

# THE BOZEMAN REPORT

January/February 2017  
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*Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." (Mark 1:17)*

We are off to a good start here in Bozeman for 2017! We got off to a bit of a slow start in January, with several issues hampering our work, but things have certainly picked up in February!

We started the year with a lot of cold weather and snowfall. In fact, we had snow on the ground from around December 11th until just the last few days. Now, there are only a few spots of snow left on the ground around the house...but we are confident that winter is not quite over, despite having several warm days. Fortunately, we are still able to get around even in bad weather, unless a storm hits right when we are trying to get something done. We also had a lot of sickness during the month of January. Even among our small number, we had someone out sick from several of the assemblies in January. We even ended up having to cancel one midweek assembly because so many were sick. The good news on that front is that everyone has improved greatly, and it seems like we are back to generally good health for the time being.

## **Bible Studies...**

We continue with the same Bible studies during our Sunday and Wednesday Bible class periods as I have reported before. I am teaching the study on the Life and Journeys of the Apostle Paul. We have progressed up to Acts chapter 19, and are currently discussing Paul's work in Ephesus. On Wednesday evenings, Justin is leading the study in the book of Jeremiah. We have made it up to chapter 31, a chapter with a message of hope to the people of God. This chapter really emphasized the difficulty of Jeremiah's work. He was, upon receiving the prophecies of this chapter, able to get a bit of relief from the difficulties of the previous revelations. He said, upon receiving this prophecy, "At this I awoke and

looked, and my sleep was pleasant to me." What a pleasant change for the weeping prophet, short lived though it may be!

We have tried to ramp up the studies that we are conducting around town. We now have four dedicated times established to meet up with folks to study, and we advertise these through our MeetUp site. We meet on Tuesday around lunch time to read and study from the book of John. On Tuesday evenings we meet to do a study of a Bible character. Justin and I alternate preparing and presenting the Bible character studies. On Fridays we meet early in the morning to read and study the book of Acts. We are doing the same study at a different location a little later in the morning, hoping to target a different audience. We have also started a new Facebook page that we are using to advertise these studies and we are "branding" (for lack of a better term) the Bozeman Bible Study Group.

We have drawn some attention to the new page through advertising, and have added some more students to our online MeetUp group. We have also drawn some comments and questions from the new page, allowing us to interact with a few more people. Of course, such advertising has also drawn some attention from those that are anti-bible, and so we have had to deal with the negatives along with the positives. Over all, it seems like there is some real potential with these new efforts, and they have already opened up some doors of opportunity. We hope that by spreading the studies out over different topics and at different times, we might make ourselves available to a wider group of people. Though we have advertised that we are available at any time, we haven't had a lot of response asking for personal studies. We plan to continue with this structured way

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### **Average Attendance:**

*Sunday: 9*

*Wednesday: 10*

keep it updated as regularly as we can.

### **Personal News...**

I have, unfortunately, spent more time going to doctors over the last couple of months than I have had to in several years. Many of you may remember that several years ago (2002) I had to have surgery on both of my ears for otosclerosis, a condition that causes the small bones of the ear to become calcified, and thus not work. Well, a few months ago, I noticed that my hearing was beginning to deteriorate again. I hoped that this was just a complication of the ear surgeries, which is not uncommon. However, after visiting an ENT specialist and an audiologist, it was determined that my hearing loss was not connected to my earlier problems. As the hearing loss, especially in my left ear, was quite drastic, and the loss was definitely affecting my work, we determined that I had no option but to get hearing aids. As many in my circumstances have discovered, new healthcare regulations make sure that I am covered for pregnancy (obviously an impossibility) but not covered for hearing devices. This is, to say the least, a frustrating, yet necessary expense.

To rule out one concern that both the ENT and the audiologist had with the sudden loss of hearing, I had to have an MRI done on my head. Contrary to what some thought, they did find a brain in there! They did not find the tumor they thought was a possibility, which was good news. They did find something else that was not related to the hearing loss, that they would like to take a closer look at and make sure everything is OK. So, I have an appointment in Billings with a specialist on March 20th. Prayers for a good outcome are appreciated!

As we begin a new year, I want to thank you all for your support of our work. We have received many notes and emails of encouragement. These have come at great times...just when we needed them! We knew this work would be a slow one, but knowing it and seeing it are two different things. We try to remember that it is God who gives the increase, and we are thankful for your notes of encouragement that remind us of that fact! Your encouragement, prayers, and financial support mean more than we can express. Thank you!

of presenting information to the public, and tie it to physical studies around town, and pray that the Lord provides even more opportunities for discussions.

I believe I have mentioned before that one phenomenon we have noticed is that we have many opportunities to talk with people that we meet around town, and they show an interest in scripture, and even in the work that we are doing, and yet when it comes to getting those folks to sit down to a more structured study, we have problems. We will keep spreading the seed, and pray for the harvest!

### **Website Update...**

Unfortunately, much of my time in January was consumed with trying to get a new website up and populated. I discovered while we were traveling in December that our website had been infiltrated with malware that eventually completely destroyed it. All of our content was completely obscured, and so we decided to change providers, starting over with CongreGATE, a company run by brethren in the Bowling Green, KY area. We will rely on them to maintain the physical side now, and we will only be responsible for the content of our site. This will take some of the pressure off us as we don't have to monitor the security of the site any longer. I still have a long way to go in getting the content back on the site, but we are well on our way. I will continue to work on that as I have time. Since our online presence is pretty significant to our evangelism efforts and advertising, we want to