

MM

MISSIONS MESSENGER

A bimonthly publication
of FBA's Global
Missions Ministry

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COLLAGE FROM WHIRLWIND MISSIONS, INC.

GLOBAL MISSIONS CONTINUES

In Times Like These You Need a Savior is a beautiful song. Maybe you remember it, too.

*In times like these you need a Savior, In times like these you need an anchor;
Be very sure, be very sure, Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!
This Rock is Jesus, Yes, He's the One, This Rock is Jesus, the only One;
Be very sure, be very sure, Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!*

The occurrences of the past several months, almost simultaneously around the world, have shaken us and awakened us. Amidst COVID-19, we've been challenged to do things differently; oftentimes leading to increased creativity and knowledge, and greater expansions of our reach to the unreached.

Even though we've been told to physically separate ourselves from one another to help prevent the spread of the disease, thank God we can remain spiritually connected together and to the Rock. He invites us all to be part of His plans and these new endeavors can increase our faithfulness to Him as we rely on Him.

We've asked our missionaries to share how these challenges have affected them, their ministries and communities. We trust that these stories will inspire you!

SAVE THE DATES

AIM ZOOM MEETING	JUL 19	12:30 - 1:15 PM	ROBERT & LARA VITTER
AIM ZOOM MEETING	AUG 23	12:30 - 1:15 PM	BILL & JOY CARRERA
AIM ZOOM MEETING	SEPT 27	12:30 - 1:15 PM	LEAH RIGSBY

IN THEIR OWN WORDS



FOTIS & MARY ROMEOS | AMG INTERNATIONAL, GREECE

In a recent staff meeting during this critical period, my brother, George, shared with us the following wonderful picture of some birds outside of his bedroom window that he saw when he woke up one morning.

The first thought that came to his mind was: "Nothing has changed for them..."

And the deeper truth is **nothing has changed for us either!** The world has almost turned upside down, the public traffic almost forbidden, the airlines closed, the various governments have taken severe measures for handling COVID-19. But for us as believers in Christ, nothing has really changed. We keep praying and trusting Him for our protection and our provision.



We may not be able to meet face-to-face, but we keep having the precious fellowship with other believers (thank God for the technology...) sharing God's promises, stories of comfort, Bible verses and prayer requests. Pray as we have been working hard to reschedule the entire spring and summer programs we had scheduled; including summer camps, short term trips, educational trips and many other projects. We are working hard on different projects to improve Cosmvision facilities as we get ready to host and better serve our future programs. We keep serving the needs of people around us and try to be people of hope in a very panicked and sometimes hopeless feeling environment.

As of 6/15/20, Time Magazine reported that Greece has contained COVID-19 far better than major European economies. Despite its debt, tourism industry and elderly population, Greece has managed to avoid the worst of the coronavirus pandemic.



RICK & MARY LYNN ATHERTON | CAMPUS CRUSADE FOR CHRIST, SOUTH AFRICA

The Lockdown forced us as a Campus Crusade ministry to venture into other methods of evangelism and discipleship. Some of it is focused on social media outreach, others on the web. Our website, Knowing God (knowinggod.co.za), has seen a big jump in activity, and we are in need of e-coaches. Over the Easter weekend, the Jesus Film Ministry arranged for the showing of the Jesus Film, Magdalena and Walking with Jesus over the TBN television network. There was a response link shared during the showings. It will take a while to gather the results, but potentially millions of people saw these films! Praise God.



SAM & SILVANA SHAW | PRESBYTERIAN EVANGELISTIC FELLOWSHIP, IRELAND/WORLDWIDE

The way we do ministry in Ireland has massively changed. What was to be a busy month of programs in schools, churches and on the streets is no more. In the past, we recorded videos of Bible stories, puppet shows and testimonies - but not consistently. What started very haphazardly a few weeks ago has grown. Now, it is a Bible story everyday Monday - Friday at midday, posted to social media and our website. The feedback we have received has been very positive. People are

now very open to spiritual things.

One of the challenges we have been working on is interacting with people. So, on Friday evenings we do a Facebook live video called Fire Fridays. This includes doing something dangerous and connecting it to a Bible story and the Gospel, such as Elisha and the lost axe head. This is really challenging our creativity and skills as we seek to improve each week.

- As for everyone, it has been a high-pressure learning experience to see what we could do, how to do it more effectively and how to solve technical problems - from improving sound, to lighting, to how to simply livestream.
- On the training side of things, we had interest from another missionary in Ireland wanting to learn some of the fire/dangerous skills we use. This may be developing into a training via Zoom for some things soon. For myself, I am still trying to learn a few new things, and a new Bible story every day, the majority of which I have never told before, is a great challenge.
- Find their Bible stories on facebook.com/godshandiwork and at godshandiwork.com.



