

# VIOLA TO PANAMA

*November - December 2024 Prayer Letter*

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of our supporters and prayer warriors,

◆ **Additional News:**

At the end of October we had officially transitioned out of the youth and the church in Boquete. However, before we left, one of the youth girls named Hannah, who is originally from South Africa, came forward asking questions about salvation. Since Hannah struggles with Spanish, Maria and I both talked with her, and after I had presented a clear gospel presentation, Hannah prayed to receive Christ as her Savior. Praise the Lord!

◆ **November Update:**

During November we had the opportunity to travel three hours south to the city of Santiago. Santiago is one of the major cities here in Panama, as it is the halfway point between the capital city and the city of David. The city has seen much growth over the years and there continues to be even more growth. Santiago is surrounded by numerous smaller towns as well. One such town which is right next to the city is Atalaya. When you count the population of both, you have nearly 127,000 people living within a 7 mile radius.

Throughout our time surveying the cities, we were only able to find possibly one Biblical independent Baptist church, on the edge of town. We were also able to locate through our surveying a Muslim mosque, a Mormon church, 4 non-denominations churches, two Pentecostal churches, a southern Baptist church, and the Catholic archdiocese school, which is where they train the future priests of the Catholic churches for this area of the country. Just like the city of Chitre, which is only an hour away from Santiago, Santiago is in desperate need for a solid Biblical independent Baptist church plant.

While in Santiago, I was able to get additional information on this specific part of the country. Within a 2-hour radius of Santiago, I was able to identify at least 18 towns and cities that have at minimum 13,000 people or more, that are in need of a church plant. There is much work to be done here in this part of Panama.

◆ **December Update:**

In December, we were also able to do some surveying of the city of David for a few days. All in all we were able to locate six independent Baptist churches, and while a couple are solid, the others are not. The city of David is considered to be the third largest city in the country. It has seen much growth over the years because of its proximity to the border of Costa Rica and the vacation towns of Boquete, Volcan, and Cerra Punta. We can definitely see the possibility of planting a church in David in the future. However after much prayer, we know that it is not the city the Lord wants us to plant the first church plant.

Towards the end of the month with the approaching holidays, we decided to travel to Costa Rica in order to spend Christmas and New Year's with Maria's family. The entire family had quite a joyous holiday, especially with meeting Emma for the first time and having her there for her first Christmas. While in Costa Rica, I was also invited by my friend Pastor Jorge to come and preach the Christmas evening message at Maria's old home church, Bible Baptist Church of Santo Domingo. I ended up preaching a 30-minute message completely in Spanish from Luke chapter two, on 'The Real Reason for Christmas and What will you do with the Greatest Gift?'

Not too long after we return to Panama, we will have to travel to the US Embassy, after I submit the appropriate paperwork, to attend an interview in order to claim Emma's US Citizenship. Since we will be in the capital at that time, we plan to take time to do some surveying of the capital and surrounding cities of Arraijan and La Chorrera.

We pray that you all had a wonderful Christmas and New Year's Day!



With blessings,  
Zach & Maria Viola  
Your Missionaries to Panama

## **Prayer Requests**

1. Please be in prayer for us as we seek the will of God in regards to where we should plant the first church.
2. Please be in prayer for Hannah as she begins her walk with the Lord.
3. Please continue to pray for our safety as we travel Panama surveying cities and towns.
4. Please be in prayer for the lost souls of Panama.

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