

Cross Family Ministry Update

April 8, 2023

Dear praying friends,

Thank you for praying for us as we travel, proclaim the gospel along the way, and serve the Lord with our partnering churches.

Serving God in the Carolinas: We thank God for allowing us to arrive safely to the airbnb house in Greer, SC. It is a very nice house located close to family and friends. The layout works well for the needs of our family of seven. We have enjoyed having people over for meals with our family, and we pray God will give us many more opportunities to do that over the next few weeks.

God gave us a wonderful time with Iglesia Bautista de la Gracia in Hendersonville, NC, this past Sunday and Wednesday. That was the church I served with during college. Kelly and I continued serving there the six years I was in seminary. We were glad to see good friends again and see the work of the Lord continue in that place. We look forward to being with two more partnering churches in North Carolina over the next few weeks. After that, we plan to be with partnering churches in Virginia and Pennsylvania from May through July.

Centerpointe Baptist Church in Huntersville, NC - April 14-17

Grace Baptist Church in East Flat Rock, NC - April 19 & 23

Collierstown Baptist Church in Collierstown, VA - April 29 - May 1

Temple Bible Church in Elizabethtown, PA - May 3 & 7

Disciple Making 2023: We praise our God who is the Sovereign King over all the universe. Over the past few weeks God has shown his sovereign control over the details of our lives in spectacular ways. We thank him for allowing us to spend time with Holiday Bible Church on March 4-5. After lunch and several hours of Christian

fellowship on that Sunday, we started the drive back to the house we are renting in Winter Garden, FL. We were set to arrive back home around 6:30 pm. About 25 minutes into our drive, the van started to vibrate. We were going about 70mph. At first I thought it was the unevenness of the road, but then I saw the low-tire-pressure light was on. God allowed us to get safely off to the shoulder of the road. We thanked him for providing safety and asked for his help. I was wondering if I could get the spare tire on before it got dark and if we would be able to make it back home for the night. Eliana, who was two months old at the time, was not liking the carseat much during those days. She had screamed most of the two-hour drive over to Holiday the day before. She had just recently fallen asleep when we got the flat tire.

After a few cars zoomed by, I got out to get the jack and tools. We had a flat tire a couple weeks before that (another story of God's providential care), so I knew where all the tools were and how to get the spare tire lowered. Kelly got Eliana's carseat out, so she could swing it and try to keep her asleep. As I was getting the tools out of the back of the van, Kelly said, "There's AAA!" I knew Kelly wasn't being sarcastic, but I didn't know what she was talking about. I remember thinking something like, "Yeah it would be nice to have them here now." We don't have AAA service, though, and we had not called them. When I looked up, I was surprised to see a AAA roadside assistance vehicle there. The worker had already told Kelly that he was coming down the road when he saw us and pulled off to the side. He had pulled off just past us and backed up to see if he could help. Not more than 2-3 minutes had passed since we pulled off. I was amazed at God's gracious provision in such a specific way. As the worker was getting his tools out, I told him that God had done an amazing thing in sending him our way at just that time. God then opened the door to share the gospel with this man, who had grown up in church but had not been thinking about spiritual things in any serious way for a long time. He spoke of the hardships he had experienced over the years, which in many ways had been consequences of sin. I assured him that God had brought him along at that specific moment, so he could hear the gospel. He was very appreciative of the truth of God's word that I shared with him.

He said that a screw had caused the flat tire. He initially thought plugging the tire would get us back on the road, but after putting air in it, he saw that the sidewall had been damaged after the tire went flat. With the nice tools he had on hand, he was able to get the spare tire on quickly. The spare needed some air, and he got it filled up with his air compressor. The whole scenario was undeniable proof that God is sovereignly in charge of our lives. May we always be faithful ambassadors for Christ in the midst of the various blessings and trials that God brings into our lives. I thanked the man for his good work, paid him, prayed with him, and gave him some gospel tracts. I pray that he will repent of his sins, believe in Jesus Christ as his Savior, and become a faithful member of a local church. God allowed us to arrive back home at a decent time that

night. God even allowed Eliana to sleep and stay content for the rest of the trip home. What a kind and gracious Father we serve!

Cultivating an appreciation for God's creation: We thank God for allowing us to arrive here in South Carolina while so many trees, bushes, and plants are still in the full bloom of spring! The changing seasons come and go under God's sovereign direction.

Genesis 8:20–22 (ESV)

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart, “I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”

From cross2peru to cross2thenations in Central Florida?: Over the past few months God has been directing our thoughts and prayers toward disciple-making opportunities and responsibilities here in the USA. We do not have concrete plans at this point, but it seems that God might be directing us to plant a church with services in English and Spanish in Central Florida – possibly in Kissimmee, FL – toward the end of this year or the beginning of next year. There are several factors that God is currently using to lead us to that conclusion. The primary factor is the desire to honor and care for my parents by providing them with ongoing physical help and spiritual encouragement. God has given them heavy loads as they care for my 94-year-old grandfather and other family members with significant needs. They have in no way requested that we stay to help them. We are, though, seeing how beneficial it would be to offer them that care.

We are excited to think about the abundant ministry opportunities that God could open for us through church planting in Central Florida. Our sending church in Florida has helped church plants throughout the USA over the years. I would love for that church to have the joy of helping with a nearby church plant. Kissimmee has a growing population of people from all over the world. Some of the zip codes in Kissimmee are up to 70% Hispanic. Many international Disney employees also live in Kissimmee. Those people often travel back to their home country. Wouldn't it be wonderful to see more of them become Christians? They could then live out and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to their family and friends back home. Preaching and making disciples in English and Spanish each week would bring me great joy.

I have also recently heard pastors talk about the decline in the number of men preparing to serve as pastors and missionaries. We would love to partner with our partnering churches, IBM Global, and BJU to offer cross-cultural mission trips and internships. God greatly used my 10 years of service with a Spanish-speaking church plant to prepare me to preach and teach the Bible in Spanish. Those years of preparation were an incalculable value to our service to God in Peru over the past six years. I would love to be able to help train more Christians to serve the Lord in cross-cultural contexts.

If God leads us to a church planting ministry here in the USA, we would still need to travel down to Peru to sell our vehicle, pack up and give away things, close our bank account, etc. We do not want to presume upon God's will. We are willing to serve him wherever he leads us. We trust that he will faithfully guide our steps as he has done to this point. For now, we are enjoying the ministry God is giving us to our partnering churches. Thank you for praying for God's will to be done in our lives!

We praise the Lord for his ongoing work in Peru. The church plant we have worked with over the past few years has grown in number and spiritual maturity. We trust that the ministry of that church will continue on by God's grace and for his glory. We will, Lord willing, keep you updated with more details as God leads us along. Thank you so much for your ongoing prayers, encouragement, and financial support.

Jay

Jay & Kelly Cross

Alexia, Isabel, Esther, Lilian, and Eliana