BILL & JOY BOEROP | WORLD THRUST INTERNATIONAL, USA/WORLDWIDE

When my wife Joy and I talked about the worldwide circumstances caused by the COVID-19 virus, we both said almost at the same time, "These are challenging circumstances, but not like what we went through as kids." Joy lived through WWII in China, under occupation by the Japanese and Communists, while I grew up in The Netherlands. My family and I escaped from our home a day before the Germans bombed our house. We lost everything. This was the beginning of five years under German occupation, where things got worse by the year. The last year there was little food, thus we ate tulip bulbs. Added to that, was

the roundup of the Dutch men (between 18-40) to work in the German factories. Our Heavenly Father watched over Dad, as they did not find him in his hiding place. Yes, the worldwide spread of the virus is indeed an awesome experience. How great that we have doctors, nurses, hospitals and scientists working on solutions. We can also continue work because of modern technology. Our World Thrust International ministry goes on as we work with individual pastors and church leaders in the development of their world missions' outreach. What a blessing to be able to Skype with our directors in different parts of the world. A monthly email to our 45 leaders around the world is a wonderful way to encourage them, share with them and assure them that God is still in control. The scheduled WTI board meeting worked well through a conference call with all members present. We are not bored or distressed, we keep on moving forward with His ministry. We thank the Lord for First Baptist Atlanta and its partnership through prayer and financial support.

// MISSIONARY STORIES FROM THE FIELD



HUGH & JOANNE ROBERSON | CRU, USA/ASIA

Joanne writes, "The COVID-19 crisis has revealed my tendency to be afraid. Like many of you, I have had 'up' days as well as 'down' days as I listen and watch the news. I'm learning to choose faith over fear. Hebrews 12:1-2 gives us encouragement to strip off the things that weigh us down and to run with endurance the race God has set before us. We must fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. In a practical way this also involves 'glancing' at our circumstances. As we walk by faith, daily fixing and glancing, we can ask God for wisdom in the moment. He is faithful to answer our prayers.

In the digital world of ministry with Cru, I'm interacting daily through online emails with people who are living in fear. The common thread I find is that people are searching for meaning and purpose in life through dating or marriage relationships, high paying jobs, education, etc. Some are looking to meet standards their religious faith demands; others are bound by family and cultural restrictions; others are dealing with health and financial issues. Some have never heard about Jesus; some have, but don't know him personally.

Please pray for me as I move towards people in faith, fixing my eyes on Jesus, trusting Him for wisdom in each email I respond to. Pray they will come to know the amazing love, forgiveness, hope and security found only in a personal relationship with Jesus."

To better understand Joanne's role in digital strategies, see this article found in Christianity Today - christianitytoday.com/news/2020/april/coronavirus-searches-online-converts-pray-cru-bgea-wmo.html.



EDNER & DOMINIQUE JEANTY | CROSSWORLD, HAITI

Before COVID-19 Haiti was a weak economy, basically a failing state. During COVID-19, the situation has only worsened, and as it affects the general population, it also hits the people in church. One indicator is the exchange rate of the national currency (Gourde) to the US dollar. We now need 102 Gourdes to buy \$1. At church we are praying for wisdom and resources to help vulnerable families during confinement. Our church has put in place a food bank for such a time. We have at least 40 family units on our list, representing more than 10% of our church community, and we may need to double that. We are grateful for food and monies that were given to start. We are praying for more so that we can serve more. We are praying for wisdom so that we may serve well.

Please pray for the future of the BARNABAS ministry. We had four Global Leadership Summit events planned for this year in Haiti. All had to be cancelled except the one in Port-au-Prince. It was another successful event that inspired the leaders who attended. The BARNABAS Christian Leadership Center was organized mainly to do large gatherings for leadership training. After 12 successful annual leadership conferences, and 14 other large training gatherings, we have become a reference for organizing events. We received the Outstanding Event Management Award last year from Willow Creek Association, now the Global Leadership Network.



