

Puerto Rico Work Report (January 2022)

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Bible study in Arecibo at Yadimar's in Arecibo



Greetings Brethren in Jesus our King,

Our hopes and prayers are for your progress for the gospel's sake so that in all areas our great God and Father will glorified. We hope you have had a wonderful new year! We are so thankful for your continued fellowship and confidence in the work that we are doing here in Puerto Rico. There are challenges on all sides, but God is faithful and is continuing to open new doors for us. We pray that we will be faithful to rise to the call to minister where we can and help proclaim His truth. I am happy to share with you many of the opportunities and new changes that are happening here.

Exciting news of a new opportunity and change

For over a year, my family and I have been investing in helping the work on the northern coast of Puerto Rico in the town of Arecibo. Over the past year we have had numerous doors opened in the work for us. I have had a continued stream of bible studies and Kaitlin has had several opportunities to engage with the sisters in the Arecibo area as well as teach ladies' bible classes. Over time we felt that there were far more opportunities for us in the Arecibo area, so we started commuting more up there for various endeavors. It is not uncommon for me to have 3-4 days where I am in Arecibo each week. After much prayer, contemplation, and investigation, Kaitlin and I have decided to move our family up to the Arecibo area to be better located near the central nexus of our current work. Thanks be to God we have found a new house and recently signed a contract on the house. We will not be planning on making the actual move till around the end of April or beginning of May, Lordwilling. We have made the announcement to the brethren in both Arecibo and San Sebastian, and we are happy to hear their supportive response to our decision. We have no plans to abandon the work in San Sebastian and we plan on continuing to attend, teach, and preach with the group in San Sebastian. For the past year San Sebastian has been our base camp whereas Arecibo has been our satellite. This move to Arecibo will simply reverse this and make Arecibo our base and San Sebastian our satellite. The main reason for the move is to be more accessible to the primary area where we are working and evangelizing. There are many secondary reasons as well that include but are not limited to: being closer to San Juan and the Christians there, being closer to a network of younger Christians, have a more centralized location on the island, and opportunities for future viability and projects in Puerto Rico. We are committed to the work in Puerto Rico and have no intention of leaving it. This move will hopefully help us meet the opportunities that God is giving us and help equip us for even longer stability and work here on the island. We would appreciate your prayers on our behalf and for the works here. If you have any questions about this move, please feel free to contact us at any time.

The work in Arecibo

The gospel efforts in Arecibo have been going extremely well and I have been extremely excited about the opportunities that we have with so many bible studies there. Brother Edwin has been an immense encouragement

for me, and he has helped facilitate a lot of bible studies for me to be a part of over the past month. Edwin is a great personal worker, and he has an honest desire to learn more about the Bible. He and I have had several studies about challenging topics like authority, marriage & divorce, and institutionalism. Edwin can see many of the problems and challenges in the work in Arecibo, and he is dedicated to start working to bring God's truth to help people see the proper way forward. This past month Edwin and I have had bible studies with a young couple that attends at Arecibo regarding God's plan for marriage. Through this study I had the first time to be able to provide biblical pre-marital counseling in Spanish to a Puerto Rican couple. The study went really well, and we hope the couple will continue to have studies with us. Edwin and I have also had the opportunity to visit many of the members and new visitors to the church in Arecibo. We have been having a continued study with a visitor named William, who unfortunately seems to be seeking more financial help than spiritual help. Over the past month there have been a handful of situations where the brethren have received petitions from people for financial help. These moments have provided an opportunity for me to teach about the scope and limit of benevolence for the local church. So far, the majority of the brethren are receiving this teaching well and it is helping me establish foundational teaching of biblical authority. Additionally, Edwin and I have continued our teaching at the bible studies that sister Yadimar arranges. Yadimar lives in the apartment projects near the Arecibo building ("*los residenciales*" in Spanish) and even though her place is small she is so active in inviting people to hear the gospel. There are almost always visitors at the studies she sets up. The last week we went, brother Eric also went with us, and in total we had 10 people at the study and 6 of them were non-Christians. I was leading the study on the book of 1 John and during the study 3 ladies expressed questions and interest in learning more about baptism. We are trying to set up individual studies with them and one of them named Marilee has expressed a lot of interest. Marilee is very honest and told us directly that she was not living correctly, but that to repent and follow God will require a tremendous amount of sacrifice. We are praying for her and trying to encourage her, but without a doubt she has a difficult decision to make because of her personal situation. We pray that she will have the courage to leave behind the world and follow Christ. We have had other opportunities for studies as well in Arecibo, but some of them have been more intermittent due to some of the people we were studying with getting Covid-Omicron. We are hopeful that we can renew these studies and have more consistency with them over the next month.

Work in San Sebastian

The work in San Sebastian is stable and going well. We have had a few of our "regular" visitors return to visit over the past month. It has been difficult to get some of them to commit to being more dedicated. I have started teaching the bible class on authority and I am writing my own material for it. Edwin from Arecibo is helping me edit many of my classes and materials, so I hope these studies will also be of future use around the island. Eric and I have been continuing in our weekly bible studies with Luis and Samaria as well as producing videos for our series in Spanish on the book of Revelation, which is available on our Facebook page. Eric and I have also continued in our personal study together studying topics of kenosis, theosis, Christology, and soteriology. It has been a challenging study, but I am learning a lot from it.

God is faithful and will never abandon us. Even though times can bring challenges that may seem insurmountable, God always provides a way forward for us. I give thanks to Him for the blessings and for the work that we can enjoy in communion with each other and with Him. If you have any questions about the work here, please feel free to contact me. May our God of abundant provisions bless and give you grace in your work for His glory!

Grace be with you always,
Caleb B. Westbrook