

Local Updates (04/09/2020)

I have been placed in a position of leadership by Jefferson County to guide food distribution throughout the county.

Pray for wisdom for I work in this role and as we distribute food to over 60,000 people

Pray that God would mobilize His church long-term, to meet needs as the virus leaves and everyone is left to recover from the economic impacts of it.

Pray that we could stay committed and faithful to our mission as we serve families all over the city.

~Tracy Higgs, Christian Service Mission~

This is awesome, what a great message to get today. Very much needed. We definitely want and need your prayers. We have a very good donor base, but pray that they will continue to do well during this time. We are serving a lot of people so pray for their health and our health. Lastly, pray that we can continue to get food from our sources and to the work we have been called to do.

~Jonathan Edwards, Serving You

International Missionary Updates (04/09/2020)

We are going crazy here in the middle of this pandemic.

Tuesday through Thursday we are delivering 500 packs of food that should last a family for 2 weeks

We are delivering Chronic medication to over 100 people per day

We are seeing about 150 patients per day

We are running our hospital

We are running a very busy farm - we are planting about an acre of vegetables at the moment which we will give away to the hungry

And so much more

Our motto at Living Hope has always been 'Bringing Hope. Breaking Despair.' But as they've disallowed entering and exiting the country and they quarantine everyone, the Lord has put the following on my heart...Despair has closed all borders, but hope knows no borders!

~John and Avril Thomas, South Africa~

We have had to suspend all of our mobilization efforts for the near future, since none of the churches are having public services. I have been in individual contact with our Global Focus Latin America directors. Some are living under total lockdown in their country, where they cannot even leave their houses, others are experiencing similar to our country, a total shutdown of the country.

Please pray for our team in Venezuela especially, they live day to day, and now they cannot get their daily funds in order to feed their families. Xochitl and I just sent personal funds to our Venezuelan team to help them. We have monthly Zoom video calls each month and later today we will all meet on our video conference call to see how each other is doing, and talk about what we are going to do during this time

~Ralph and Xochitl Canada, Global Focus~

We are under a national emergency right now, but “local” life hasn’t been as affected. This is sad, because we know the virus is spreading. But honestly, the idea of “Japanese exceptionalism” is working against them this time. Many feel that Japan is not like other countries, and that they don’t have to worry as much. The start of cherry blossom season brought a sense of “it’s all over, get back to life”. Unfortunately that brought about a spike in reported cases that continues now.

We are praying that God will turn the hearts of the Japanese to Him during this time. We feel it is still early in this situation. We have seen church members stepping up and ministering more and more to each other. And members are realizing how much they need their family of faith. People miss each other very much. Please pray for the people of Japan, that God will use this time to both humble them and cause them to seek the One and True God.

~Steve and Kayhee Taylor, Japan~

Until this past weekend it has been business as usual but on Friday evening the 3rd the Bahamian Government put all the islands on a 24 hour lockdown until this morning. This afternoon they announced that Wednesday night at 9 p.m. they were going to do a lockdown till the following Tuesday morning. This is going to really slow our progress down. Yes, we have several restoration programs active at this time. My program here on Elbow Cay is ahead of schedule but this lockdown will probably even things back out. As of last week we had completed 74 beneficiary work orders.

We have been able to have many Gospel conversations since I have been here. One person I would appreciate prayers for is a young co-worker named Souvy. He is a nice young man with a good heart but he does not know the Lord. Myself and a couple of my operators have had meaningful conversations with him and he is asking a lot of questions. He has had a difficult

time since the storm such as losing his home and a break up with his girlfriend. Pray that he will keep asking questions and that we have the right answers. There are other community members but this friend is heavy on my heart.

One other local gentleman named Ben is a leader in the community. He has been helping us with some logistics around the island and he also is not a Christian. Pray for the Holy Spirit to soften his heart for Christ.

Also pray that we do not have any more lockdowns so that we stay on schedule and can finish our relief work here.

~Ronald Robinson, Bahamas~

The government is using this virus to clamp down on other types of religion. They are now requiring every church and NGO to contribute to their political party.

We're having to cancel a leadership conference in May and given what people are saying, we may have to cancel in September as well. We are being told that the lockdown could continue into the late fall!

Pray for our farmers. Because all markets have been closed, they are not able to sell any of their crops and are having to throw them all away. The situation will have a very long-term impact.

~A and A, South Asia~

Europe has been hit hard with the virus. We are praying that God would use this to open hearts and minds to the Gospel that would bring a significant harvest in the near future.

You could pray for our personnel as they walk their kids through this season and help them navigate this in a biblical way.

We are seeing some digital evangelism and discipleship tools be effective. Through WhatsApp, Facebook ads and zoom we have seen almost a thousand new people engaged with the Gospel or discipleship. Pray that this bears fruit!

~Jacob Boss, London~

They just extended the state of alarm in Spain until April 26th, so it looks like we'll be spending at least another two weeks inside. It's hard news for everyone here who wants to get out, not just for our team but for the Spaniards also. The health care system and the workers are stressed and in despair with no foreseeable end in sight, so please continue to lift up the situation here and around the globe.

I was talking with someone this week and was encouraged by looking at the bigger picture. That this is short in the grand scheme of things and truly is "light and momentary suffering." Choosing to remain focused on the Lord's plans and promises and keeping my mind on things above helps me to avoid spiraling into negative thoughts about my situation. Also, I'm praying about how I can join God in what he is going to do through this situation. We have witnessed already how many people are at their breaking points and are in need of hope. We are praying and asking for prayer that God would bring us into contact with those people who are ready to hear the gospel and believe!

Thank you so much for your prayers and encouragement during this time! It has been really amazing to see how the staff at each church continues to shepherd the congregations, and I will also be praying for opportunities for y'all to be hands and feet in Alabama!

~Seth Graves, Spain~

In our part of the world some aspects of life are "normalizing" to an extent, but in other ways we are still restricted in terms of our movements and ability to meet with friends. But, we are thankful for God's grace and how he has provided and cared for us.

*This past week I was able to meet with Pastor K and their church leadership for the first time in over two months. It was an emotional time and I was encouraged to see them full of joy as always. Pastor K has been able to continue in gathering them all around the preaching of God's word through a secure online platform. In addition, even during this recent time of quarantine **the Lord has added 22 new members to the church** who will receive the ordinance of Baptism very soon. **Please pray that many more in our city would repent and believe the gospel.***

The pastors and deacons also gave a report of their January ministry trip which was very encouraging. Besides helping to strengthen some of the more remote sister churches through the teaching of God's word, they also were able to provide finances to care for over 40 orphans in that war-torn area for the next year.

*Also, we are so glad to let you know that over the past month **we have begun a new church planting project in our community.** Even during this difficult and challenging time, the Lord brought us new friends BT and L who are assisting us in planting this church. This is an opportunity that we have been anticipating for many years in this city and BT has been a great help to me in moving things forward. He has especially been a blessing to me in shouldering some of the weighty responsibility along with me of preaching God's word, as we continue to work through the First Letter of Peter. **Please pray for wisdom for us as God continues to build his church here.***

~D & A, East Asia~