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MARK & ALTIA

Serving in Mexico

Spring 2020

Dear friends and family:

Psalm 46 states: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, even though the earth be removed . . . There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the dwelling place of the most high. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be shaken."

There probably is not a single person reading this newsletter that has not been affected by the covid-19 pandemic currently laying siege to the nations. In the olden days (i.e., the time king David wrote this psalm), the way to defeat a city was to surround it and lay siege until either the residents of the city died from starvation and disease, or surrendered. However, cities that had rivers going through them were hardly ever defeated in this way, since the residents had constant access to water and fish, and thus did not have to surrender because of starvation. Likewise, those of us who have our citizenship in the city of God, regardless of the earthly city we live in, have a constant supply of the water of life because of the river that flows through it, so even though we are currently hemmed in by an invisible enemy (covid-19), we do not have to surrender to our predicament or accept defeat. I trust these days you are able to find your supply of the life-giving waters only available to the residents of the Heavenly City.

Our last newsletter was during the winter months, so many of you are not caught up on the latest news from our neck of the woods. Before I get into family/personal news, I wanted to update you on the situation in the Yucatan peninsula where we live, as it relates to the coronavirus outbreak. Right around the middle of March, the governor of Yucatan basically shut down schools, churches, and non-essential businesses and ordered a "shelter in place" strategy. This was right around the time of the first confirmed case in Merida. As a result of these measures, the virus has not spread as rapidly as in other locations in Mexico. Additionally, on March 31st, the governor ordered a further enforcement of only one occupant per private vehicle (though the police make exceptions at the various checkpoints in the city). Also, the state of Yucatan was at that time sealed off from the rest of the nation, and one could not travel into the state from outside, unless they could prove they lived here, or had a pressing need to be in the state. It is the same with most towns and villages throughout the state – they are closed off to non-residents. As a result, most of the confirmed covid-19 cases are in the capital city of Merida, along with the 2nd and 3rd next largest towns/cities.

I guess this would be the good news, that the virus is not spreading as swiftly as in the rest of the country. The bad news is that the people here are not prepared economically to deal with a prolonged period without any income. Most persons outside the cities were for the most part already living hand to mouth before the pandemic, and now have to resort to finding a way to survive any way they can. As a result, crime has increased. Also, intra-family violence, as well as physical/sexual abuse. I am sure this is not the first time you hear of these things, since the same applies to most other countries around the world.

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However, I would ask you to pray that people would come to the gospel during this time, when their "world" and the things they have built their lives around have collapsed.

Ministry-wise, as is the case around the world, we are not able to serve in a "conventional" way. Mark was going to officiate two weddings for young people from church, but they postponed it to the fall. For the most part, we are heeding the advice/request to shelter at home. Mark is the one who goes out to get supplies. He also spends his mornings at the church office. We have kept it (the church office) open in the mornings (just Mark and a maintenance person), and every once in a while someone comes to visit or bring an offering or food gift, but mainly our ministry has evolved into doing online services, teaching, and counseling.

We currently have live online services at the same time we had them previously on Sunday mornings. Both of us (Mark and Altia), plus a couple other musicians/sound tech go to the church property for the live transmission of the service. It has been interesting, to say the least. I (Mark) am not yet used to looking into a camera while I speak; it certainly does not have the same "feel" or "energy". On the flip side, there are now many more people accessing the church services, including people from different parts of the country. We even have regular viewers in the U.S. and South America. Please pray that the Lord would use this form of communication to bring to Himself those who do not yet know him and that we would have the creativity to reach others with the gospel despite the various physical limitations.



I wanted to spend the rest of the newsletter to let you know of a situation that happened recently. While Mark and Altia were in Florida for ministry at one of our supporting churches at the end of January, we received a phone call with the news that Altia's mother had unexpectedly had a bad stroke, and so she (Altia) flew home as soon as we could find a flight for her. Mark stayed on for the rest of the meetings in Bradenton and Orlando. Unfortunately, Altia's mother did not recover, and a few short weeks after the stroke, she passed away. This would have been bad enough, but the day of the burial, Altia tripped on the concrete steps at the cemetery, landed on her knee and fractured her kneecap. Keep in mind this is the same knee (the right knee) which she fractured in 2014 – although at that time it was a fracture of the tibia. So, things have been very interesting at our home, to say the least.

This all happened right around the time the quarantine was put in place, and so people from church who would normally volunteer to help out at our home were not able to. So, the rest of the family (Mark, John and Ellie) have had to divide the chores up. We all take turns with the dishes. Mark is in charge of procuring/cooking/delivering the food, and the kids sweep and mop (in theory, anyways). We also have to help Altia get the things she needs, and Ellie helps her with showers, etc. The doctor decided against a cast this time around, and instead has her with a very rigid leg brace. The appointment at the end of April is to decide on the next course of action (physical therapy, or a couple extra weeks of rest). Please pray the knee will heal correctly, and that Altia's recovery would be without the long-term need for crutches, and without long-term pain, etc.

In closing, I again turn to psalm 46 – this time verses 7 and 10 – The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. . . . Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth! Selah

Many thanks for your continued prayers and gifts on our behalf. We need them more than ever during this time. May God bless you and keep you safe during this time.

In Him,

Mark, Altia, Ellie and John Legters

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