

April 30, 2016

## Monthly Support Report

Dear elders,

I trust that this Monthly Support Report for the month of April 2016 finds you well. It is my prayer that you are experiencing good health for you and your family members. And I hope and pray that the members there are doing well and that together you are working diligently to bring glory and honor to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that new members are being added to the body there. We are fine. We've managed to stay healthy this winter. We're thankful for the measure of health that we have enjoyed this past year. And like all of you, we are attempting to bring glory and honor to the Lord Jesus Christ in all that we say and all that we do. It is an honor to be serving in the Lord's kingdom, studying and attempting to learn more of His word.

Let me begin by talking about what we hope proves to be a blessing and some good fortune for us and the Lord's body here in this place. For the past year (or longer) we've had various visitors on Sunday evening. In getting to know them we have found out that they were members of what we would respectfully refer to as an "institutional church." From what we gather it's one of the smaller institutional churches in this area (there are at least 6). But for more than a year we have had visitors worship with us on Sunday afternoon and on Wednesday evening for Bible class. We had found out that they only had one service on Sunday and no mid-week Bible study. So many of their members, including their preacher have occasionally worshiped with us and attended our Wednesday evening Bible class. Over the past year we have gotten to know them pretty well and I have had some very good private discussions with them. Some of those discussions having to do with the things that divide us. The discussions have been good and of course it has been my prayer that these discussions would be profitable. One of the things that has come from this has been that our friendship has grown closer and much stronger. Plus, no one has been offended during our discussions and studies together. Very positive attitudes have been maintained throughout each opportunity we had to sit and discuss these somewhat delicate matters. I won't outline our studies together, but I will say we discussed things like institutionalism and Bible authority.

To make a long story short, to my surprise this group has decided to disband and the members will now begin looking for another place to attend and another group to worship with. It's a smaller group of about 45-60-members. We don't know what this means for us. Those same members are continuing to be with us from time-to-time. But to the best of my knowledge they haven't made up their minds individually as to what they are going to do or as to where they are going to worship. We will help them with their decision if we can, but as you know it's their decision. Some of their members have apparently already made their minds up and have gone back to congregations they have been a part of in times past. I had already anticipated as much. When we first heard of their closing the doors we decided to ask for access to their directory so that we could write each family and invite them to come and be with us and allow us the opportunity to get to know them and for them to get to know us. We're

still hoping that this will pay dividends and open up some additional doors for us. We have been praying for open doors of opportunity and only time will tell if this is one of those doors or not. If it is we will thank God for the opportunity, if it isn't at least we've demonstrated that we're willing to not only pray for open doors, we're also willing to see them through to see what's on the other side. I'm very proud of this group for the effort that they are making, and for their continual prayers for open opportunities to teach the lost and to be more involved workers in the Lord's kingdom. I'm confident that we will see this through and if and when other opportunities come up that we will be prepared to follow up on those opportunities as well. Having said that, we're still not finished with this.

We are continuing as a congregation with our studies and workshop pertaining to Personal Evangelism. Those studies and discussions are going well. What I continue to find so interesting is how so many people interpret Personal Evangelism to refer to doing the actual teaching someone the gospel of Jesus Christ. Obviously Personal Evangelism can reference the effort of doing the teaching, but there can be so many other things directly and indirectly involved in Personal Evangelism. When folks understand this, then they're not afraid of getting involved. That's what we're doing. We're getting involved and everyone, whether directly involved in the teaching or indirectly involved, each person's effort is important.

In our last class/workshop part of what we considered was the population of the area surrounding our building versus the approximate number of Christians in this population. While I understand all of us could come up with an approximate number in our heads, when you put it on paper it's astounding to see the number of possibilities. Clearly the percentage of those who are lost is very high which means we have a lot of work to do. We have an endless number of possibilities just in the general area around us. We have a lot of work to do. And even if we just find one precious lost soul, and help them save their soul, then we've done well.

By-the-way, I'm still very interested in knowing what you are doing in the realm of Personal Evangelism. We've listed a number of different ways to become more active and one brother shared with us his effort using Facebook. One of the things we will do in the very near future will have something to do with Facebook. But we're also looking at other ways and methods that can be used. Two of our members live in an assisted living facility. We're attempting to arrange a time with the facility to come there on Sunday afternoons to deliver a short message and sing songs of praise. While we're confident that we will be approved in the near future, it may take a little time to get this approved. Everything that takes place in this facility must first be approved by management and two management members live out of state. Their only concern that we're aware of is whatever takes place should be something that would be open to everyone who lives in this facility.

Many of my recent lessons have been focused on many fundamental subjects. Two lessons were about This Amazing Book. And of course the Bible is an amazing book for a number of reasons. These lessons will be followed by some fundamental lessons having to do with teaching the lost.

Our Sunday morning Bible class has also been focused on some of these same fundamental lessons. Lessons like; How we got the Bible, What is conversion, How does Conversion take place, Why isn't everyone converted after hearing the gospel, etc. Thus far the lessons have been well received, and class participation has been fantastic. Of course we are always having great Bible class discussions. It's nice to know that everyone is preparing their lesson ahead of class and it's always good to hear the thoughts of others.

I guess that's about it for the month of April. I've written about everything on my list that I planned on talking about. I never want to end my report without expressing my sincere gratitude for your fellowship in the gospel. We greatly appreciate it and we are doing our best to bring glory to the Lord. But thank you. Your help is very important. Thank you!

God bless.

Randy