

December
2007

Familia de Dios

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Weekly Bible Studies Sunday:

Teach Bible class to teenagers at Sherman Ave. Then return to Upper West Manhattan Church to worship there. Drive to Washington, NJ to attend worship and teach teenage Bible class afterwards.

Monday:

Study parables with 4 Cruz brothers. Two of their friends have begun to attend!!

Tuesday:

Study about the Holy Spirit with Youming Chen. Then have Bible class with a Joel, or Melissa and Luz. Teach the teenage class at Sherman Ave.

Wednesday:

Study premillennialism with my father. Study Mark with Luz.

Thursday:

Have Bible class with Madaleyn Olivarez. Then have singing devotional at the church with all of the kids.

Friday:

Study at my apartment with UWMCO members and invited guests.

Saturday:

Go to class Gardner teaches in the Bronx. Teach parables to young class in Fairlawn, NJ. Worship with congregation in Fairlawn.

Well, this was a particularly interesting month. I experienced one of those events that are humorous in only in hindsight. My mother asked me if I heard about the fire on Sherman Ave. "Oh no", I said. The church where I teach most of my young students is located on Sherman Ave. When I went to the church building, I was relieved to see that there was no damage done to the building beyond the pungent smell of smoke. The very next building was rendered useless by the damage, but our building was spared. We thank God for that. Soon after, inspectors came to assess the damage. When they inspected our building, they didn't report any real damage, but they did condemn all of our upstairs classrooms as being a fire hazard. And just like that, I lost my classrooms that I needed to teach my 10-20 students. If this had happened in the summer, we could've had class in the

backyard, but it is far too cold now. So, for a few weeks, I took the kids into the 14 passenger church van double parked outside. Sundays, Genesis would take the younger kids and teach them in Fairlawn's van parked just behind the van I was teaching in. This gives new meaning to "teaching in the highways and byways". One Thursday night I even had to move the van during class because it was blocking someone's car. This was a decent part time solution, but was not ideal by any means. The church had spent money recently to buy the van, so we cannot afford to fix the classrooms now. Two women chose to spend several hours one Tuesday to clean the basement that had suffered major flood damage previously. Thanks to their help, we are now having both young kids classes in the building's basement. Among our obstacles, we must remember that people worshipping is all that is needed for worship.

The Show Must Go On!

Personal Evangelism

I've learned a lot about our personal responsibilities of evangelizing this month. My younger students at Washington, NJ were all interested in learning ways to be a better influence on the outside world. My roommate Neil is constantly teaching friends and family. My neighbor Leah Ann has been an immense influence on her mother and boyfriend. Youming is studying with me so he can help teach his wife. Mature Christians need to be active in teaching others.

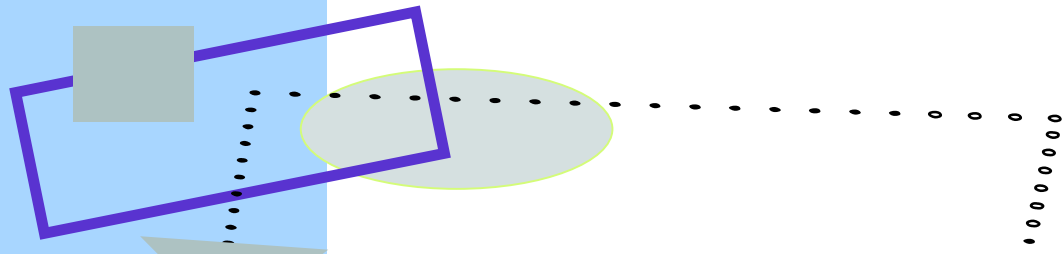
What I learned this month is how quickly new converts, or even people just beginning to study, feel the need to teach others. Sometimes we feel obligated to teach others, because it is a Christian duty, but we should feel the need to

teach others because we genuinely want them to know. Luz is 14, and not yet baptized. She needs encouragement to attend church regularly, but she is already telling her friends about the parables we study together. Jason is about 30, and not yet baptized. He is constantly talking about the need to teach others. To see this genuine desire to share the gospel with others is very encouraging.

We need to remember that we aren't responsible for saving people. We just plant and water. God makes growth. Let's not get discouraged by the immense job of changing hearts. That's God's job. Just share what you know boldly and often, and see where God makes growth.



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Young Christian of the Month!!!!



December's young Christian of the month goes to Daniel Cruz. Daniel has been attending the Sherman Ave. Church of Christ for 1 1/2 years with his mom and 3 brothers. Ever since, he has been growing spiritually. He has a very passive personality, but becomes very active when wanting to understand something from the Bible. Daniel has a sincerity that a Christian of any maturity can be influenced by. When Daniel says the prayer after our Bible studies, he always makes it about what we've learned and applies it to our lives. He is a very encouraging student, and I believe he will continue to have a good influence for many

Fairlawn Church of Christ

There are several churches that I am devoting my time to. I will describe one of these churches per report.

The Fairlawn Church of Christ is one of the churches in New Jersey that I am working with. There are two congregations that meet at this location. There is the English speaking church, and the Spanish speaking church. The English congregation is currently supporting me financially. Though I have not spent as much time with this church as others in the area, my time spent with them has been very enjoyable. There are many earnest Christians there that are very concerned with serving the Lord in truth and spirit.

I have recently been spending more time with the Spanish congregation. Brigham Eubanks and Esther (she teaches class at Sherman Ave. as well) pick up many young Christians in the area, and we have a Bible class about the parables. We also plan to have some extra time for fun afterwards. This has been a very encouraging class for me. Just after that, the Spanish congregation has a worship service. I am very blessed to know so many great Christians all over the area that I can study with.



Assimilating

I've always been a strange guy. Growing up we were always a strange family. Americans in Norway are strangers, and Americans moving from Norway to Florida are strangers. Growing up, I was always trying to assimilate to the surrounding culture. Today, I find myself doing the same thing.

I spend about half my time with Spanish speaking people (specifically Dominicans). Though they have always been accepting, I find it exciting to try to be less of a gringo (North American), and more Dominican. I've fallen in love with Dominican food. Maribel taught me how to make patelitos, Gary taught me how to make mangu, and Rosie taught me how to make maduros and tostones.



Tostones * Rice and Beans * Maduros

More importantly, I've also started to take Spanish classes. Though I do not need to speak Spanish to my students, most of the adults can communicate only in Spanish. I want to have an influence on the whole congregation.

So far my desire of the Spanish culture has helped me get a closer bond with the Christians at Sherman Ave. I've also gotten some really good meals.