

Newsletter from the Alvarado's- Panama

October 7th, 2023



Members of La Bonga church at the San Juan- Pequeni River (Oct. 3rd, 2023)

As many of you know, we are in our rainy season. We have only two seasons here in Panama – dry and rainy – and we have a saying: “If you don’t work in Panama because of the rain, you don’t work for nine months.” Nine months of rain keeps Panama green and gorgeous, but getting out can be difficult. In fact, from September to November, we have the heaviest of rains. Sometimes we feel like taking cover in our homes, but we can’t. We need to keep working in the midst of storms. As Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 11:4, “He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap.” We must keep working in the midst of the storms. However, let me share some wonderful projects that happened before this intense rainy season.

❖ The Wellness Project

From July 1-9, [Rebecca Ann Kidder](#) and [Melissa Grose](#) came from [West Virginia](#) to work the medical clinic, and support our evangelism effort. Three Panamanians health professionals are also committed to work with the



Wellness team arriving to Parara Puru Embera village (July 1st)

Wellness Project: Dr. Keyla Rosalba Kerr and the nurses Yasmin Sanchez and Tamar Isabel Rodriguez. Eulalio Miranda, Betty and I also work as collaborators and interpreters. The Wellness team went to six different locations where many were helped with their physical needs and where many more were allowed to hear

the Gospel. On July 2, Rebecca and Melissa joined us at Iglesia de Cristo Metropolitana for worship before we left for our first stop for the medical clinic and evangelism in El Valle de Urraca where Nelson and Doralba Chami are working with the congregation recently established in this community. We also went to Embera Puru Church led by Bro.



Wellness project team in El Valle de Anton (July 3rd - 7th)



The Wellness project team led by Rebecca Kidder

Nelson and Sara Mepakito, to Ancore Puru village led by Eliester and Dina Cardenas, to Peñas Blancas, supported by the principal of the elementary school, Milagros Gonzalez, and El Valle de Anton, where Clemente and Maria Eugenia Rosales work with the church.

As I said, hundreds of adults and children received medical care for clinical illnesses and had the opportunity to listen to the gospel of Christ – the seed was planted in many hearts, and we are starting to see the beginnings of harvest.

❖ Evangelism and Medical Mission Trip



Lee Jamieson and Raul Alvarado sharing the gospel of Christ at the Embera Puru village (July 11th)

From July 12-21, [Lee Jamieson](#) and a group of 25 from [Timberlane Church of Christ in Tallahassee, FL](#) came to help spread the gospel. We attended the same places as the Wellness Project earlier that month, plus [Embera Puru of the San Juan-Pequeni River](#). As a result, we had [eight conversions to Christ](#) – truly one of the greatest highlights of that trip.

A particular precious moment for us was the conversion and baptism of [Zuleyka Mepakito](#), the wife of the previous chief in [Embera Puru Village](#), who has been listening to the



Zuleyka's baptism at the San Juan River (midnight of July 11)

gospel for the last 10 years. She has always listened but made no commitment to Christ, and this has worried us greatly. However, that changed at midnight on July 11, and since then, Zuleyka has proven to be a great leader and influence on women, not only in Embera Puru but in all the communities in the San Juan River area.



Baptisms of Justina M., Justina R. and Lineth S. (Sept. 23rd)

[Lineth Sanchez](#) -- a grandmother, mother, and daughter -- were all baptized by Bro. Clemente. This was amazing because [Lee Jamieson Jr. and the youth group](#) went to this family's home and planted the seed prior to this incredible multi-generational commitment to Christ. They were very impacted by this work.

Another highlight was working in the [Penonome community](#). For two days, we worked at [Porfirio Gomez Elementary School](#) where the 350+ students, parents, and staff all received medical care and listened to the gospel (Please check the attached video-clip made by the principal of this school, [Ruth Mendoza](#)).

Bro. Clemente Rosales is doing the follow-up with the contacts at Penonome. One beautiful event was [when Justina de Mendoza, Justina Rivera, and](#)



Medical Clinic performed by the Timberlane church mission team at the Embera Puru village.

❖ Evangelism in Panama City in the Rainy Season



Evangelism Ministry led by Elio Vergara & Raul Alvarado

We are incredibly blessed with members who share the gospel with their community and family through Zoom and face-to-face. To be honest, driving in Panama City in the rainy season is not easy. The incredible traffic is only made worse by flooding. Still, [Elio and Serafina Vergara](#), [David Leonard](#), [Ruben Melendez](#), [Norberto Lasso](#), [Arquimedes Madrid](#), [Luis and Diana Ortega](#), and others who are not officially members of the Outreach and Evangelism committee are busy reaching out to others. Betty and I are so happy that we have these brothers and sisters who come up alongside us and care about the lost. Each person is so unique. We love each one of them.

Four people were baptized in the last month and many others are hearing and studying the word.

