



BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES

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July-August 2020

“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee...” Isaiah 43:2

Dear Pastors and Friends,

Hello from the Slobodians! We can surely relate to the Psalmist who made his refuge under the shadow of His wings, *“until these calamities be overpast.”* We certainly look forward to when the calamity of the coronavirus will be over. In the meantime, we hope you are doing well and staying healthy.

The main impact of the coronavirus on our ministry is that is for the time being it has curtailed our overseas travel. Normally, we would be overseas in connection with our camping programs in both early and late summer. This summer, American groups that were planning on such mission trips have had to cancel. Likewise, we have had to postpone American involvement in our Seminary since the pastors we had scheduled to teach in Kyiv, Ukraine this September, could not travel to Ukraine for the time being. In fact, Ukraine has once again extended the ban on foreigners entering Ukraine for at least another month. Since the European Union has designated the United States as a high-risk area, many countries like Ukraine and Russia have restricted Americans from entering. Currently, we simply do not know when it will be possible for us to travel overseas. Since these countries are known for underreporting on issues like this, it is quite possible that it’s simply not safe to travel to these places anyway.

Nevertheless, our church planting, evangelism, church building, children’s work and the training of nationals continue as we have adjusted to using Zoom and Facetime, as well as some other more secure programs to conduct much of what we would normally attend to personally. Praise God for technology! We also praise God for our national church planters and workers who have risen to the occasion and not only adjusted to the restrictions and challenges brought about by the virus, but actually found opportunities to reach out to people that are in need due to the shutdowns brought about by the virus. Nearly all of our church planters have mobilized their people to put together packages of food they deliver to the needy in their communities along with a Gospel witness. These outreaches do lift up the testimony of the churches, especially since their government simply cannot afford any sort of “stimulus check” or other relief. Therefore, despite restrictions and “lock-downs,” God’s word is not bound, and folks are being saved. Even in the restricted Muslim nations BIEM has personnel who are actively evangelizing and planting churches.

Another blessing is how our folks have conducted camps this summer. Most churches in these lands have cancelled their summer camping programs. Not our wonderful BIEM people! No sir, they went ahead with their camping programs by making adjustments such as moving most camps to August and purchasing packaged food instead of having church folks prepare meals as they normally would. The majority of children and youth that attend these camps come from unchurched homes, so there are many salvation decisions among the campers and wonderful opportunities to share the Gospel with their parents through follow-up efforts.

A significant opportunity brought about by the virus, is that there are some great bargains in construction since many are without work and materials are abundant. Currently, we are in three church building programs as well as a fourth which is about to get underway. If you are interested in participating in any of these projects, we would be glad to provide information concerning these opportunities.

Finally, we would like to sincerely thank all who responded so compassionately to the passing of our grandson as we shared in our last prayer letter. Whenever we think of this our hearts are warmed recalling the wonderful response of so many kind words and encouragements from so many. May God bless you all!

The Slobodians