

JIM AND PHYLLIS CHILDRESS

SINCE 1976

MISSIONARIES TO PANAMA

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me

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Dear praying rope holders,

Time is passing by so quickly as it seems I sent our March report just last week. For some time at church we have noticed a discouraging force behind the scenes, but we could not pinpoint the source or cause. It started before Christmas last year and continued during our summer months. School started the first of March, and we hoped for a change that did not come.

We started planning for our mission's conference and I started planning and praying for a revival. In several churches we did our missions conference Thursday through Sunday since many workers had extra days off during Holy Week. I put the two future pastors in charge of the conference since I would be in a different church. The men were told they would need to do a report on planning, execution and a summary identifying problems, and needed recommendations on how to improve conferences in the future. This will be filed for future reference.

Because the two pastors had to work on Thursday, they arbitrarily canceled the first night of the conference. I was not happy with that decision, but I did not override the decision. It was the first church to do that. We needed revival and they did not understand there was no shortcut to revival.

I teach on Wednesday night, so I used the service to introduce missions using Jeremiah 8:20 drawing attention to a time awareness, a needed harvest and a spiritual awareness of the people. I challenged the people to be of a missionary spirit on Thursday reaching out to the community. Pastor Johniel caught the vision and announced a prayer meeting during the evening.

Friday came and the church had a higher attendance than what we have had in Sunday morning services for some time. They had 103. Sunday evening is traditionally our best attended service of the week. The conference ended with an attendance of 137.

The spiritual impact continues to permeate the congregation. During the conference, a long

time couple committed to getting married. Last Sunday night there were eight complete families in attendance.

Our Wednesday night service remains with a large increase in attendance compared to pre-conference attendance. At prayer time, all the men and boys were called together at the altar, where the director chose three to lead in prayer. I was amazed to note that there were more men and boys at the altar than there were women and girls seated in the sanctuary.

Our young people have been revitalized as well. They have formed a singing group that includes several guitar players. It seems there are about 20 in the group. I met with the two pastors and gave a summary:

1] eight complete families in the service.
2] The number of men now attending (6 or 7 come regularly without their wives).

3] The revival among the young people.

Now the challenge is to multiply the momentum instead of seeing the increase wither and die. Pray with us for wisdom.

At this point I challenged the men to not lose what we have gained. Please pray for Federico and Johniel, and their wives, Sheyla and Anne... that they will have wisdom to keep what we have gained and in that there will be continued growth.

It seems like our church has a history of taking two steps forward and one step back. I believe there have been times when we took two steps forward and three steps back. My guys were supposed to turn in their post activity report on the mission's conference May first (a national holiday). Then it was extended to Sunday, then another extension to the next Sunday. That Sunday Johniel still did not have his report ready so we can have a teaching session based on the post-activity analysis (something I have been trying to get the guys to do for some time). Johniel will not be teaching (something he loves) his Sunday School class the rest of this month. Hopefully by this Sunday he will have his report ready and can return to his class in June.

We appreciate so much the sacrificial gifts and prayer support that you have dedicated to our ministry. We are very thankful.

Fishing and feeding,

Jim

