

HAITI UPDATE

July 5, 2017

Dearest Friends and Co-laborers in the Kingdom:

Yesterday was a fine day at the Central church of Christ in Puerto Plata, DR. We ordained 3 elders and 3 deacons. The Central church has grown so much, both numerically and spiritually. It is the site of our preaching school and all the activities attract many new folks of course.

The Central church at one time (about 4 years ago) had over 600 members. The political situation in the country at that time was such that people disapproved of the many illegal Haitians in the country and consequently many illegals (and legals) were deported. The Central church suffered horrible injustice as many of our brethren had legal papers, yet were repatriated. We lost over 400 (!) of our members at that time. Kids were left alone (like orphans) in their houses as their parents were hauled away in the streets. It was horrible.

The Central church has come back to great numbers and all (well, almost all), have come back legally.

It is thus with great joy that I am reporting about yesterdays events. Four of our prospective elders were local Haitians (they have lived here 20-30 years). As they desired (and were urged) to become elders they were told to take our Bible classes to better understand the character/duties and qualifications of elders. They, along with three of our regular students (for deacons) have been with us since September of last year.

Last week, I taught several classes about the work and qualifications of elders according to 1. Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and 1. Peter 5. I also preached the same material Sunday morning before installing the elders and deacons. As I told the church and the candidates again and again, there are some things that might disqualify a candidate, such as bad character traits mentioned in the above passages there were of course also things not mentioned in the passages before us. One of the four prospective elders stood up and said he would abstain. Some members had talked to him about a personal problem and he quietly accepted their concern. I feel good about that this was done in private without rattling the cage as they say.

Thus three elders and three deacons accepted the challenge before them. I was so excited to see all the folks coming up, hugging the new elders/deacons. But more than that, even more, all hugged and comforted the brother that declined the office. That was heart warming.

Maybe he can clean up his "mess" and come back at a later time?

I am aware that many of you want me to come and report to you in person but as you know the HURRICANE RELIEF EFFORT has taken all my time and more remains to be done. I will gladly come as soon as things have quieted down a bit. Please, remember us in your prayers. Please, remember us when you make your financial decisions. We will have our summer campaigns again, including many seminars. If you are able, please help us to send our TIMOTHY TEAMS to the many locations that asked for their presence.

Thank you again for partnering with us in this exciting and profitable work.

And oh, thank you all ever so much for commenting on my last report. Somehow my computer did not say MAIL SENT. It looked like an empty page. But so many (more than ever) commented and said you had indeed received my report. And their were so many encouraging comments. That was so nice. It makes me want to continue in this great work.

God bless you,

JOE