The week of 4/20/2020 we celebrated the 32nd anniversary of our church. We are grateful for the continuing witness of the church in the community, for the thriving Children ministry, for the successful matching fund project with former members living abroad that helped us install solar panels that provide 24/7 electricity for the church and especially for the new worship service that was started in late November. A grant from FBA helped us build a team for the new initiative. When we had to cancel church gatherings, the musicians, worship team and media interns we had recruited for the early worship service were instrumental in delivering online services. We do see regular offerings revenue going down, but church online brings more participants especially at Bible Study where we see an increase of over ten times what we had previously when we only gathered locally. We are perfecting the way to use WhatsApp messaging to deliver worship services, Bible study and prayer time to our members and friends since this is the technology that most of our people can access. Streaming on YouTube and Facebook is not affordable or accessible for most. However, while in confinement, a few of us were inspired for a new platform that provides an easy, flexible and professional web presence for churches. We call it leglizpam.com ("MyChurch" in Haitian Creole). Our church's address is leglizpam.com/se/eglisebaptisteberee.



GARY & PENNY SEITHEL | UNITED WORLD MISSION, ENGLAND

As COVID-19 and isolation swept through the UK, one afternoon I was walking Ralph, our rescue Weimaraner, praying for family, neighbors and friends. As I was praying, the Holy Spirit gently nudged ... "Pray for the homes you are passing." I continued to do this each time we walked down this particular street.

Then the Lord highlighted the house numbers and began bringing scripture to my mind to pray. For instance, for house number 27, I prayed Psalm 27:1... "The Lord is my light and salvation whom shall I fear?"

After a few walks, again I felt the familiar nudging of the Holy Spirit. I was prompted to write a card with the verses for six of the families and let them know we are praying. Sounds easy, but I only knew two of the families. The familiar dialogue of excuses stirred in my mind, yet thankfully His voice was louder saying this: "Penny, are you willing to risk embarrassment to release eternity?"

As Dr. Stanley has taught, "God's Word is an immovable anchor in times of storm." Knowing His truth never returns void and would be life-giving to each family, I wrote the cards and dropped through their letterboxes. Do you know, three families got back in touch with us!

In times of crisis, people are looking for hope. What steps could you take to bring His hope and release life to others today?



ROSS & ROULA GEORGIU | CAMPUS CRUSADE FOR CHRIST, GERMANY

Hope... "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."

Sports people are among the most affected by the Coronavirus. One of our sports chaplains phoned the CEO of his sports club asking how he was coping. "Lousy! I have had to lay off 90 percent of my staff. And you are the only person asking me how I am doing?" Another sports chaplain in India who has worked with a soccer player who has been an atheist for the last 24 years received a call from that player stating that, "The only hope we have is praying to God." That same chaplain is training leaders to bring sports chaplaincy to all corners of India.

Being in a cross-cultural relationship, being in lockdown and not being close to any family members is surreal. Having elderly parents in our far-away-home-countries during these times does weigh on us some. We live in a town of 18,000 and 76 have already been diagnosed with the virus. In the tiny town of Kandern is the Black Forest Academy mission school where Roula teaches. Two have died in that town and others have been infected – yet we have hope. We have hope in the One who slept in the back of a boat with a storm raging around him. We have hope in the same One and same Jesus, who with just a word, calmed the storm. Our prayer is that people who are in the center of the coronavirus and economic storm will call out and listen to the One who is Hope.



MICHAIL & LOIS LITSIKAKIS | AMG INTERNATIONAL, GREECE

In the beginning of the year, I was looking to my 2020 calendar, and I started feeling stressed seeing how full it was already. In that moment, I made a seemingly crazy wish. I thought to myself, "What if time could freeze, and I could have two to three months with no pressing work obligations so I could catch up on things I never seem to have enough time to do." And then it happened! The COVID-19 pandemic started!

What we are experiencing is a good reminder that we do not have total control over our lives. We might make our own plans and think that we know what's best for us, but God in His ultimate wisdom always has better plans for us. Plans that might be different than what we expect, yet He's inviting us to be part of them and exercise our faithfulness...no matter what.



BEVERLY MINOR | CENTRAL MISSIONARY CLEARINGHOUSE, AUSTRIA

Beverly shares an update of how COVID-19 affected her ministry in Austria and how the church has reopened now. "Almost every ministry I was involved in stopped. It took about two weeks before we were able to regroup. I thank the Lord for Zoom, which provided new ways to do Bible studies, prayer meetings and church meetings – we'd even eat together over Zoom and have choir practice over Zoom. About a month ago, 37 people were allowed to meet in church. Now, up to 100 people are allowed per service. Masks are no longer required except on public transportation. Life is pretty much back to normal. I'm most grateful to the Lord for opening the churches. It's so wonderful to now look in each other's faces and share. You don't miss your water until the water runs dry. It's just so great to be back in church. I'm so grateful to the Lord for who He is and how He is using me to serve Him."



