

# **Puerto Rico Work Report (December 2021)**

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Greetings Brethren in Christ our Sovereign,

Thanks be to God this past month has brought many blessings and a relative return to normal after the travels and illness that I had over the previous few months. As the weather finally cools down a bit here in Puerto Rico, my family and I have enjoyed doing more activities outside and enjoying time with brethren in outdoor activities as well. Puerto Rico is currently going back to stricter protocols due to the Omicron wave. Sadly, some brethren on other parts of the island have used this as an excuse to close down

services again. Thankfully, however, many brethren are remaining constant and are continuing to meet. The government's response to these Covid waves is discouraging but we remain steadfast. We continue to pray to God that He will give us strength and deliverance through all these trials. He alone is the One who has control, and we look to Him for our guidance and to open ever door of opportunity for us.

## ***Work in Arecibo***

December brought a lot of productive work with brethren and contacts in Arecibo. For reminder, Arecibo is a larger city situated about an hour away from where we live. It is located on the north coast of Puerto Rico and sits between San Sebastian and San Juan. There is a small "semi-institutional" church there and my family and I have many contacts among the brothers and sisters there. We have been attending the Sunday morning services in Arecibo for over a year now and have had a lot of progress in establishing studies with the brothers and sisters there. Kaitlin had a huge milestone this past month with the ladies' study that she attends with the sisters from Arecibo. Kaitlin taught her first ladies' class in Spanish. On top of that, Kaitlin also presented 3 lessons in Spanish so far on the topic of "Women & Pornography: Not Just a Man's Problem." I am so proud of Kaitlin. She has come so far to be able to have the courage and ability to teach a class in Spanish. Kaitlin's work here at home with the hospitality that she shows the brethren, her work she does teaching our sons, and her work with the sisters in Arecibo; it is all so important to our shared work here in PR.

I give thanks to God that my work in Arecibo has been very busy and productive over the past month as well. Every mid-week I go to Arecibo and I have 3-5 different studies set up on a weekly basis right now. The most exciting studies right now are the ones that I have with Brother Edwin Quinones. Brother Edwin and I have formed a close friendship and he and I have weekly studies together. Brother Edwin struggles with emphysema, but he doesn't let that stop him from being very active in the work. He and I have studied several topics this past month ranging from bible authority to the collection, to church organization, to marriage & divorce. Edwin is a retired Army contractor and is eager to study. Over the past month I have seen considerable growth in Edwin in our studies. He has an open and inquisitive heart. For example, in one study we were discussing the topic of divorce and Edwin argued that divorce for any cause wasn't sinful so long as the person didn't get remarried. We slowly worked through the verses again (Matthew 19:6, 5:31-32, etc.) and he admitted, "Well, even though that's

Bible study at Yadimar's house in Arecibo



not what I was taught, it definitely seems clear that Jesus is condemning divorce except for fornication.” After the study Edwin went to talk with other brethren on the island and they tried to divert him from that clear teaching. Edwin came back and we studied more, and he found clarity and conviction in the Biblical text. Edwin has also arrived at the point of rejecting the error of institutionalism and is understanding better God’s plan for the collection. Edwin is battling his past with misconceptions that have plagued the vast majority of the Puerto Rican brethren. Yet, Edwin’s honesty to consider the biblical text and remain faithful to it, is so encouraging and refreshing.

Additionally, I have had opportunities this past month to accompany Edwin on several occasions to visit members and contacts in Arecibo. We had the blessing of visiting sister Zoraida who lives close to building in Arecibo. She is a very faithful member but is widowed and her son lives on the other side of the island. Sadly, like the majority of older Puerto Rican Christians her son is not a Christian. Edwin and I are hoping to encourage her and others as well as hopefully set up studies with their non-Christian family members. Edwin has continued to help me set up studies with sister Yadimar. Yadimar is such a tremendous example of a faithful worker. She constantly invites people to her small apartment to listen to the bible studies that Edwin and I teach. We have been having weekly studies at her place and this month we had 6 new non-Christian visitors to our studies. We also had several opportunities to study with Yadimar’s son Raizon who is not a Christian.

God has also blessed me with the opportunity to continue my studies with Yan, the young brother from Dominguito, Arecibo. Yan and I have been studying through Genesis together. He has been learning a lot and his interest and amazement at the depth and clarity of Genesis has certainly grown. At one point Yan told me, “I don’t care what anyone at school says, the Bible is way deeper than anyone thinks.” Amen. This past month I also had the blessing to invite Yan to go camping with me and my boys. Eric and his son Sam also came along, and we had a very uplifting time together as we enjoyed God’s creation and each other’s company. I am encouraged by Yan and he helps me a lot with learning and connecting with aspects of Puerto Rican culture that I have never encountered before.

### ***Work in San Sebastian***

The work in San Sebastian is also going well. I have presenting sermons every week and I am currently working on writing a bible class course on the topic of biblical authority to teach after Eric finishes the book of Proverbs. Eric and I are also continuing in our studies with Luis and Samaria each week and those studies are going well. This past month we also had an opportunity to use some biblical conflict resolution to help an issue that one of our members had with a visitor to our services. Thankfully the situation was handled well, and I think that both the individuals and our group as a whole grew from the process.

This past year has certainly brought many challenges for me and my family. Despite all the ups and downs God has been faithful to us and has helped guide us safely through all of the turbulence. There is so much work to do here in Puerto Rico and we are always praying and looking for more workers to join our efforts. We are excited about the future prospects of the work, and we are grateful for your fellowship in our work. Please keep us and the work here in your prayers. We appreciate so much our communion together for the cause of Christ! If you have any questions about the work here, please feel free to contact me at any time. May God bless and protect you all in this New Year!

Grace be with you always,  
Caleb B. Westbrook