

Newsletter from the Alvarados
January 29th, 2011



Helping the flood victims

Greetings from Panama!

We always thank God for allowing us to spread the gospel of Christ in our country and to share the fruits of our mission effort with you.



Flooding in El Llano, Chepo-Panama

Normally, from January to April we enjoy the sunny days of the dry season: playing sports at the parks, going to the beach, enjoying a lot of outdoor activities is the normal routine of the Panamanians during these months. However, since the beginning of December until last week we have had the heaviest rains in years in Panama, which have caused flooding in several areas of the country and have destroyed many houses, especially in the provinces of **Panama**, **Colón** and **Darién**. According to the *National Department of Civil Protection* "The natural disaster left 13,710 victims without homes and 2,720 refugees in 19 shelters and it damaged 2,586 houses. The estimate lost is 168 millions of dollars".



5 families receiving food supplies

The National government and several international and national humanitarian and religious organizations have sent water, food and clothes to temporary provide for the basic needs of the victims. Members of the churches of Christ of the Metropolitan area also have sent help to these needed people. **A generous member from the Church of Christ in Tulsa, Oklahoma** donated funds to provide food for the

victims of the flooding. We bought food and basic supplies with this donation. On Wednesday the 26th, our coworkers **Elio Vergara, Norberto Lasso** and I took these items to the refugees in **Chepo** who are hosted in one of the public schools in Chepo (a western town of the province of Panama, located an hour from the city). 5 Non-Christians families were invited to



Elio sharing the gospel with the victims of the flooding



Euclides sharing the Word with a refugee in Chepo: Débora gave birth to "Tatiana" at the shelter

the church building in Chepo to receive the donation and to listen to the gospel of Christ along with words of consolation. The local preacher in Chepo, **Euclides Nieto**, will keep in contact with these families to continue sharing the Word with them. Our plan is to keep visiting this shelter in Chepo to provide food and disaster relief to the victims and to share the message of salvation with them.

Members from the Metropolitan Church of Christ joined effort with **Panama Mission** (which is a Christian organization that mainly focuses its mission work in the rural areas and the Indian villages of the province of **Darién**) to deliver gifts at the Children's Hospitals in Panama City. Because of the flooding, thousands of the Christmas gifts had to be kept at the church building in



Christians in Panama unloading gifts sent by churches in the US

Torti. When the flooding in Chepo decreased, these gifts were brought from Torti to be delivered at 3 of the Children’s hospitals in Panama City. On January 6th -8th, we had the wonderful experience of giving the gifts to the ill children at the hospitals and praying with them and their parents. A list of families was made to keep visiting these kids and their relatives. As members of the Metropolitan church in Panama City, we’re responsible to keep working with these families.



Training leaders to organize the church in 2011

The main focus of the Metropolitan Church of Christ is to do mission work in Panama City (1.6 million people- which is one third of the population- lives in the city). We’re working to develop a growing and biblically organized church, led by the Holy Spirit, in Panama City. To achieve this goal, since January 2nd, lessons about the establishment of an organized church led by elders and deacons are being taught by our Bible teachers during the Sunday Bible

classes. **Elio Vergara** is presently teaching biblical examples of organized churches based on the book of Acts. In February, **Jim Richardson** will teach about the functions and qualifications of elders and deacons (Jim was one of the elders at the Davis Park Church of Christ in Modesto, California and presently is one of the teachers at our congregation). In March, I’ll be sharing lessons based on the book **“Smelling like sheep”**. Our goal is to biblically establish elders and deacons before the end of this year. There are qualified men in our congregation that are already “shepherding” the church and serving in different ministries.



Wade and Emma participating in one of our small groups

The School of Biblical Studies was established with the same purpose of training leaders in Panama City who would later establish organized churches in our country, from the main cities to the rural areas. On January 4th, **Wade and Emma Bedwell**, from the Park Plaza Church of Christ in Tulsa Oklahoma, arrived in Panama City to collaborate with us in the mission work for 2 weeks. Brother Wade, who

is one of the teachers at the Bible school, taught the letters of Ephesians and Colossians. 9 students participated in these classes.



The Nietos family open thier home to have a small group

Since January 6th, our small group in the **Brisas del Golf** community is having their meeting at the Nietos' family every Thursday evening. Betty and I are supporting this group this month. **Norberto Lasso**, who is one of the evangelists at our congregation, is leading this Home Bible study. Presently,

we're studying the **Lord's Prayer**. After the study, thanksgivings and petitions are presented to God in a prayer session. All the projects for 2011, especially the goal of having an organized church this year, are submitted to the Lord in prayers. All the small groups are studying the same topic and are having prayer sessions after the lessons. Jim Richardson and I are leading the small group that meets in the communities **of Albrook and Curundu Plain** every Wednesday evening. Members who only used to attend our morning Sunday worship are committed this year to participate in one of the small groups meetings during the weekdays.



Ladies meeting on Jan. 23rd –Secret sisters

The Metropolitan church is greatly blessed by God for having a group of godly women who meets regularly to have Bible studies and prayer meetings and are involved in evangelism and community services. On Sunday the 23rd, they met to reveal **secret sisters**. They began this activity since

November of 2010 to encourage one another through "secret letters". During the rest of the year, they will continue having their home Bible studies the last Saturday of each month.



Ladies prayer meeting & Home Bible studies



Alberto Lasso preached the Sunday message

On January 16th, the church enjoyed a special Sunday worship led by the youth. **Alberto Lasso**- a 13 years old faithful Christian- preached an encouraging message entitled, “**Being obedient to the Lord**” (Psalm 119: 33-34). He presented a biblical, dynamic and well prepared 15 minutes lesson. Another

faithful teenager, **Eduardo Basil**, led the songs of praises to God (Eduardo is a professional singer, known nationwide) **Douglas Ponce**, who is one of the youth leader- assisted by other youth- led the Lord’s Supper. It was very encouraging for us to see our youth leading the worship to God.



Eduardo Basil led the spiritual songs

During Sunday Bible class, our youth has been learning lessons about “**The relationship with their parents**”. Since one of the requirements to become an elder according to I Tim. 3:4 is, “he must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect”, our youth are being encouraged to fear the Lord and to obey and respect their parents. They’re being challenged to search for the “*causes and solutions of rebellious behavior*”.



Presently, two young couples are leading the communication ministry: **Adolfo and Alis Ríos**, and **Carlos and Mélida Lopez**. They’re working diligently to update our website (www.iglesiametropolitana.com). We encourage you to visit this page, which will keep you informed about the present and future activities of **the Metropolitan Church of Christ in Panama City**. These Christian couples made the

commitment to keep our webpage updated. They are also committed to work as leaders of our youth group. They are faithful and well educated Christians.

Alis & Adolfo Ríos



Mélida & Carlos López



THE COORDINATORS OF THE YOUTH GROUP AND THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION

It's very encouraging to work together with a group of faithful and committed Christians who are willing to serve the Lord with sincere hearts. We're so blessed to have these brothers and sisters who are collaborating with us to spread God's kingdom in our country. It's also a great blessing to have brothers in Christ like you who generously support our mission effort in Panama. Thank you so much for collaborating with us in this great mission.

In Christ love,

Raul and Betty Alvarado