One activity that we have at the Metro Church is the [Evangelistic breakfast](#). We invite those who are not Christians to join us for a special breakfast before services. [On September 10](#), we had ten visitors! One of them, [Mariolis V. Davis Rios](#)



Ten visitors attended our Evangelistic breakfast (Sunday, Sept. 10)



Mariolis' baptism- Sept. 10th

heard the message that Sunday, and was baptized into Christ that day. She was a special guest of [David Leonard](#); David is an amazing brother who is leading all of us in the charge to share the word with all of our community.

❖ [Evangelism in Indian Villages](#)

The most physically challenging work during this heavy rainy season is in the indigenous villages. It is so risky because of flash flooding, and trying to climb up the hills that lead to the villages from the river is dangerous when wet. The last time I went, I had to go down the wet hill and was very shaken by the danger I found myself in. Without being dramatic, I was badly

shaken and praised God I was not killed on this trek.

This last Tuesday, October 3, in the La Bonga village, four people were baptized. [Edwin Tabare](#) from La Bonga village has been doing a great job of evangelizing in his village, but he requested that I come to baptize these four. I am working with my brother Edwin to feel confident and be prepared to baptize people when I am not there, but I went this time.

One reason I went is that Elio and I were asked to go help the brothers and sisters in Embera Puru with a



Four precious souls were converted to Christ in La Bonga (Oct. 3)

serious spiritual issue and their need to receive instruction on Biblical teaching related to Christian families. [Nelson and Sara Mepaquito](#) are doing a wonderful job in evangelism and spiritual leadership; however, they requested our collaboration to deal with these issues. I ask that you pray for this village and the family relationships in this Indigenous congregation.

❖ [The ECEB \(School of Biblical Studies\)](#)

Like so many other places, the harvest is plenty, but the workers are few. For that reason, for the last several years, we have encouraged students to participate in the ECEB (a three-year, 32-course Biblical academic program) where we train Christians to be mission workers, evangelists, and teachers – both men and women – and to fulfill the need in Panama. I am so happy to say that the ECEB students we have in this cohort are just fantastic. Eight students (and others who are auditing) are attending full-time; they represent different backgrounds and professions.



- [Gisella Timmins](#), an entrepreneur from Metropolitana
- [Antonio Murillo](#), a firefighter from Metropolitana
- [Gail Cedeño](#), a nurse from Las Tablas Church
- [Fernando Merchán](#), a college professor from Metropolitana
- [Jose-Luis Gaitan](#), a construction worker from Nueva Esperanza Church
- [Cesar Cedeño](#), a math professor from Las Tablas Church
- [Yasmin Sanchez](#), a nurse from Metropolitana
- [Cleovis Perez](#), a businessman from El Valle Church



Christian School of Biblical Studies- ECEB Active teachers



Raúl Alvarado



Elio Vergara



Lázaro Muñiz B

The teachers are [Lazaro Muñiz](#), formerly a member at Metropolitana who now lives in Dallas, Texas, Elio, and me. We hold classes from 2-5 p.m. every Sunday, with two classes being held per term. That allows one teacher to be on break each term as we rotate, but we are actively seeking another teacher to join us in teaching the established curriculum.

❖ The Building Construction

We are moving quickly on finishing up this latest phase that started in February. The work that can be done slows down in the rainy season compared to the dry season of January through March.

We are thrilled that the February phase is finishing up: we are putting in bathroom stalls and toilets, kitchen cabinets and sinks, and all the lights except for the lights in the auditorium. We are also putting in the front sidewalk, and putting in the tile for the kitchen, two bathrooms, and the cry room.

We also just installed eight steel doors to the outside that keep the building secure, but we still need to put in two anti-panic doors. We are also installing the ceiling for the baptistry, and counseling rooms.



Metropolitan Church of Christ in Panama City- Building Construction

We want to share with all of you that we have gotten a match for [\\$50,000](#). We are trying to collect funds to match the other half. [Our desire as a congregation is to collect these funds by the end of October and to install the air conditioning and the auditorium lights and floor tiles by the end of the year.](#) Now that the building is enclosed, you can imagine that the auditorium has gotten very dark and hot.

I want you all to know how much we praise God for all of His love and provision. We started worshipping permanently on the property on the first Sunday of 2015. We would like to inaugurate the auditorium on [the first Sunday of January 2024](#). It would be 9 years since we started worshipping on the property and 12 years since we purchased the property.

If you can help with this match, please send all donations to

[Park Church of Christ](#)
[10600 E. 96th St.](#)
[Tulsa, OK 74133](#)
[Contact person: Tim Maynard](#)
[Tel.918- 627-3201](#)

In rain or shine, we continue to be so grateful for your love for us and your partnership with us! We never stop thanking God for you and all the help and joy you bring us. We are prepared for the rain! Storms are nothing new. Whether the storms hit our physical world or our spiritual/emotional world, we know who is in charge, and we thank Him for His protection and care.



Metropolitan Church building construction



To see our latest video clip click on the attached link.

¡Dios te bendiga!

Raul & Betty Alvarado