

July 22, 2020

Hello Prayer Partners,

Thank you for keeping us in your prayers, we could not keep serving without them. I wanted to write and give you an update about Bolivia. Nothing has returned to normal, just after our last update our city took stronger measures and we entered into a total lockdown for 2 weeks as the Virus really started to take off here. However, the people started to rebel and chanted, "we would rather die of Covid, than starvation". They did have a good point and so the government turned to a dynamic quarantine. Dynamic means that every week some restrictions are being lifted. We are in Day 124 of our quarantine and currently anybody can shop until 2pm, all restaurants are takeout orders only, and those under 16 and over 65 are supposed to stay home, and no travel on the weekends. Interstate travel is still forbidden.

The virus has been rapidly spreading in the city south of us and in our small community of San Lorenzo. The government has been doing rapid tests in our city, going from neighborhood to neighborhood, at a rate of 2000 a week in our City of 500,000. That's a drop in the bucket, and of those tests they have had many positives. Concerning graphs, they are only as good as the testing, and if your testing is bad, the info on the graph will not be accurate. But what I do know, is what is happening on the ground here, our hospital system has collapsed, 70% of the medical personal have tested positive for the virus. Today the news said our State Gov. has run out of tests.

Currently our president has Covid-19 and several members of congress, some say half. Yesterday it was reported that in the past five days, a special police unit had found 420 bodies in streets, vehicles and homes in the capital of La Paz, and in Bolivia's biggest city, Santa Cruz. These were people afraid to go or were turned away at the hospitals.

The virus has had a harder impact on Bolivia because much of the population suffers from the Chagas disease that affect the heart and lungs, and of the very poor public health system.

Bolivia has been using ivermectin an anti-parasite drug for livestock to treat the virus. They seem to have had some success. But now as the crisis grows they are turning to Chloride Dioxide, or Miracle Mineral Supplement, (MMS). A chemical that is very controversial, the Minster of Health said NO, but congress approved its use anyway and now it is being widely dispersed in our area as a treatment, endorsed by our mayor. Time will tell how this turns out.

Well let's get to what Sheila and I have been doing, we did respect the 2 weeks of total quarantine. We are still unable to have any kind of meetings, but we are in contact with our people via WhatsApp. And I continue to send my weekly messages over this application. I also send a daily Bible trivia question to the youth, and at the end of the month the winner receives a prize. Visitation has been hard because it is still prohibited by the government and now people are concerned about getting the disease and we do not want to be blamed for spreading it. Now that we have a little more liberty we have started to deliver the bags again. We are not doing as much for several reasons, (a.) people can now work ½ time, (b.) people now have public transportation to go and make purchases, (c.) we are also concerned about our health. With no medical care it could be problem for us if we got the virus. But last Thursday we bought groceries for 100 families and this week we have distributed to around 50 families so far. We are trying to be a little more frugal getting it to those who are most in need and appreciative. The funds our supporters have graciously given have supplied for this need, and we also would also like to hold some funds in reserve for some of the church members, just in case they get the virus. Since the medical system has collapsed, we have sought other verifiable treatments that are not controversial and safe, of which the medicines are available here, and if the need arises we can purchase those medicines to help.

On a more positive note, Sheila and I are good. She is working on several tracts to distribute. A month ago, Brother Armando had his pacemaker replaced in a private clinic. We were able to help pay for half of the \$4000 it cost him. When I say we, I mean all of you who graciously donated to that at the end of the 2019. His surgery was put on hold because of the virus lockdown. Praise the Lord he is well and back in the fields doing light work at 75 years of age.



Armando

**Praises:** God's continued provision, protection and the opportunity to continue to serve Him. Brother Armando's successful operation.

**Prayer Requests:** Wisdom, our health, and for the Word of God to find its way into the hearts of those who receive it; and that God would continue to lead us to those He wants us to minister to; for those in our church who have loved ones with the virus.

Thank you for your prayers and your financial support.

**For His Glory, Matt. 5:16**

**Rick & Sheila Ackerman**