

RONNIE AND JAQUE MACKENSEN • JULY 2022 • CHIRIQUI, PANAMA

Hello Family and Friends,

Greetings from Panama. We hope you have been doing well and you are enjoying your summer.

In our last letter, we told you we were in the process of finding a place to have our church services and other ministries. We are happy to report that at the end of March we found a building to rent for our church meetings and we began meeting in the building



Comunidad Bíblica de la Gracia (CBG...our church)

in the month of April. The church building is centrally located in the city of David, close to a high foot-traffic area with a bus stop nearby. This building is in a great location for the general population to see the church. Our ultimate goal and hope is to one day purchase our own property here in Panama so that we can build our own church building and other church facilities.

Our church, Comunidad Bíblica de la Gracia, has services Sunday mornings from 10am to noon. We have a time of worship followed

by the sermon. During the sermon portion of the service, Comunidad Bíblica de la Gracia also has Sunday school for kids. Jaque and GMI team member Mauren Barrantes, along with a young lady, Julia, who is a member of the church, serve as the Sunday school teachers.

Our church also has a Bible study class every Thursday. Currently, we are studying the book, “Understanding your Bible,” by Pastor Craig MacDonald. This class has

been awesome for helping our church members and other attendees to better understand God’s Word while also teaching them to rightly divide and handle God’s Word. As our team looks to the future, we hope to continue having more Bible studies, exploring other Bible textbooks to help members and Bible students to better understand the Bible and how God has interacted with human beings throughout history. It has been super encouraging to see how those in attendance are excited about better understanding God’s Word.

Ronnie started a martial arts ministry at the beginning of May with just three students. This ministry was named Academia Arraigados, which translates to “Rooted Academy.” In Colossians 2:6-7, God’s Word tells us that we are to



First three students: Angelo, Dilan, Josue

be “rooted and built up in Christ.” Ronnie’s hope for this ministry is to not only teach martial arts techniques but also to use martial arts as a tool for sharing the good news of Jesus Christ to the students and from the students to the community. His goal was to first start with three students and train them up as his first leaders. Academia Arraigados held its first belt test in the last week of June and all three students obtained their first promotion to ninth level—white belt with a yellow stripe! These students were awarded their new rank and belt at our church as part



Belt ceremony in front of the parents

of a Sunday service. The students invited their parents and family to attend the ceremony. For many of the parents who attended the ceremony, it was their first time attending our church. These three young students were excited



First three students after Belt promotion

to see their parents attend the church and they are excited to continue their martial arts and spiritual training as they seek to become both proficient martial artists and, more importantly, beloved children of God. In the beginning of July, we added seven new students to the Academia Arraigados ministry!

Panama is a relatively young field as our team continues sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with the people of David and the surrounding areas. Through this, we also hope that Panamanian nationals will join the church and become part of the Body of Christ. We hope that they too, will come to understand, know, and rightly divide God's Word, as it says in 2 Timothy 2:15.

Praises:

- We are excited to announce the birth of Baby Noah on July 17! He came a couple weeks earlier than expected, but Jaque and Noah are doing very well.

- We praise God for the martial arts ministry, Academia Arraigados.
- We give thanks to God for Jaque's healthy delivery. Noah and she are doing very well!

- We give praise and thanks to God that Jaque's parents arrived in Panama at the end of June.
- We give thanks to God for our teammates Alvaro and Mauren Barrantes and for our Panamanian family in Christ who have all shown us much love and affection.

Prayers:

- We ask you to pray for the future of our church, Comunidad Bíblica de la Gracia; for the members that they continue to spiritually grow; and that more people come to hear God's Word. We pray that one day we are able to purchase a property. If you'd like to partner with us and help us grow



Ronnie preaching

as a church you can do so by donating towards Panama projects at www.gracem.org, click on the projects tab at the top of the page and then type in the search bar "Panama."

- Also, pray for our growing family!

Thank you all for your prayers and support.

In Christ,
Ronnie and Jaque Mackensen
and baby Noah

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