



March 2024

We are very grateful for the continual love and support for the program here at Brown Trail. The English Department has officially finished our Winter Quarter, and the students will be on break for a week before we start afresh. The Spanish Department is running a week behind the English Department. They are in Finals Week and have been busy taking one final exam after another since Monday. Then, they will be on break for a week.

Next quarter is my light quarter. I have only one class, Restoration History, which I have always enjoyed teaching, especially in the last couple of years, since I spent several weeks seeking information where the Stone/Campbell movements started. As a child, I was raised in that area and even attended college in the Ohio Valley, where much of the movement took place, but I never took much of an interest at that age. By spending that time up north during the last few years and getting to know local historians in Kentucky and West Virginia, I have found much more to learn than recorded in our Restoration History Books. One of the most significant finds we made on the last trip was at a family-owned restaurant in West Middletown, Pennsylvania, just a few miles from Alexander Campbell's home in West Virginia. The owner gave us copies of their town's history, written throughout the 1800s. To our surprise, not only were we eating two buildings down from where one of Alexander's sisters lived, but the villagers even wrote about Alexander Campbell in the late 1800s, and not about his religious views, but about the man and how nice, kind, and brilliant he was, but also about his teaching ability. I also found a book written by the Atchison family, who moved to Washington, Pennsylvania (they helped Thomas Campbell move there from

Ireland, even building him a house). The book told of their close relationship with the Campbells and about how one of their daughters broke off an engagement to be married to Alexander. This is interesting because our Restoration Books teach he broke the engagement off. We also learned about brethren like Patrick Gass, who helped lead the Lewis and Clark expedition, built the first brick worship complex for the Campbells, and was the lead contractor for several United States Presidents' homes. Plus, I was given copies of the Men's Business notes to transcribe from the church in Wellsburg, West Virginia, which was the Brush Run congregation, the first congregation the Campbells established. The notes clearly show that this is a congregation that many in the churches of Christ today would not have worshipped with because they had deaconesses and their elders served on term limits, along with other differences from what we see in a sound congregation today. Learning all this and more simply by talking to local historians quickly makes this class more interesting.

Please keep us in your prayers as we begin the Spring Quarter!



Jane Campbell McKeever Home
Built in the mid 1800's and Part of The Underground Railroad

New Student
Ulises Franco

We were blessed to bring in nine new students back in January. Unfortunately, Brother Franco could not attend in person for the first month while he worked out some Student Visa problems in Panama. He spent the first month of classes on Zoom and joined us in person just a few weeks ago.

Brother Franco is originally from Panama City, Panama, and his parents came to Christ when he was three years old. From then, he was raised in the church and was baptized into Christ when he was 18. He attended college and graduated with a degree in Computer Sciences, after which he married his wife, Yajaira Chiru. Together, they have been blessed with two daughters: Zuzany, who is 14 years old, and Yazmin, who is 10.

While in Panama, he was an Engineer Assistant, installing and operating computer systems. For the last ten years, he has been preaching for the church in Valle Verde, Panama.

I tried speaking with him, and I could get the above through my non-existent Spanish and his broken English. He mentioned how happy he and his family are to be here studying God's word and preparing himself to be a better preacher. He seems to be a little homesick, and he mentioned that as soon as he graduates, he plans to return to Panama to serve the Lord!



Brother Franco and Family

Graduate Updates

Mike Roberts

Brother Roberts came to us in 2008 to begin his training. During his second year of school, some congregations from Corsicana and Waxahachie, Texas, agreed to fund him for three years while he finished school and to help him re-establish a congregation in Ferris, Texas, just east of Dallas. He, along with eight others who were there when he arrived, grew to 45 members in three years. In 2011, he and his family moved to Porter, Oklahoma, where they labored with the church until mid-2023, when he decided to leave for Knott, Texas, way out west! The town of Knott is almost non-existent. However, they have a congregation that is made up of local farmers and oil field workers. Together, they have recently worked and brought four souls to Christ. He has also worked and taught at Cape Bible School since its inception in 2012 in Cape Town, South Africa.

Brother Roberts not only graduated from Brown Trail but has not stopped his education since he left. He studied and received a Doctor of Ministry in Leadership and a theological degree in church leadership. Now, he is working on a Dissertation to fulfill the requirements for a secular Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership, focusing on church leadership.

I appreciate Brother Roberts. He desires to serve the Lord, but not only that, he also has a "Here am I" mentality. Many today claim they want to preach, but they have shackled themselves to a specific geographical location and refuse to move, and if no one in that location is hiring, then they don't preach. However, with Brother Roberts, whether it is in Cape Town, South Africa, or Knott, Texas, which, by the way, you need to know a little bit about West Texas and see where that location is to appreciate it, Brother Roberts is willing to go!



Mike and Terri Roberts

Conclusion

We appreciate your continual love and support for the school. Please reach out to me if the congregation where you attend would like a presentation. Also, please reach out if you know of any young men interested in preaching. We would love to talk to them.

Brotherly,
heath w stapleton
