



RIPE *for Harvest*

WORLD OUTREACH

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OCTOBER 2020 MINISTRY UPDATE

Hello Friends and Family,

Christian and faith-based schools around the world are struggling to survive during the pandemic. The [Cato Institute](#) maintains an update on closures of private schools in the USA due to the pandemic. To date, 117 private schools have closed their doors permanently, and of those, 108 are faith-based schools (e.g., Catholic, Christian, Lutheran). Not only do these closures impact the thousands of families whose children were enrolled in these schools, but it also translates into an additional \$276,398,080 of costs transferred to public schools, many of which are facing some of the largest budgets cuts and reductions faced in decades.

Numerous studies regarding the growth of the Christian Church worldwide have identified that **the single most-effective ministry of evangelism and discipleship takes place on Christian school campuses**. There are many other benefits as well to investing in the health and survival of Christian schools. As noted above, here in the USA, the financial relief provided to local governments' operational costs is a significant benefit in itself. [Cardus](#), a research firm, reports that graduates of Christian schools are far more likely to take action against wrong and injustice. Also, students graduating from Christian schools believe to a much higher degree than graduates of non-Christian schools that they have an obligation to help other countries' poor. In addition, "Protestant school graduates are highly involved in giving and volunteering in and for religious congregations and organizations." These students become the leaders of the Church.



This is why I am such an ardent supporter of the [Association of Christian Schools International](#)'s work. Their ministry is vital to the growth and health of the Kingdom. Just this past week, I had the opportunity and blessing of spending a day with the new Vice President of ACSI, Dr. David Balik, the Eastern Division Director, Chuck Gilliam, and leaders of several Christian schools throughout North Carolina. Together we discussed strategies for leading our schools through these challenging times, and I want to share with you **what a blessing it is to have the support of men and women who are equally committed to ensuring the vital ministry of Christian schools continues and flourishes**.



As you may recall, I have frequently served as a trainer and mentor to many ACSI school leaders, especially in Latin America. Next month, I will have the honor of providing virtual training to [Christian school leaders throughout the country of Brazil](#). Registrations for online training just opened. Your prayers are appreciated for the leadership of ACSI Brazil as they organize, promote, and endeavor to ensure as many Christian school leaders as possible have the opportunity to participate.

The [Village Christian Academy](#), where I serve as Superintendent is, by God's grace and blessing, an example of a Christian school that is flourishing even in these most difficult days. I am honored and excited to share with you that **our school was recently named the #1 Best Christian School in Fayetteville, NC!** There are nearly 30 Christian schools in our county. Thus, this is a genuine distinction



and commendation to our faculty and staff. Our school was also recognized as the #2 Best Private School In Fayetteville, NC. We experienced an enrollment decline this year in high school, but we needed to open three additional sections to accommodate the new elementary school students. **We are at capacity in the Elementary!** Praise God with us for this growth. And please pray for our Middle and High School ministries, which are under new leadership this year and I believe will be better positioned for growth in the coming school year.

Now for some family news! The picture on the right is from three years ago. It was taken outside of the United States Immigration Services office in Tucson, AZ. On that day, Tannia officially became a resident of the USA, and Emma was awarded citizenship. Both received their "green cards," and we became a legally immigrated family!



However, although it took years literally to get to that point and the investment of thousands of dollars, we were still unable to secure an American passport for Emma, as she still needed to secure an official *Certificate of Citizenship*. The certificate is also required for her to be able to receive Social Security in the future. The sticking point? The filing fee for that document was \$1,500!

So, we began to save and put some money aside to complete the paperwork and file for the certificate. After about a year and a half, we had the funds to submit the form. Now for the past year and a half, we have been awaiting its' processing. This past week, we received the official notice that on Tuesday, October 20th Tannia and I will appear at the Immigration Services office in Raleigh, NC to secure Emma's Certificate of Citizenship and surrender her green card! Yeah! So, finally, after years and years of paperwork and appointments, **Emma Gabriella Travis Granja will be an officially documented citizen of the United States of America!** Next step? Securing her American passport!



Emma's journey began when she joined our family at just four weeks of age. She was born in the Amazon region of Ecuador in an impoverished environment, and she struggled with numerous health issues. But from day one, she has been and continues to be a blessing and a joy to our lives and family. Today, she is a bright and energetic third grader! Emma loves swimming, running, and Physical Education is her favorite class! (We have an athlete on our hands)!

She also loves her Aunties in Ecuador, whom she talks and plays with every day thanks to modern technology's wonders. And she is making friends quickly here in Fayetteville.

Our thanks to the many of you who have supported us over the years and have prayed for and financially assisted us in completing Emma's adoption and now citizenship. Thank you!

Our thanks also go out for the prayers lifted for our extended family, who remain in Ecuador. If you are following the news regarding the pandemic, you know that **South America is now the epicenter of the Covid-19 virus**. Conditions have been terrible in Ecuador, and nearly all of our family members have been placed out of work. Please keep Tannia's family in your prayers as they are facing very uncertain times.

And praise God with us that **Tannia's Mom, Sara, is currently with us for the next couple of months**. We are so thankful that she has been able to secure a tourist visa to the States and at least be with us for a few months out of the year. We ask your prayers for Tannia's sisters to be able to do the same. Thank you!

Praying that you and yours are all remaining safe and well. We keep our eyes fixed on Jesus!

- Toby (for Tannia and Emma too!)

