

Report for Gardner Hall

December 31, 2013

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Friday night crowd at meeting in Midland, Texas



Young men serving the Lord's Supper in the independent congregation in Havana, Cuba

Meeting at Fair Lawn

Gospel meetings aren't a part of the tradition of most Hispanic congregations in New York City, but the brethren in Fair Lawn decided to organize one the first week in December. We distributed thousands of flyers and the brethren invited a number of friends. Roger Polanco, Brigham Eubanks and Nelson Amaya did an excellent job of bringing the lessons. I would estimate that we had between 70 and 90 in attendance on Friday and Sunday, less on Saturday, including non-Christian visitors.

Bilingual church

It is a joy to work with enthusiastic young disciples in the bilingual church in Manhattan. We have decided to encourage members to read the Bible through in 2014 with one weekly class designed to help the reading. The congregation has leased an adjoining store building at 508 W. 139th Street in Manhattan. It will provide extra classroom space that will be exclusively ours, seven days a week. The room we meet in now is only available on Sundays and Wednesdays with special permission required for other times.

Street Work

Tim Bunting, Roger Polanco and Caleb Churchill do a lot of street work in New York City. Their tactic is to invite people on the street to Bible studies in local fast food hangouts. I've done little street work lately compared to them, but spent several hours in front of City College on Amsterdam Avenue giving away inexpensive Bibles to students and others. I hope to do this more as time and weather allow. When some classes were cancelled, I accompanied German Ortiz to a laundromat in Paterson, New Jersey to read the Bible with people there. A few always accept invitations to read for ten minutes and two have accepted long-term studies. I hope to accompany him more when possible.

Street work is usually not as productive in terms of numbers of mature converts as is working with friends of members. However, it involves imitating early evangelists like Paul (Acts 17:17) and is sowing the seed as God has commanded us, leaving the results to Him.

Cuba

A sizeable group of brethren in the Cuban province of Granma are rebelling against the national "Church of Christ" association on that island. I receive emails from them about the efforts of the president of the "national Church of Christ" to stop them. Though right in rebelling against the denominational organization, which is controlling and corrupt, I fear that they are moving towards the formation of another. They say that that the government requires one person to serve as a liaison between churches and the government and have named someone to serve in that capacity. They insist that he will have no authority in any of the churches and will not carry the title of president. I've tried to encourage as little connection with the government as possible, but they want to have some legal arrangement to avoid problems. Brethren in Cuba, not just in Granma, are in a difficult position and need our prayers. I admire brethren in Havana, Santa Clara, Holguin and other parts of the island who are serving God independently and thus illegally, like first century disciples.

Midland, Texas

Beverly and I enjoyed a meeting with the Spanish speaking church that meets on Lamesa Road in Midland, Texas. I've enjoyed a number of meetings in Midland and Odessa through the years and have come to greatly appreciate many brethren there.