

January 13, 2021

Greetings Prayer Partners, and friends. Praise the Lord we made it to 2021! The year 2020 will go down in history as a year of great trial. My heart goes out to any of you have lost a loved one or who have experienced a loss as a result of the Covid-19 or the lock downs. I pray that we can put 2020 behind us as we face the challenges of 2021. I praise the Lord that we do not have to face the challenges alone, we have our God and we have God's People. May we draw ever closer to the One who gives us strength and peace, and may we help to carry each other's burdens.

The Government of Bolivia had loosened the restrictions so we have been meeting in the church since early October. We have been doing a Sunday am service, a Sunday pm meeting for the youth, and a Wednesday night prayer time and Bible Study. The Wednesday study is based on the book of James. We have some other good news to report, since October we have had 3 salvations, a young lady named Erica, and two young men, Eric and David. David is the most faithful of the three in coming to church. But please pray for all three, that they would grow in the Lord.

What's going on with the virus in Bolivia? Well from October until the end of 2020 the virus was on the decline. So much so that the government allowed church meetings and opened indoor dining at restaurants. Of course, certain protocols had to be met. Then as the calendar rolled over to the new year the virus made its comeback and now Bolivia has had a surge of coronavirus cases. It is very possible that we may enter into some more lockdowns. The sad thing is, the government knew that a resurgence of cases was possible, but did the new Bolivian socialist government do anything to prepare for this possibility? NO. In the cities of Santa Cruz and La Paz it is reported that the hospitals are once again overwhelmed and there are reports of people dying in their homes. The closest city to us, Tarija, has an uptick in cases, but its medical system is not close to collapsing as in the other cities. The doctors have threatened to quit if the elections for governors and mayors are not called off. These elections could spread the virus even more.

To add to the already difficult situation, the transportation industry has decided to block all the roads in protest of the dangerous conditions of the roads. The roads have fallen apart because of the tremendous amount of rain the country has received. Please pray for Bolivia.

Currently Sheila and I are in the States, for what we hope to be a short furlough. We had a longer medical furlough planned in June – Sept. of 2020, because I needed two surgeries. One surgery was for the reconstruction of my left thumb, and the other was for a severe deviated septum in my nose, that has blocked my nasal passages. However, those surgeries were cancelled because of Covid. I tried to reschedule, but the doctors said no, I would have to be seen first before rescheduling as a whole year would have passed since my last appointment. When the Bolivia national airline, had a fare sale to the States we got some pretty cheap tickets and flew to the Mid-West on Dec 31 and we plan to return to Bolivia on Jan. 28. We hope to reschedule these surgeries for May. As an added blessing we have been able to visit my wife's parents who are 84 and 86 and my dad who is 82 and in an Alzheimer's care facility. My dad had been diagnosed with Covid earlier in late Dec. but he is doing well now.

Please pray for my remaining doctor's appointments, and that we would test negative for our PCR Covid tests, which we need for our return to Bolivia. Also pray for Brother Francisco who is preaching in my absence, for Sister Lilly who is teaching the little ones, for Brother Sandro as he leads the services and teaches the young people, and finally for Brother Rider who is driving the church van to pick up some of the brethren on Sundays.

Praises: For God's provision of godly men and women to keep the ministry going in our absence.

Prayer Requests: For wisdom for Sheila and I, our health, for the ministry in our absence, for negative covid test results, for protection of the church family from the virus. Also please prayer for Brother Miguel who is 90, he is bedridden, and preparing to meet Christ. Keep his family in your prayers.

Thank you for your prayers and a great big thank you for your financial support of this ministry.

For His Glory, Matt. 5:16
Rick & Sheila Ackerman