

San Juan, PR
September 1, 2010

To brothers in Christ and friends interested in the ministry in Haiti.

Again, please receive our greetings, sent to you by the mercy and grace of the Lord.

This is being written so you can join with us in giving thanks to the Lord for answered prayer in the case of our mission in Haiti carried out last week and on the past Lord's Day, August 25-29. About 175 pastors and another 40 leaders attended, with quite a few being present for every session. Two young "beefs" were killed, one on Wednesday and the other on Friday, so there could be fresh meat (remember there is no refrigeration) to go along with the rice and beans.

Just as our Lord gave us our daily bread, so He also dealt in goodness with our souls. We were able to carry out the ministry as planned, with pastor Guzman teaching from 1 Timothy 4:16 (Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine) with 2 messages directed to taking heed to ourselves and a 3rd session on being the pastor one should be. An illustration at the beginning of his teaching and one toward the end caused some to call this conference the conference of "the mirror and the grenade". The mirror: some pastors hold up the mirror of the Word to their flock but they only look at the black back side of the mirror and don't see themselves. The grenade: when a pastor falls into scandalous sin it is like dropping a grenade into the congregation.

Pastor Carlson had four sessions to deal with the Gospel and preaching it, especially opening up 2 Timothy 4:1ff. I (pastor Vater) also had four to deal with "Providence", using material from chapter 5 of the 1689 confession. This also has the effect of showing the men how they can use the confession as a guide in studying and preaching, which quite a few have done and are doing.

Jean Pierre Kawas worked very hard as our main translator. How we continue to praise the Lord for him, for his dedication and example. He and pastor Guzmán listened to many men who needed counsel in regard to many different matters.

Haiti is suffering in many ways. No one can trust those in charge. Little has been done since the earth quake. Now elections are coming up in November. The next administration is to begin in February. Only the Omniscient Ruler of heaven and earth knows when some positive steps may be taken. For example, right now there is a whole trailer full of food stuck at the border which the government wants to profit from while Haitians suffer. Apparently the only person who can negotiate the release is an important person from Red Cross who is out of the country and will not be back until about mid-September. So things go. The study of "Providence" is good and necessary.

Furthermore, there is crime, kidnappings and other stuff (though it is not as bad in the area where we work as in other areas). The Lord kept us from harm and from sickness and refreshed our souls in different ways. He took care of our families. Hurricane Earl threatened PR and the winds were strong enough to make my wife nervous, cause power outages, scare the airplanes out of PR, and leave us with a cancelled flight. JetBlue has good prices but I have serious doubts about their handling of matters like these. Brother Ramos and I ended up paying about \$400 per seat to American Airlines to be able to get back to PR last night, but as far as I am concerned it was worth it, just to get back to the church in which God has placed me and to the wife he has given me. I am pretty sure he feels the same way.

Francisco (Paco) Ramos experienced the blessing of God on this trip. He worked too, sitting beside pastors Guzmán and Carlson, translating from English to Spanish or Spanish to English as the case required, while Jan Pierre Kawas was translating into Creole for the whole gathering. It

was a delight for me to see him interacting with the children on the Lord's Day after worship, while we waited to be picked up.

On the Lord's Day, pastor Carlson preached and/or taught 3 times in 3 different places; pastor Guzmán preached to a large congregation in the a.m. at the church whose building we use for the seminars and I preached there in the p.m. In the morning I was out in the country at a very poor community where there is a church with which we have had close ties from the very first. I have been going to Haiti since around March of 1999. On one of the first trips, we stopped at that community, surrounded by fields, without electricity of course. We were on our way to Terrier Rouge, it was night time, it was clear and the stars looked like they could fall on top of us. I preached in a building that had no walls, just poles supporting the beams and rafters of the roof, which was made either of metal or maybe just plain palm leaves at that time. There were perhaps 4 kerosene lanterns giving off a little light. I could barely see the faces of the people. The man who was then pastor has gone on to be with the Lord and now a younger man is there whose heart beats with ours in many ways as far as I can tell. They now have a concrete building with a good metal roof and seating for 100 or more, I would guess. I reckon there were around 60 present, and the attention was good as I preached from John 10:27-30, even giving a brief review of the doctrines of grace as found in John's Gospel. Pastor Temacul, who almost always has been my translator on the Lord's Day ministries in Haiti, again helped out in that way. If I start to describe him, this letter will be a lot longer. I am thankful for the ties that bind us.

The Lord took care of the flocks where each labors (of course, Trinity in Montville has pastors Chanski and Smith and many other capable men; and pastor Guzmán has pastor Dante as a fellow elder, but the Lord, in His own way, provides for Berean in San Juan, although I do not have a fellow elder yet). Our families were well, although pastor Guzmán's wife had something like the flu while he was away, but the Lord has been with her and she served us well both at the beginning and end of the trip to Haiti. She and the rest of us were uneasy on our first arrival at Santo Domingo. The electric had been off unexpectedly and unusually long, so that their inverter was beginning to fail, and we were facing a really hot night without fans. We decided to pray for our trip and also ask the Lord to restore the electricity. We had barely begun to pray when that happened and it did not go off again all night long. He hears before we ask.

Please praise the Lord for His manifold goodness to us which has been demonstrated in so many, many different ways. Please pray for lasting effects from the ministry and that we can continue on serving the Lord in that place.

Yours by the goodness of the Lord,

Noble Vater

Pastor, Iglesia Bautista Bereana (Berean Baptist Church), San Juan, PR.