and the meeting was a great encouragement and success for everyone involved.

These past two months I have had more personal bible studies than ever before. Throughout October I was teaching a children's study each with at sister

Yadimar's house. Some of these children have continued to worship with us on a regular basis. I have had numerous studies and conversations with a man named Axel who is a friend of some of the members at Arecibo. Axel has admitted to me that he wants to be baptized but is afraid of remaining faithful to his commitment. I continue to study with him, and I hope that he will make the necessary decision soon to be baptized. Additionally, I have been studying with a young man who responded to one of our Facebook advertisements, his name is Yadriel. Yadriel comes from a Pentecostal background but is very enthusiastic about studying with us. He is making good progress, and we hope to continue our studies with him. I have also continued my normal weekly studies each Friday on the review of the Old Testament. I will be finishing up these studies soon and they have been a great way to help connect with brethren and to help promote better knowledge of the Old Testament, which sadly most people here have never studied. The weekly studies with brother Alvaro Andress each Saturday have been going fantastically well. Alvaro Andres is growing so much in maturity and in his knowledge of the Bible. Alvaro Andres is 24 years old and has really grown in the last several months. He has been accompanying me on other Bible studies as well. He is currently teaching the book of James in one of our studies and it is very encouraging to see him progressing as much as he is. In addition to these studies, I finished translating my bible class workbook on the Holy Spirit into Spanish. I have also been teaching the adult morning bible class each Sunday in Arecibo with that material. The study has been going very well and I am encouraged by the participation by the members and the growth that the church is showing. My workbook on the Holy Spirit is the first bible class workbook that this congregation has ever used in its history. I have been receiving great feedback and I have been making adjustments. After finishing this class, I hope to make a publishable copy available for everyone on my website solocristianos.org.



Roger preaching at the young people's study

Even though there have been a tremendous number of open doors for studies with so many people, there have also been some very real struggles and challenges. Sadly, the issue of marriage and divorce has resurfaced again here in Arecibo. Two of the older members in Arecibo who do not appear to have a right to be married expressed

to the church in October that they wanted to pursue marriage to each other. This has caused quite a problem and has opened up some past challenges. Initially, I was very disappointed and discouraged because of some of the details of this current issue, but I have tried to see this challenge as an opportunity to grow and as a chance to teach the gospel. This issue has taken a lot of time and investment from Kaitlin and me. Unfortunately, it is a long way from finding any resolution, but we trust in God to lead the way and we would appreciate your prayers on this matter.

Another significant challenge that has been taking place is regarding the conduct and logistical issues regarding a sister at Arecibo. Sadly, it has been quite incredible and some of it sounds like it could come out of a thriller drama story. From police informants to drug dealers, to hitmen, and a whole lot of other drama, the situation has been rather exhausting to deal with. I have been trying to emphasize to the brethren here the need to follow the Bible's guidelines on church discipline, but the brethren here have never really studied or applied much of church discipline, so the progress has been slow. Nevertheless, I give thanks to God for the opportunity to apply His Word and help teach on new subjects. Often, I tell the brethren here, "Even though these issues are difficult and draining, we must not get discouraged. This challenging work is the Lord's work, and we must not ignore it!"

In both Arecibo and San Sebastian, I have had a lot of opportunities to preach and teach. There is so much work to do and we need more workers. Over the past two months throughout the various churches in Puerto Rico (roughly 15 churches) there have been 12 baptisms. There is growth and opportunity, but Puerto Rico is in desperate need of more workers. Right now, brother Joel Holt from San Juan and I are the only two full-time evangelists on the island. The Puerto Rican brethren do a great job with evangelizing, but we need more people to help teach and ground the brethren as well as reach out to the lost in the community. If you know of anyone that is interested in preaching in Spanish, please send them my contact information. We are always looking for more workers in the Lord's vineyard here in Puerto Rico and the opportunities are abundant.

As always, we give thanks to God for your fellowship with us in our gospel efforts. Thank you so much for your support and prayers. We could not do the good work that we are doing here without your participation. Thank you, brothers, from the bottom of our hearts. If you have any questions about my work here, please feel free to contact me at any time. May our great God and Father eternal bless and keep you always in His loving care!

Grace be with you,

Caleb B. Westbrook