BELA & ILDIKO DOBOS | WORD OF LIFE FELLOWSHIP (WOLF), HUNGARY

Not in our lifetime and maybe not in all previous history, have we ever seen where one bad news can cause such a sudden change in everybody's life. For such a time as this, God raised us up to serve Him in this generation, when God calls all the world to "be still and know that I am God." In March, after the Hungarian government declared "national crisis" because of the COVID-19 virus, they ordered to suspend all classroom teaching in all the universities and the following day the decree came to suspend all classroom teaching in all schools from the following Monday (March 16). Similar measures were taken by the surrounding countries as well and countries in Europe started closing their borders. That was not a small shock for all of us and for our students who came to study at our Bible Institute from five continents and 15 countries. It was heartbreaking to see them go before their time was over in our Bible Institute, but God worked such maturity and eagerness into their lives as they seek Him. We believe they will never forget what they have learned from God's Word, even though their time was cut short. Although they are scattered now, we believe that they will serve Him and preach the Word everywhere. After spring break, our Bible Institute continued online with a quality online program in place by our staff.



ROBERT & MARY JO FOSTER | BE ONE TOGETHER, USA/BRAZIL

The pandemic situation in Brazil is like the United States, beginning with the use of masks and gel, social distancing and sheltering in place. Major cities are highly affected, rural cities are less affected. Nevertheless, the economy and the country were put in lockdown, as in the U.S., and are slowly coming out (perhaps at a slower pace than the U.S. for several reasons, some of which are political, some practical). Brazil is in the southern hemisphere. By rank, Brazil has the second most cases of Coronavirus, following the U.S. in terms of numbers. Unlike the U.S., Brazil is going into the winter months, whereas the U.S. is going into the summer months which will be helpful. So, the number of cases is not likely to decline so quickly in Brazil because respiratory cases are more common in the cooler weather, so that is a matter of prayer. In fact, pray that somehow that trend can reverse, in spite, of going into the cooler weather. We have adapted to our situation and our limitations. Before the virus, we held nine workshops and clinics, training 277 people in January and February, which is an excellent number considering those are summer vacation months in Brazil. But by mid-March, things had come to a halt due to the virus, and things have been suspended so those training events are not happening now. My challenge to our missionaries there has been to remain in contact with churches and to promote communication between them and the churches. This includes church leaders, trainers, trainees, prayer partners, all up and down the line the kinds of communication that would be going on during normal semester of training. They should continue using WhatsApp, Google Meeting, Zoom and other platforms that might be available to them. We have indication that it is going on, so, everything is going virtual. Churches are meeting virtually (some on Sundays) and midweek and business ministries are being conducted over different platforms that are available. We suspended 15 training events for the first half of 2020, and we would like to reschedule those, but right now we're not free to do that. Please pray that the Lord will open Brazil sufficiently so those events can be rescheduled and there will be 20-25 others in addition to those in 2020.



BENNETT & IDONG EKANDEM | NAMB, USA

The refugee community is frightened. Prior to arrival in the United States, refugees lived through unimaginable tragedy. Many of them lost loved ones to wars, genocides, famine or natural disasters. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought back painful memories for a lot of these families and triggered a great deal of anxiety. Residents of the 1.5 square mile city of Clarkston have a high risk of infection. Most refugees work in meat plants. We are not sure of the precautions and safety measures taken by these plants. Their only mode of transportation to work is a shared ride with a dozen other people in a 14- or 15-passenger van. After a 10-hour shift at work, they return home to a tiny apartment that houses an average of seven people. We've been informed that there are several reported cases of COVID-19 in these apartment complexes, so we're taking extra precautions in ministry.

It was ministry as usual, until COVID-19 escalated. Schools closed with one day's notice and life, as we knew it, changed rapidly. We had to find ways to continue to serve while following shelter-in-place guidelines. We prepared Emergency Care Kits for those infected by COVID-19 and recovering at home. We've been serving in Clarkston close to 19 years now, ministering to refugees here. FBA has been very supportive of our ministry. We have groups of women and men who prepare lunches for our children and offer tutoring support.

Summer will be different from previous years. We've been asked by community leaders to hold off on large gatherings, but we will continue to minister to small groups and families one at a time. As a result of COVID-19, we've had to find ways to continue delivering our message while helping our community and following health guidelines. We began virtual tutoring with children, contactless drop-offs of food deliveries at various homes. We included Gospel materials in each of the food boxes that went out. During the pandemic, FBA support never waned. We are thankful to you for making it possible for us to serve the vulnerable ones during this time of crisis.



The ministry work of our Missionaries continues. Please pray and consider how you might support Global Missions at FBA. Go to fba.org/global-missions/faith-promise-principle.