



August 2024

I am grateful for another opportunity to report on the work at the Brown Trail School of Preaching and for all those who unite with us in mentoring men and their families for ministry. We are now entering the latter part of our Summer Quarter. I have just started my Galatians class and finished six hours of instruction covering the first chapter. Our students are excited as they prepare to leave for a few days to work with the Mount Vernon congregation in East Texas. The congregation, which has two of our recent graduates, Preston McElyea (2021) and Jerrod Hammond (2023), working with them, is a beacon of inspiration. They, along with very active elders and deacons, not only serve the local congregation and community, but they oversee the local church camp in Maud, Texas, the Gospel Radio Network (thegospelradionetwork.org), and the Home of Recovery and Restoration in Winnsboro, Texas, which is a faith-based rehab center for men. They have several podcasts on their website for adults and children (mountvernonchurchofchrist.org), and they oversee the new Lamb's Academy of Biblical Studies, a program designed for advanced instruction, which operates on-site and online three days a week. Plus, the church has an extensive local prison ministry as well. Our students are eager to learn about the various works and teach classes at the rehab and in the prison ministry. Plus, they are looking forward to attending a few lectures about full-time ministry and the work of elders. Please keep them in your prayers that they will have a successful weekend.

New Student

Johnny Sanchez

Brother Sanchez is originally from El Salvador, where he was raised in the church and knew relatively young that he wanted to serve God by preaching. Today, he is 20 years old and lives in Bogata, Columbia, the capital city. He is a member of the Salitre congregation, where he often fills their pulpit. Before starting the preacher training program, he studied psychology and hopes to study medicine after he graduates from Brown Trail. He said his goal was to be a bi-vocational preacher, using his profession to pay the bills so he could preach for a smaller congregation.

Johnny is a great young man with quite a sense of humor. He loves God and His truths and

asks for prayers so that he may have a long life of service to God in Columbia. He asked me to share his love and gratitude for all the financial support and prayers given on his behalf.



Gospel Campaign

The students are diligently preparing to travel to Benton Harbor, Michigan, on September 4th to work with the church that meets there. They are ready to door-knock and hold a Gospel Meeting. The congregation is excited about their coming and has been preparing food, maps, brochures, tracts, themselves, and more to make this trip a success. Their thorough preparation instills confidence in their abilities and the campaign's success.

Graduate Update Brandon Ferguson

Brother Ferguson came to us in January 2016 and graduated in December 2017 in what was our largest graduation class in years. Since graduation, Brandon has set out to do precisely what he came to do: serve God and the church and seek and save that which was lost. In thinking of what Brandon has accomplished since graduation, I am reminded of what a famed gospel preacher of yesterday named Johnny Ramsey, who was the preacher at Brown Trail and an instructor in the school for many years, said in June 1990 from Brown Trail's pulpit, "The greatest single thing I see missing on Christian colleges is there is not much of an evangelistic fervor training men to preach the gospel. Now let me say the Bible nowhere says it is the work of colleges to train preachers. It is the work of churches and families to train preachers. But it is still a shame we don't have those fireball evangelistic thrusts that used to build a fire under those young men who wanted to preach. One of the greatest things that I believe is happening in the last quarter of the century is the church is vitally involved in training men to proclaim the word, and the thrust first, last, and always must be evangelistic. We are really not holding this school here to turn out academic deans, we're here to send men out to preach the gospel on main street, in villages around the world...to proclaim the glad tidings."

Brother Brandon was raised in Alpine, Texas, in Big Bend country. As beautiful as that area may be, Brandon failed to see the hand of God at work in this creation and was an outspoken atheist for many years. When he was 24-25 years old, he heard the Glad Tidings, which challenged his belief system. He allowed the evidence to lead him to Christ, being baptized at that time for the remission of sins. Not too long after his conversion, he realized while on a mission campaign to Baguio City, Philippines, in May 2013 that he and his family should devote their lives to declaring what he had denied for so very long: that Jesus lives! In January 2016, he and his wife, Angela, started their training, and he graduated in December 2017.

Souls have always been on his mind since the beginning of his training. He first started serving as the Family Minister at the Highland congregation in south Fort Worth, where he stayed until August 2019. Then, he and his wife decided to move to a mission point in Huntingtown, Maryland, to serve the small congregation and community there. He still loves foreign missions, and over the years, he has worked closely with the World Bible Institute, laboring with ministry training programs in Baguio City, Philippines, Ivano-Grankivsk, Ukraine, El Salvador, and Mexico. He now labors with three separate programs in India that have a combined student population of about 50. He has also ministered in eight different states in America, preaching gospel meetings and helping to spread the gospel through door-knocking campaigns. Brother Brandon recently said, "I pray to God that I am always able to answer the call to serve Him anywhere a need becomes apparent, foreign or domestic."



L-R - Ferguson Family, Ferguson's on a Mission Campaign

Conclusion

Please keep young men like Brandon in your prayers. And remember, we need more like him, who are ready to leave the comforts of home to take the Glad Tidings of Christ and His victory over sin and death to the masses.

Also, please keep the students, a few graduates, and me in your prayers as we travel to Michigan to share Christ and Him crucified.

Brotherly,
heath w stapleton
