

Dear Friends and Ministry Partners,

May-June 2018

In our last letter I wrote about our mission trip to the Caribbean island nation of Cuba. One of my goals for the trip was not something accomplished while in Cuba, but after we came home. **Ritz**, a Ph.D. in Nuclear Engineering grad student, who went with me to Cuba, said our trip was “one of the most significant times in his entire life” and “he’s become more bold to share the gospel here.” Here’s what he said.

“Coming to the University of Michigan and being involved in GradCru was an eye-opener for me. Through getting involved with GradCru, being disciplined, and eventually being challenged to lead a men’s Bible Study Group, I started connecting with God more. I started reading the Bible, praying for other people, and eventually discipling other men graduate students... [Then] I had the opportunity to go to Cuba with GradCru and a ministry called ‘Filter of Hope.’ People in Cuba need the basic requirement of clean drinking water. During our time there, we provided 53 households with filters that provide clean water. Not only did we give them the chance for clean water, we also had the opportunity to share about the spiritual living water of Jesus Christ.

People in Cuba are spiritually thirsty for the gospel. I saw the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of these people and I was amazed to see how these people were receptive to the gospel. Nearly 50% of the people that we shared the gospel with wanted to accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

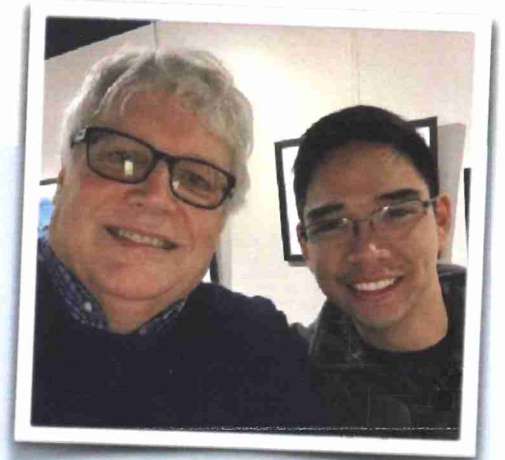
Since the Cuba trip, I have become more bold to share the gospel with people around me. Looking at the opportunity God gave me to minister in Cuba and how my spiritual life changed, I’m excited to see how God can use [my fellow grad students in GradCru] as a force for the gospel in the world. My peers have an amazing opportunity to influence the world in front of them. These grad students are not only going to places of influence and opportunity but also places of such darkness and need for Jesus where others cannot go.”



We’re excited to go again on our second mission trip to Cuba next March 2019. We’re praying that this time 10-20 U-M graduate students with GradCru will go. And, like Ritz, when they return to U-M they will be more bold to share the gospel with those around them. (If you’d like to see and hear Ritz himself say by video what he wrote above—and more—go online to: youtu.be/hojhRo4jdvU)

Another Ph.D. graduate student, **Clarence**, in Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology, came to faith a year ago at U-M. I’ve been meeting with him weekly since last summer, helping him become firmly rooted and built up in his new faith in Jesus Christ (Colossians 2:6-7). I asked Clarence if he would write for you about how the Lord has been using our times together, and broader GradCru, in his life.

*“I met Chuck last summer 2017 when I was 1-2 months into exploring Christianity. We met at one of the Bible Study meetings that GradCru hosts every Wednesday evening during the summer. He seemed like he was the most experienced person in the group, so I immediately asked him to meet for coffee sometime and he promptly arranged a time to meet me. When we met, he was very patient listening to and addressing my concerns, including my frustrations regarding the inability of some believers to explain in an eloquent manner the nature of their faith. Initially, I did not know what I was looking to accomplish during our discussions, but I was desperate to learn about Christianity so I kept meeting him. Over time, I learned to trust him and listen to his teachings on the theology of the cross. There were also times when Chuck challenged me by pointing out certain ideas that were not helpful to me. I was very thankful for his honesty with me. **With Chuck, I continued to learn about my new faith in Christ and then months later in April 2018 I was baptized.** I could not have made it to that point if it was not for Chuck. Now it’s a year since I began my investigation of the Christianity and coming to faith in Jesus Christ. During this time I have: (1) experienced healing and forgiveness from Christ regarding my past mistakes, (2) developed a robust understanding of Christianity, starting with learning the basis for Christ’s resurrection, (3) improving my understanding of Scripture, (4) becoming involved in a local church, (5) participating in a graduate community of believers that genuinely encourage and challenge one another, and (6) inviting non-Christian friends to consider the gospel and experience the Christian life. I’m excited to keep working with Chuck during the next few years.”*



Just last night, Clarence and a couple other graduate students with GradCru, organized and led a time of Praise & Worship for GradCru and previewed our fall Bible Study series in Philippians. Some new grad students came, including **Jason**, who is a 2nd-year Ph.D. in Pharmacology. Jason doesn’t come from a Christian background and has explored in the past Buddhism and Shintoism. Recently he met some Christians and he felt compelled (we would say, by the Holy Spirit) to learn more about Christianity. He found the GradCru website online and then came to our meeting. After the meeting, our fellow GradCru staff guy met him and they talked for awhile which led into the gospel. They talked about sin and forgiveness through Christ and the new life that Jesus offers. **Jason then prayed aloud to receive Christ as his Savior and Lord. So very exciting!** We’ve invited him to church this Sunday and will try to arrange ongoing times with him so we can help him grow as a new believer. **Please pray for Jason.** And, Clarence was exuberant that God used the Praise & Worship meeting that he led to help bring Jason to faith!

Thanks for partnering with us and helping make transformed lives possible!

Serving our Lord,