

Cross Family Ministry Update November 16, 2022

Dear Praying Friends,

We thank the Lord for the grace he gave us to finish up our second term of service for him in Peru. On the one hand, it was sad for us to leave Peru because we have great friends there and are glad to be a part of what God is doing there. On the other hand, we are glad for the ministry that God has for us while we are in the USA.

Disciple Making 2022-2023: We thank God for technology that allows us to stay in contact with friends in Peru to encourage them in the Lord. We want to be making disciples and building up believers in every place God takes us while continuing to encourage those that are geographically far away. This is the caring spirit we see in the NT letters that were written to Christians in various places. We pray that God will continually give us the grace to have that type of ministry with the Christians we have served alongside of in various parts of the world.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-2 (NIV)

As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

We are now serving the Lord with our sending church in Florida for a few months as we anticipate the birth of our fifth little girl, Eliana Hope Cross. Her due date is January 8, 2023. We thank the Lord that the pregnancy is going well. It seems that Eliana is developing and growing well. We look forward to holding her, Lord willing, at some point in the next couple months. We thank God for giving us a comfortable house to live in, so Kelly can get the rest that she needs.

Our plan is to be in Florida through March 2023. During most of that time we plan to serve the Lord with our home church. We also plan to visit two supporting churches near Tampa, FL. From April through July 2023 we plan to travel north to visit our nine other partnering churches that are in North Carolina, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. Our plan, at this point, is to move back to Peru in September 2023. We thank God for bringing together the details of our travel schedule.

Thank you very much for consistently praying for God to be glorified in, through, and around us. God has been answering your prayers. We praise him for guiding us and providing for our needs. We thank God for allowing us to arrive safely in the USA. Hurricane Ian delayed our arrival in Orlando, FL, but God gave us two very enjoyable days in Houston, TX. We enjoyed the family time and were also able to spend an evening with some Christian friends that we had not seen for several years. God also gave us specific opportunities to share the gospel in Spanish and English along the way. The hurricane also delayed the arrival of the missions van by several days. We thank the Lord for all the people that were part of getting it down here to us. We thank God for providing for all our housing and transportation needs!

We were praying that God would give us service and teaching opportunities during the months that we are here with our sending church in Florida. God has opened up the opportunity to help in several specific ministries of the church. I will be teaching a weekly Bible study on Proverbs to the young adults. God gave us a great time studying Proverbs 1:1-19 last week.

I am looking forward to helping with teens as well. Tonight, Lord willing, I will be teaching about international disciple making and showing a video about what God is doing in Puerto Maldonado, Peru. We are also looking forward to helping with the Prime Timers (50 years old and above) ministry in the next few months. We have been enjoying having friends and family over to our house for meals and times of Christian fellowship. Please pray that God would use every second of our time here in the USA to strengthen the church, encourage the believers to serve the Lord with all their being, and urge believers to consider participating in gospel work around the globe. It has been our joy to work with children, youth, and adults in Peru for the past few years. We thank God for allowing us to serve him in similar ways while we are here in the USA.

We thank the Lord for giving us enjoyable times of rest, recreation, and Christian fellowship with friends and family that we have not seen in person for three years. It's also been a great time to help our girls understand and adjust to serving the Lord here in the USA. We pray that God will equip them to joyfully serve him here in the USA, in Peru, and wherever else he may send them. We are currently reading and studying through Genesis, James, Psalms and Proverbs. We are also reading through *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* by C.S. Lewis.

The last message I preached in Peru was from Acts 13 and 14. There God gives us a clear missions philosophy. In chapter 13 Paul and Barnabas are sent out from the church in Antioch to the work that God had called them to do. Acts 13 and 14 give some details about the doors of gospel witness that God opened for them in many

different places throughout this first missionary journey. As I was studying, the last few verses of Acts 14 stood out to me. They say . . .

Acts 14:26-28 (NIV)

From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.
And they stayed there a long time with the disciples.

God took them back to their "sending church" to encourage the believers and praise God by giving an update about the gospel work that God had done in, through, and around them. Then God gave them an extended period of time to be with disciples. God had work for them to do there. We thank the Lord for giving our family this extended time to serve him here in the USA. We pray that God would give us a faithful ministry for his glory here with our sending church just as he did for Paul and Barnabas with their sending church.

Cultivating an appreciation for God's creation: We thank the Lord for giving us the opportunity to explore his creation in a "new" setting here in Florida. We have seen and experienced these places many times before, but I am now trying to capture the beauty and complexity of God's creation in a way that I had not done before when we were in the USA. May God's creation humble and amaze us as we reflect on the power of our great Creator.

Job 38:1-21 (NIV)

Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm. He said:
"Who is this that obscures my plans
with words without knowledge?
Brace yourself like a man;
I will question you,
and you shall answer me.
"Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?
Tell me, if you understand.
Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!
Who stretched a measuring line across it?
On what were its footings set,
or who laid its cornerstone —
while the morning stars sang together
and all the angels shouted for joy?
"Who shut up the sea behind doors

when it burst forth from the womb,
when I made the clouds its garment
and wrapped it in thick darkness,
when I fixed limits for it
and set its doors and bars in place,
when I said, 'This far you may come and no farther;
here is where your proud waves halt?'
"Have you ever given orders to the morning,
or shown the dawn its place,
that it might take the earth by the edges
and shake the wicked out of it?
The earth takes shape like clay under a seal;
its features stand out like those of a garment.
The wicked are denied their light,
and their upraised arm is broken.
"Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea
or walked in the recesses of the deep?
Have the gates of death been shown to you?
Have you seen the gates of the deepest darkness?
Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth?
Tell me, if you know all this.
"What is the way to the abode of light?
And where does darkness reside?
Can you take them to their places?
Do you know the paths to their dwellings?
Surely you know, for you were already born!
You have lived so many years!

Thank you very much for your consistent prayers, encouragement, and financial support. We look forward to seeing you, Lord willing, at some point in the next few months. Let us know how we can be praying for you. Let's all be faithful ambassadors for Jesus Christ today!

Jay

Jay & Kelly Cross

Alexia, Isabel, Esther, Lilian, & Eliana (due January 8, 2023)