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Dear friends and family,

What is more important, truth or emotions, doctrine or feelings? In the past, many Christians would class feelings and emotions as irrelevant, distracting or maybe even dangerous. The pendulum has now swung to the other side. Today many believers would doubt their faith is genuine if it is not accompanied by regular deep emotions. Some would even say, "I feel in my heart that is true, so it must be true!" In what ways do your beliefs and convictions touch your emotions? The Psalms give us a good insight into the connection between doctrine and emotions. It shows us that doctrine itself is not the goal. Sound doctrine is a servant to Godly passions. Take Psalm 100 for example, begins with emotions: shout for joy, worship with gladness, come before Him with joyful songs. Verse 3 is doctrinal, it gives the reason for these positive emotions: the Lord is God, He made us, we are His.

This same connection is evident in the New Testament. Why are we told about the 'rapture' of the saints? So that we may encourage one another and not grieve like those who have no hope (1 Thes. 4:13-18). How can a Christian remain cheerful while going through deep trials? He needs to know sound doctrine. He needs to believe God's promises (1 Peter 4:12-19). Why are we told that we are 'chosen by God', 'predestined' by God according to His plan? (Ephesians 1:3-14). Not to generate centuries of animosity between Calvinists (God chooses us for salvation and we can't help but respond) and Armenians (God offers free salvation to all and saves those who respond). The purpose of the doctrine of predestination is to generate a deep 'wow' of gratitude in our hearts: God has a plan! Insignificant 'me' is also part of that plan! God seeks our hearts, not just our minds and will. To do so He reveals truth. Doctrine is revealed to generate in us Godly passions, like gratitude, kindness, generosity, joy, hope, humility, patience, peace, love, wonder and heart felt worship!



During 2024 I taught 6 seminars on 'Christian leadership' in the river Magdalena valley (4 hours' drive from here) to a group of believers from different assemblies. At the last seminar I asked: What topic would you like me to address in 2025? After a short silence came one answer: please teach us 'doctrine'. Why doctrine? To make us feel 'more Biblical' than other churches? To help us retain our identity as 'Brethren assemblies'? I hope and pray that the preparation and delivery of this new series of seminars will stir up some God honouring passions, in me and in every participant!



What happened here during 2024?

During this year we have supported FEB (the 10-month training programme in Pereira) and participated in regional conferences in Armenia, Guaduas, Bonafont, Pereira and Cimitarra. The focus of our work in Colombia, however, revolves around helping and supporting the development of a small Christian assembly here in Ibagué.



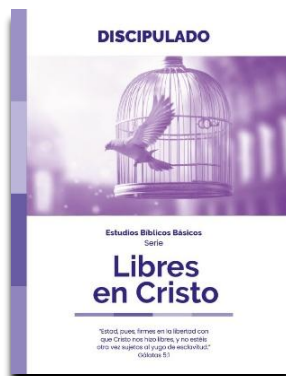
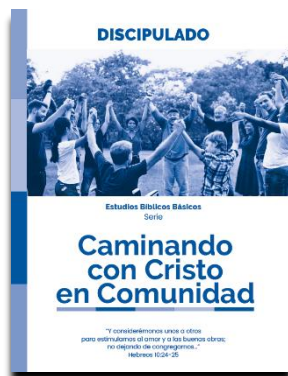
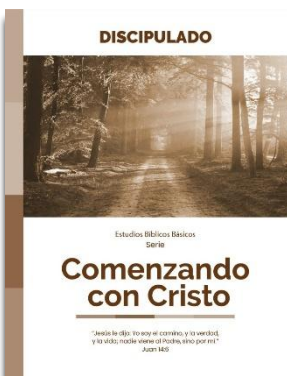
Ibagué: We are delighted to now have a house where the church can meet. Since moving in, we have run some seminars on pastoral work and one on how to teach and preach the Word of God. During this year, our mid-week meeting moved from 'virtual' to 'presential'. Meeting in this way increases travel costs and travel time, but it has been a positive development. This meeting is 90 minutes long and consists of three parts: 20 minutes 'joyful songs', and the rest divided equally between Bible study and a time of prayer. Every week we read and study



a chapter of a book in the Bible. A brother prepares a 15-minute introduction which is followed by comments from other brothers present. It has been a good formula.

We are training some brothers and sisters to run discipleship courses in people's homes. Each course consists of 6 evenings. The first is evangelistic, **Comenzando con Cristo**

(Beginning with Christ), the second is to encourage baptism, the Lord's supper and how to be part of the church: **Caminando con Cristo en Comunidad** (Walking with Christ in Community). We are experimenting with a third course, **Libres en Cristo** (Free in Christ), which addresses 'Freedom in Christ Ministry' topics such as repentance, confession of sin, forgiving others, identifying lies and replacing them with God's truth, our identity in Christ, learning to become free from fear, traumas and demonic influences.



Anneke: She enjoys being part of the women's leadership team which organizes a monthly meeting for sisters and their friends. She also engages in home visitation. Sadly, two sisters she often visited with have moved away from Ibagué. The assembly here is blessed with some who have musical talents. She was happy to join them with her violin for an end of year programme. Every Wednesday, she teaches English to two groups in a small local primary school. The goal is to develop contacts with non-believing children and teachers. Last December she could give a Bible to each of the 8 children who graduated from Primary.



Philip: Often on Thursdays, he would help sister Pilar with a Bible chat in a university laboratory that she runs. Usually between 3 and 12 students turn up, mainly from Catholic background, with a variety of questions. During 2024 he arranged the printing of the 3 discipleship courses mentioned above and helped with the editing and printing of a new testimony book in The Netherlands titled 'Manly enough – the story of my homosexual feelings'.



In this book, Jonathan identifies several factors that he considers contributed to his homosexual attractions. As he, with the Lord's help, begun to address these factors, the strength of his homo feelings decreased, and they made room for some new feelings. He is now happily married to Beth and is blessed with 2 young daughters. Every life situation is unique, but I felt that this story was worth sharing.



Goodbye to loved ones

Last April, Anneke's brother **Jan Lemkes**, aged 63, passed away rather suddenly. In November brother **Jesús Trejos**, a full time Christian worker for many years and very active here in Ibagué,

was also called home, aged 72. And in December, **Peter Nunn**, our father (in law) was also called home, aged 89. If you would like to read the eulogy which we, his 5 children, wrote for him, you will find it [HERE](#). You will also find a YouTube recording of his Thanksgiving service.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. Our thanks too to those of you who regularly pray for us and support us and the work we are doing here.

Philip & Anneke