



in touch

Prayer Letter

February 2021

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AN URGENT APPEAL



COVID-19

LOCKDOWN

from Victor & Audrey Maxwell

The whole world has been convulsed by this prolonged and dangerous Covid-19 pandemic. Sadly, some of our esteemed supporters have suffered loss and others have been victims of this horrible disease. We have been concerned for all our workers in various parts of the world and thank God for His hand of protection upon them.

However, we are making an urgent appeal for prayer and support for our friends in Brazil where they are in great need. There is a critical situation in the city of Manaus in the heart of the Amazon. In this city of 2 million people there is an average of **3,000 new** cases each day and **around 200 people are buried daily**. Patients with other health issues are also dying because of the inadequate and overwhelmed medical system. Added to all this, a new "Amazon variant" of Covid-19 is also circulating. Consequently, a daily curfew from 7 PM to 6 AM has been imposed on the city.

An elder from the Hebron Evangelical Church in Manaus sent this alarming text: *"Thank you very much for your prayers! Manaus is in great calamity. There are no vacancies in public or private hospitals. There is no oxygen for the sick. more than 3,000 new cases of Covid-19 are diagnosed daily and these are followed by many deaths. Yesterday, more than 200 people died. Thank God, until now, the Lord has kept us. Please pray for us."*

In light of the above, Acre International is organising special seasons of prayer for Brazil. We have also planned to set up a **Brazil Emergency Fund** for those who would like to contribute financially to help our outreach and relief for needy families. All contributions sent to this fund will be forwarded to our churches in Brazil for their relief programmes.

Pray, pray, pray for Manaus.

BRAZIL EMERGENCY FUND

If you would like to contribute to this fund, please send your donation marked **"Brazil Emergency Fund"** to the address above. You can also bank transfer to account: Acre Gospel Mission sort code: 95/01/21 - Account number: 82788357

(Please let us know if you have given this way and put your name as reference)



Keith & Karen Lindsay

Thank you for your continued support and prayer for the work over the past strange year and now into 2021. We praise the Lord for all that He has done for us both as individuals and also as a Mission. The Lord continues to open doors of opportunity for us and we are thankful for those churches that have invited us to preach/report/sing for their internet services. If we can help you out in any way, please contact us.

Jeffrey and Marianna Ferguson approached the Mission recently with a difficulty they have faced when Brexit rules came into force at the beginning of this new year. As a married couple, Marianna being at present an EU citizen would have been unable to travel and stay freely in the United Kingdom and has now started the process of residency here. The couple met via ZOOM with the Acre committee and as we sought the Lord's direction it has been decided that Jeffrey and Marianna will come off the field for a period of time.

As the workload increases with administration, deputation, teams, prayer meeting visits, church services and visiting the various mission fields, the committee asked Jeffrey and Marianna to consider assisting Keith here at home and also lead teams and make frequent visits to the work in Portugal. They have consented to do this. It has been heart-wrenching for this couple and we pray that the Lord will go before them as they pack up in Portugal and make their home here in Northern Ireland. Jeffrey and Marianna are both trained and gifted in children's and youth ministry and will be available for meetings and church services in the coming months.

Dr Tom & Lucimar Geddis

Rio Branco, Brazil

We are so thankful to the Lord for the improvement that Tom has known over the past few weeks since he broke his hip. He is getting physiotherapy at home during the week. Please continue to pray for Brazil. Things are not good there because of the Covid-19 virus and also an outbreak of the Dengue fever. Many people are very ill and dying. We were very sad to learn of the sudden death of Pastor Raimundo Brito. He was a 41-year-old Pastor who was killed in a road accident in Rio Branco. He was involved in our literature ministry in the schools and our work amongst the young people. Please pray for his widow and four children, the youngest being only 4 months old.

We have also just heard that another young Pastor has died from liver cancer. Both he and his wife have been very involved with us in the school ministry. Again, we appreciate your support and prayers for us here and for the ongoing work in Brazil.

Barry & Raquel Henry

IECA, Portugal

Christmas has come and gone for another year and it was quite a different Christmas to what we have been used to! As we come into a new year, we realise there are a lot of challenges awaiting us, especially as we still move on amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. Here are the following points of prayer that we ask you to remember on our behalf.



Please remember the Acre Zoom Prayer meetings on:
Monday 1st February and Monday 1st March at 8pm
 The codes are - Meeting ID: 4350810967 - Password: 150967

ACRE ZOOM NEW YEAR CONFERENCE
 On Friday 5th February 2021 at 8pm
 Taking Part: **Pastor Victor Maxwell**
Pastor Diego from São Paulo Do Potengi, NE Brazil &
Barry Henry from Portugal
Singing items and greetings from some of the other mission workers.
 Zoom codes - Meeting ID: 4350810967-Password: 150967

Pray for the country of Portugal itself as we step into another period of lockdown.

Pray that God continues to use this pandemic to open deaf ears to the Gospel.

Pray for the protection of the leadership of the church as we continue to minister to those who have felt the effects of the Covid-19 or have been isolated due to restrictions.

Pray for a young man called Diogo whose grandfather passed away from the Covid-19 on the 11th January. His grandmother passed away around the same time in 2019.

Pray as we enter another period of recorded services.

