

January Newsletter 2024

Thank you so much for your prayers and faithful support this month. We truly appreciate you, and the Lord will use your giving for the kingdom as we place it in his hands with faith. Here's where we are in:

Circumstances

By God's grace my family and I were in a CIT missionary training for one month in Union Mills, North Carolina. We are being commissioned by Stonebridge Church on February 18th and flying out to Peru February 19th. We are looking forward to work with Pastor Beto Fernandez, the same pastor we were helping with online Bible studies in the ministry. We will also try and get to know other leaders in Huancayo and try to see how to support them or any advice they may have about where we could help out.

Our kids, Stephen and Noah, were doing well during the first three weeks at the training campus because it was an adventurous experience. Later, they started to have problems falling asleep and waking up early in the morning; with this happening, we pray daily to God for our kids and try to teach them that Home is where family is. The adaptation process is always difficult, but we put our kids and our family in God's hands each day. So we ask you to pray for us and our family, and we thank you for being part of this Journey with Christ and us to Peru.

The CIT missionary training, this month was very helpful to be with like-minded missionaries, starting with some of the same fears, struggles, and feelings. It was a beneficial and great time of community, fellowship, and training that helped us look forward to the Lord for guidance through prayer for plans in Peru. There were many cultural, biblical, and theological lessons that many taught to get beyond the behavior to beliefs, from the beliefs to the values of the culture, and from the values of the culture to the worldview. The thinking behind that is that change happens at the worldview or the heart level with Christ's help, and many times, we focus too much on changing the behavior rather than seeing what is causing the behavior (the roots). Also, we did an activity called the Tree of Confession of Sin and the Tree of Confession of Faith. On the first tree, we try to get to the root of our struggles and feelings by identifying what those struggles say about us, what God has done about it, and who God is. As we recognize the lies, we repent and write the truth about who God is, what he has done, what he says about us, and what fruit comes from that truth on the other tree.

This exercise helped me process my emotions during the training, as I was emotionally overwhelmed by all that was going on. One of my struggles was bitterness from working too hard and having so much thrown on my shoulders. Ultimately, with the Spirit's help, I could identify that God does allow more than we can handle sometimes so that we can more fully rely on Him and that He is not a God who enjoys squeezing and pressing us. He is like a coach for us. God wants the best from us, so He may push us sometimes. He is preparing us to entrust with more blessings, which is why sometimes it may feel like too much when things are growing. He is preparing and shaping us to release his blessings and entrust us to be channels of his grace. He is a God who is a good master that provides for his servants; he looks after them and cares for them. Remembering all these things about who God is helps me take a step back and fully appreciate His work through it all. Also, I was reminded that more than a servant, I'm his son and child, and the Father in Heaven will always have open arms despite my performance. You can also be reminded of this when you feel overwhelmed.

In the missionary training, many team principles were taught to work well on a team, and mindstyle preferences all to train and prepare more flexibility to be able to go into the culture as a learner and not a leader in the beginning. The principles were also helpful for me to remember to plan what to do once on the field- support and help others in the beginning and maybe in the future attempt to implement “ministries” (not in the beginning). The practice is to study the culture, the needs, what works and what doesn’t, and what open doors there are for the gospel in the present time.

Spiritually

We are learning that in hard times, or when there is increased stress due to adapting to different circumstances or cultures, it is important to recognize many of those factors to be able to deal with them. There are many new factors when entering a new culture. But even more in those times is when we need to be “on our toes,” prepared spiritually in dependence on Christ and the Spirit to move in faith and the Spirit, not in our own strength or in the flesh. That is why it is important that all of us lift our prayers to God together as He pours them over us daily. Though the situation is much more severe in Revelations due to persecution, I feel like two of the same verses apply to us in tough circumstances.

In hard times, may we always continue to be true to His name (Rev. 2:13-below) and “be faithful even to the point of death, and He will give us life as your victor’s crown (Rev. 2:10)”. It’s interesting to see in Revelations that the one who appeared to John is the First and the Last. The Living One He says, “I was dead, and now look, I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades. Also, Jesus is described in Romans 8 this way as Paul describes Jesus as resurrected, living, and He who intercedes for us. “Christ Jesus who died-and more than that was raised to life-is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of God? After Jesus presents himself as the risen one, the living one, He encourages the churches going through persecution to be faithful to His name.

Revelations 2:13, to the Church at Pergamum: “I know where you live- where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city-where Satan lives.”

Revelations 2:26, “To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give him authority over nations.”

Revelations 2:10, “I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor’s crown.”

Moreover, seeing what God says to Sardis through John can be convicting: “Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God.” Rev. 3:2

The prayer for us would be that of Ecclesiastes 5:7, “Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore, fear God.” Fear of the Lord, I sense, causes us to be true to ourselves and God and obey the things He puts on our hearts, and not much speak of them, and not just ponder them, but obedience until the end in action and doing them. As January has gone, we still have a whole year ahead. May we be faithful in the small things and have a heart of obedience (not out of duty) but out of faith that expresses itself in love. May the fear of God and the awe of His Almighty power and us as his servants help us stand because We know who goes before us, with us, and behind us. And He is worth giving our

life up for, as it says in Mt. 16:25, “For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.”

Fundraising

Praise the Lord, many Christmas donations were generously given. We need to raise \$50,067.44 for our third year, and we are at 48.3% of that amount. If you feel the Lord Jesus is leading you to be in ministry with us financially, you can use the link below to contribute— <https://tnpartners.org> (Make a free account and choose the Ivey missionary to give). Monthly, we are making half of the annual budget that needs to be met for the third year. We trust the Lord to continue providing and bringing this ministry to fruition. Blessings in Christ!

