

Mission Partner Updates (5/22/2020)

My 84 year old mother has been diagnosed with COVID. She lives in a care facility where 7 individuals have already died from this virus. Please pray for her, and please pray for the staff of this facility as they continue to serve the residents.

~Brian Hook, Tucson~

God continues to work among one of our people groups. Praise God, even in the lockdown, we saw our national partners begin two new churches in the past week and they also baptized several new believers!

~J, South Asia~

Here is a prayer in which we would like to ask you and Shades to join us: One of our good Taiwanese friends who doesn't know the Lord is in her early thirties and is recently married. Over the last few weeks, she had suddenly started gaining weight. She took a pregnancy test, and it was negative. Then, two Sundays evenings ago, she texted Janelle to say she had been diagnosed with advanced ovarian cancer. Of course, this hit hard. She and Janelle have grown close, and it is so hard to see her facing the trauma of this cancer. Of course, ovarian cancer is extremely dangerous, with pretty tough odds. Beyond that, there is a horrible cultural reality that goes with it, because in Taiwan, when a woman dies without having children she is seen as a curse on her family. So much so that she is buried far away from the family grave, usually in the middle of a field. Because of this stigma, Janelle is one of the only people that she has told about her cancer. To other people, she has just "taken a medical leave." We so desire that she will come to know the Lord. And, we also are asking the Lord to heal her, and to let her know that He is the Healer, so that she and her husband and her family will come to know this powerful Savior! As much as we love this place where the Lord has brought us, and as much as we love the people and respect the culture, we are seeing more and more clearly the utter gross hopelessness of the spiritual darkness here — the perplexingly misguided ways that they try to gain favor from their manmade gods. We want this to become an opportunity for our friends to discover the One and only Almighty God, their Creator and loving Ruler! Please join us in this prayer!

~Preston and Janelle Hite, Taiwan~

This is a strange time, almost like it is a parenthesis in life. But we continue working in the parenthesis! We continue fixing up the camp, as well as serving the community however we can. As we continue some of our projects, my prayer is that the Lord will provide whatever amount of money he wants us to have. I only want to work any project through his provision.

We continue to wait on materials for our chapel construction. They have been held up as the fabricators are not able to work on them at this time. We hope to receive materials and begin construction in the fall. Please pray for the Lord's timing on this. And also pray for our daughter as we continue to try to get her back here from the US. I've already had to change her flights 5 times!!

~Art Nilsen, Azores

The two churches I mentor in Colombia were poised for growth and renewed impact right when the lock down began. I was supposed to be there ministering in May. Now, they tell me that congregations will not be able to meet until December. Most of my work got moved to the online platform. I spend many hours on the phone or the computer mentoring the pastors from the Bogota churches, coaching leaders of organizations with which I serve and also individuals from around the world that I am discipling.

I ask you to pray for us during this time of waiting and re-directing. We realize that ministry strategies have to re-calibrate to better respond to our new normal around the world. We are ready to do that! We want to do whatever it takes to productively continue serving the Lord. I am convinced that Jesus' teachings were not meant only for Sunday morning; they are the most relevant and convenient for the development of life Monday through Friday. Please keep us in your prayers and ask God to clarify in my heart the renewed vision he already has in His.

~Manuel Zarate, Globeworks~

1. Pray for our discussion group as they wrap up the book of Acts in the next couple of weeks. Pray that the Holy Spirit would soften the hearts of the lost who attend that they would find salvation.
2. Pray for God's timing and wisdom regarding our return.
3. Pray for opportunities to share about what God is doing in Russia while we are here in the states.

~Drew and Sara, Europe~

The country remains on lockdown and there is no intra-country travel permitted. This is affecting us presently because one of our sets of houseparents was on their month-long vacation visiting family when the travel ban/lockdown began and are unable to return to Iquitos until it is lifted. Praise God that, due to our process of hiring a couple and using them as relief for all the other houseparents in preparation for giving them their own house and boys, we had them waiting in the wings and able to step in immediately and indefinitely. With this comes the ever-present prayer request that our staff does not suffer from extreme burnout, as there is no one available to sub in right now. We have received two new boys at Las Lomas since the lockdown began. Jareth, who is 6 years old and Jeral, who is 4 years old.

