

October 15, 2007

Dear Brethren,

My prayer is that you are all well, as we are. We are in Kentucky this week—I'm preaching a Gospel meeting where our oldest son and his family live, so we have the added bonus of enjoying our two granddaughters here.

My trip to the Dominican Republic went very well. I arrived on Mon. the 24th of Sept. and returned home on the 1st of Oct. This trip was spent working on two side of Santo Domingo, the capital. Santo Domingo is a city of 4 million people, which is almost half the population of the country.

I had been scheduled to preach Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights in Ensanche (a step above a barrio) Enriquillo. The church here was the first, and for some time, the only church to take a stand against liberalism. Santiago Del Villar preached here for many years, while also reaching out to 3-4 other churches in the capital. Santiago is now living in the States—his medical problems have gone beyond what is really available in the DR, but his son Hugo has continued to work there. Hugo is the asst. comptroller for the Western Union affiliate there, but is an excellent teacher. His older brother Reynaldo (Chago) has also been teaching the last several years. They're a good team—Chago is outgoing and a bit more emotional in his teaching style, while Hugo is probably the better teacher, but more reserved. They have baptized a number of college students in the last year, mostly young men, which has raised the zeal level all around.

They set up chairs in the front patio of a house across the street from the church building for this effort. They have 40 chairs and the neighborhood association loaned them 40 more chairs, plus a large tarp for shade. Thursday night we had around 70 and Saturday afternoon we had 65. Friday night was the biggest crowd—about 75, so of course that was the night it rained. Just as I was introduced it started, and rained hard for about 15 minutes. It took 30 minutes to get everybody and the speakers situated inside the house, but we all fit. The living room led to the dining room, which led to the kitchen,

and we had people sitting from the living room all the way through. I preached from the dining room table, holding the microphone in one hand and my Bible in the other. We had visitors who were not Christians, as well as from other churches. The closest sound church to Enriquillo is at Km. 13 and I think everyone of them was there at least one night. The brethren at 13 have been faithful through many years and I've known them since 1993, so there is a special bond between us. We also had visitors from the liberal church at Km. 18 as well as a couple of other congregations. I preached on "The high calling of God", "The character God expects from His children" (the Beatitudes), and "Salt and Light".

I was encouraged with the progress in Enriquillo. They are now preaching in the town of Bonao, about an hour north of them, and have 8-10 people meeting there. 2 or 3 young people came from Bonao each night. Other brethren came from Km. 25, which is at least 25 minutes away by bus, while some who live 4 km. farther came at least one night—family and all. During the day motorcycles taxi people from Km. 25 the last 4 km, but at night you either walk or leave a bicycle at someone's house and ride back home. There are 15 or more brethren that live in Km. 25, so next year we're planning to do some preaching in that area.

When I arrived at the airport Mon. morning Arcadio Manon met me there. He is retired from the Central Bank—he worked in the dept. where they destroy the old currency and was given early retirement a few years ago. He is 43 years old and has been distancing himself from the liberals for 5-6 years—he could see that a number of their practices were not biblical. He received literature from Wayne Partain and Bill Reeves about a year ago, which carried him farther in his studies—he told me part of what he read was confirmation of what he already believed, but of course there were things he learned. I spent Mon.—Wed. nights, then Sat. & Sun. nights with him and his family. I was impressed with all of them. His wife Lillian also has a bachelor's degree and I found her to be very involved in the work. Their children are 13 and 10 and very well behaved. Their daughter Lili is a Christian already.

Monday night I preached at El Mamon, where Arcadio preaches, a rural area on the east side of Santo Domingo. We

arrived at his in-laws house and I got a surprise. I had assumed we would be meeting in the church building so had prepared a pretty detailed lesson on a much needed topic—church autonomy. But no, because of the heat in the building in the afternoon (we met at 5 so we would be through before dark, as the power frequently goes off for 30 minutes to an hour around 7 PM) so we met under a large mango tree in their backyard. It was much cooler, but there was nowhere for me to place my notes—if I had realized this beforehand I would have prepared accordingly, as it's not an uncommon arrangement in the Caribbean, but was caught off guard this time. So they got the scaled down version, which was probably better anyway, as about half of the 30 people present could not read or write. This mango tree was also the roost for 20-30 chickens and they started getting settled about the time I started to preach, so I had to choose my spot to stand more carefully than usual.

Arcadio normally has studies on Tues. afternoon in El Mamon, before they have Bible study, so we left about 3 and studied with 3 or 4 people. It was obvious Arcadio knows the people there and they respect him. He did most of the teaching, although, as a "stranger" I was able to teach an older man and his family who had never given Arcadio a chance before. Arcadio's teaching was logical, Biblical, and at the level of each "student". From there we went to San Isidro, (about half way back toward Santo Domingo) where I preached. This church numbers in the 50's. They have much potential—most of the men are former or active, military men, so they are disciplined, follow orders well, etc. Their military training shows in many things—they have 1 minister, assisted by 2 evangelists: a commander, with 2 assistant commanders. Church discipline here is strict and the "probationary" period after repentance according to Arcadio, can last up to 2 years, during which time the man cannot take a public part in the worship, nor partake of the Lord's Supper. They have a number of peculiarities, but are eager for us to work with them. So much so, that they insisted I had to preach for them Sunday morning (I was supposed to preach at El Mamon). Like many churches in the DR, they meet at 8 AM on Sunday, so they can be done by 10 or 10:30, when everybody else gets up and gets going, which means their music is turned up as loud as it will go. Since nobody has A/C, the noise is distracting.

Wed. night I preached at El Tamarindo, a group of close to 40 that is actually in Santo Domingo. Most of the brethren at this congregation are black—coming from Haitian descent, but still Dominicanos. One older sister when she met me, held her arm up against mine, and told me, “Even though it may not look like it, we are brothers in Christ”. They all came out of Pentecostal churches and their worship style is much more “lively” than our “normal” services. It took them awhile to get into my preaching, as it wasn’t an “amen” type sermon.

Saturday night the brethren brought me back to Arcadio’s apt. We left the house around 7 AM the next morning and they dropped me off at San Isidro, while they went on to El Mamon. The worship service lasted right at 2 hours—the Lord’s Supper and collection took 25 minutes and I preached for close to an hour on resolving problems, which I had been told was a needed topic. We went to the preacher’s house for a few minutes, then they came and we went to the Food Court of the big mall in Santo Domingo for lunch. At 3 we left to go to Guerra and I preached there. We left right after the sermon, as I was scheduled to preach at Invivienda, in Santo Domingo and they began at 6 PM. Even though we left as soon as we could, we still didn’t get there until 6:30 PM, and whether there was a misunderstanding or what, I didn’t preach. I’m not encouraged about the future there—the preacher, one of Arcadio’s cousins, is doing everything he can to get in with the big liberal preachers.

If the Lord wills, I will be going back to the Dominican Republic in May next year for 2 weeks. We already have 2 young men who have their tickets, so I’m hoping there will be 5 or 6 of us and we can spread out to preach in more places.

The expenses of this trip were:

Airfare, taxes, etc.	\$385
Food (I gave Arcadio money)	250
Misc.	65

Arcadio’s retirement is really good, but DR standards, but they just get by. They would gladly have fed me and kept me, but I knew it

would have run them even tighter than usual. So I usually “help” with food, gas, etc.

Brethren, thank you for your help. Without your help it would not have been possible.

Your brother,