

Cross Family Ministry Update
April 21, 2021

Dear Praying Friends,

Thank you very much for your faithful partnership with us in the gospel. We thank the Lord for your consistent prayers and sacrificial giving. May he richly bless you for your faithfulness to him.

Disciple Making and Peru COVID-19: It's tempting, isn't it, to think that we can predict the future? Something seems to be steadily heading in one direction with nothing apparent that would stop it from continuing on that path. Our very life, though, which at times may seem to be so full of energy and strength, is "a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes." We remember that nothing besides God is unchanging. God alone knows the future and is in complete control of everything. He uses passages like James 4:13-17 to align our plans, stewardship, work, and service with his sovereignty. Should we make wise plans, carefully steward the resources that God gives us, and zealously serve the Lord? Yes, and the way to do that is with a humble heart that acknowledges that the reality is "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."

May our faith be firmly fixed in the Lord's sovereign will over all things. Our church had been able to enjoy in-person church services and Bible studies for about three and a half months. That was a joyful change from the many months before that. The COVID cases, hospitalizations, and deaths had greatly diminished and remained that way for several months. The government restrictions had also diminished. We were glad to have the freedom to move about and make disciples in ways very similar to pre-COVID days. It seemed like things would continue in that direction. Then in a matter of a few days all of that changed. COVID cases started to go up again in many regions of Peru and the government restrictions increased. Our church has had to go back to teaching and preaching online. Despite all the changes, we rejoice to see people continue growing in the knowledge of the Lord and obedience to his word. I have been enjoying preaching through 1 John and Proverbs.

Though we are disappointed to be back under extreme restrictions, we do understand why for the present time some drastic measures have to be taken. The medical infrastructure throughout much of the country was not set to handle a heavy influx of hospital patients. Having a simultaneous rise in COVID cases and Dengue Fever cases here in Puerto Maldonado has been taxing on our small medical system. We thank the Lord that no one in our church has been hospitalized from COVID. Those that have had COVID at some point over the past year had relatively mild symptoms. We have heard, however, about many Christians throughout Peru that have passed away over the past few months. Many people are hurting. Let's keep praying for one another and encouraging one another with the word of God. May we consistently be pointing others to the Lord who is our strength and shield.

Opportunities to spend time with believers in person have been very limited recently, so we are trying to make good use of technology to continue making disciples. One thing I have really enjoyed doing more throughout this time is sending voice messages to fellow believers. I will record myself reading an extended portion of scripture and give some words of encouragement. I have found it a great way to share the gospel with unbelievers as well. Reading the word of God out loud with expression is a beautiful way to hear the Lord speak.

Most messaging apps have the built-in function of recording voice messages. For email I record a voice memo and then copy and paste it to the email. This ministry has been incredibly encouraging to me. From what I can tell by the responses I have gotten back is that it has been encouraging to others as well. Maybe this is something you would like to try!

Investing in the Next Generation of International Disciple Makers: The Lord has been so kind to work in our lives for many years. He used countless people during our years of preparation to guide us and prepare us for the ministry in which he has placed us. The investments that these Christians made in us continue to produce spiritual fruit for God's glory every day of our lives. We praise the Lord for his work and pray for his help to invest in those around us as well.

One such opportunity was recently presented to us. We were contacted about the possibility of hosting a Bob Jones University Cross-Cultural Service major for his summer internship. His desire is to be mentored by missionaries that are faithfully serving the Lord. Would you pray that God would do that tremendous work in us? In 2006 God allowed me to do an internship here in Peru. It was a fantastic time of learning and spiritual growth in my life as I saw God at work in those around me. The many new experiences also forced me to rely on the Lord's help. God used that trip to point me toward long-term service here in Peru.

If it is the Lord's will, the intern will arrive to Peru in about a month and spend about seven weeks with us here in Puerto Maldonado. Pray for him during this time. He is finishing up the school semester and has many details to work on for the trip.

If it is the Lord's will, we will help host a mission team from a church in Texas toward the end of July. For some of the team members this will be their first trip to Puerto Maldonado. They asked if I would make a video giving an overview of the ministries here and the work that the Lord is doing. I thought you might enjoy seeing the video. I had fun putting it together. It's always good to be reminded of what the Lord has done and prayerfully hope in him to see his work continue.

Please let us know how we can be praying for you. Have a wonderful day serving our Lord!

Jay

Jay & Kelly Cross

Alexia, Isabel, Esther, & Lilian