Iquitos has been hit the worst with the virus of all Peru. There was a dengue outbreak just before COVID-19 struck. As a result, the hospitals were already filled up at the start. There are no tests available and limited oxygen. Prices of meds are skyrocketing. The Belen market has been bulldozed over so no one can set up shop due to the virus previously spreading through there like wildfire.

Some of our staff has been sick recently with some symptoms resembling COVID-19; all have recovered. With no testing, there is no way to be sure. We will not be traveling down there, nor will we be taking any teams for the remainder of the year.

All the boys are doing well overall and really have kind of a best-case scenario, given that both the Las Lomas and the Aporcar quarantine consist of multiple buildings, lots of friends, and plenty of outdoor free space to roam and play!

~Tyler and Allison Fuqua, Not Forgotten Peru~

Our Team is regularly sending messages of encouragement to the children living in the refugee tent settlements. These messages include Bible verses, devotionals, and words of encouragement letting the children know they are being prayed for every day.

One day, one of the Hope on Wheels Team members woke up with a beautiful message from Amal, a sweet young girl in one of the camps. "Hi Miss, today I woke up and read something in the Bible with my parents and siblings, and I want to share with you the passage. *'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?'* Matthew 6: 25-26

"My parents and I were sharing our thoughts about this passage and I would like to share them with you, like the words of comfort you and the team are always sending to us. What we are passing through is really difficult, but we should all have faith that just as God is taking care of the flowers and birds, He will take care of us as well!" said Amal.

Please be greatly encouraged by this because it is your prayers and your support that is helping Amal to know God's word for herself, leading her into a deeper relationship with Jesus.

~Heart for Lebanon~

It's strange when you feel like you're somewhat stuck - stuck at home, stuck in neutral, etc.

Even so, we've been seeing the Lord do some amazing things here during the pandemic!

-Our church is continuing to broadcast the services and the small groups are meeting online.

This past Sunday the church celebrated its 3rd anniversary!!

-Our team has grown closer and has seen several doors open for potential ministries in the future.

-Several youth are wanting to be baptized and may be baptized soon at the church! (With family and just a few other people, although it will be videoed for everyone else)

-God has been working in our hearts to mold us and to remind us of the reasons that he's called us here to Spain. For the church service, we wrote a word for what God has been to us during this season. My word was serenity.

~Seth Graves, Spain~

Hello from Tokyo. All is well here. Things are slowly changing. No one knows the real situation, since the gov't tightly controls information regarding COVID. But overall, it appears that Japan avoided the worst scenario. There are many theories on this. In general, Japan ALWAYS practices social distancing. Even in the home, there is very little touch contact between family members. And masks are nothing new, everyone (well, almost everyone) wears them regularly during cold/allergy season. So we don't know exactly why, but it appears things are getting better. Tokyo is still under restrictions until the end of May.

For prayer, please lift up these requests:

1) For this whole situation to open the hearts of the Japanese people to the gospel. Over 127 million in Japan, and less than 500,000 believers nationwide. Japan is the world's largest spiritual prison, and we need the barriers to the gospel broken.

2) For wisdom in reopening SonRise Cafe, and that it may continue to be a place of welcome, peace, and hope to the community.

3) For wisdom and strength as we begin limited meetings for SonRise Church. That we would be sensitive to the mood of the people, and respond with grace.

4) For the 8 career missionaries working together as the SonRise Tokyo Ministry Initiative, that God will give renewed vision, strength, creativity, and power to reach the Japanese people with the saving gospel of Christ.

5) As always, please pray for Kay and I, that our walk with Christ would be close and consistent, and that we would draw upon His strength and encouragement day by day.

~Steve and Kyehee Taylor, Japan~