Pray that the Word will spread out and do its work in the hearts of those listening who do not know Christ.

Continue to pray for Matt, our son, as he continues to study at the ITLC.

Continue to pray for my mum (Carmel) as the confinement is slowly taking its toll on her in Ireland.

We thank you all so much for your love, support and prayers as we continue to do what God has called us to do in this part of Europe. May God continue to guide and protect each of you for His Glory.

Jeffrey & Marianna Ferguson

Santo Andre, Portugal

After returning home to Northern Ireland for the Christmas period, we began to make enquiries as to the effects of Brexit and the ability for Marianna to be able to be in the UK for an extended time should the need ever arise. We quickly realised that due to the new immigration policies coming down the line, this would prove difficult for us in the future.

However, we did have the opportunity for her to register here in Northern Ireland under the old EU system, which was successful. This means however, that we cannot be away from the UK for more than 6 months within a 12-month period. Regrettably we have to come to the conclusion that it would not be possible to stay full-time in Portugal. We addressed this with the Mission and what this means for our work and we are very pleased to say that a new opportunity with the Mission has opened up for us here at home, in a support role to the Mission co-ordinator, Keith Lindsay. Of course, we will maintain our links to the work in Portugal and we do not rule out going back someday in the future, but for now we feel that this is God's leading in our lives and we are happy to be able to serve Him in this way. Please pray for us as we make the move back home, that God would help us deal with all the emotions that will come in leaving behind our friends and colleagues in Portugal, but also that He would lead us and guide us in this new step forward.

Aroldo & Emmanuelle Areas

Santo Andre, Portugal

This past year has been so strange for all of us but, praise the Lord so far, He has taken care of us and we have been able to continue our ministries here in Santo André.

December was a very busy month for us. We have had very few restrictions here, so we were able to carry on our meetings as usual. As our church building is big, despite the new rules and regulations, we were able to hold two weekends of special events for the teens, the children, the ladies and the adults, with special activities for each group. These special meetings brought great times of fellowship and three unsaved attended. At one of these meetings, a yearly devotional for each child and teenager was also given as a Christmas gift.

We also had our usual visits to the senior citizens from the church and each one received a Christmas basket full of special Portuguese Christmas food and an evangelical calendar. This is a Portuguese tradition that we have adapted and have been doing as a church for many years.

In December we also went around to give out the "Good Seed" calendars at the market places. They were very well received as nearly everyone accepted them gladly. One market seller told me to give one of our calendars to his friend saying, "My friend needs the Word of God in his life". Another market seller asked for 20 calendars to distribute among his family. These small conversations were a great encouragement to us.

On Christmas Day and New Year's eve, we were able to have a number of people come to our home for food and fellowship who would normally be on their own.

Vitor the young lad, converted from a Catholic background, the Brazilian family of four and Mário (our friend who was a backslider for many years) continue to attend faithfully the different meetings.

We do pray that the Lord will continue to keep us all safe in the palm of His hand. Many thanks for your faithful prayers and support, especially during this pandemic. We do appreciate them so much.

Ricardo & Sandra Hernandez

Lanzarote

Due to the ongoing pandemic and the strict restrictions imposed on us in Lanzarote, we are now at Level 2 and only allowed to have 50% capacity in our church services. Until further notice we have to suspend the Sunday school for children. Pray for the 20 children who attend these classes and for the majority of their parents who are not believers in Christ.

We thank God for the favourable recovery of our son Daniel. He has been accepted into a treatment plan at the social security mental health unit. Pray for the 20 Good Seed calendars that Sandra was able to deliver to the psychiatric staff at the hospital when Daniel was admitted. He is now home with us again and improving each day. Please continue to pray for him.

Pray for Amisa and her baby Marinho. She is a new believer and God healed her from a tumour in her throat. She was very ill and admitted to the ICU in the hospital in Gran Canaria for three weeks. She is attending church frequently.

Due to the cancellation of tourists from the United Kingdom, Germany and France, hotels and businesses in Lanzarote are planning to close completely in 2021. There is fear of a huge economic crisis in Lanzarote.

Despite all the negative news from the pandemic and the economic recession, we pray that as a church the Lord will give us opportunities to spread the Gospel and that the church will be a refuge in times of need.

There are four people who have requested baptism. May the Lord give us the opportunity to do it in times of pandemic. Please pray for Elkin, our church elder as he continues to teach the Bible Training Course 'Prepared to Serve' with 8 people each week. We are also encouraged that we have around 20 ladies meeting via Zoom for our ladies meeting and 10 young people attending the youth meeting with Jesus and Ruth each Saturday.

We are disappointed that we won't be able to carry out our evangelistic activities in the Old People's Homes nor in the Prison. Dulce who works along with us was able to get permission from the Prison authorities to distribute 100 "Good Seed" calendars to the prisoners. Pray that God's Word would take root in their hearts.

The church motto for 2021 is: Hebrews 12:3 *"For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."*

Mark & Judith Loney

IECA, Portugal

Like everywhere else on the planet, the Algarve has not escaped the effects of Covid-19. The greatest impact to this area has not been the actual disease itself due to the fact that the Algarve has had very few cases up to now. However, the main impact has been the economic effect on the local economy that depends so heavily on the arrival of tourists from all over the world. Last year 60,000 people lost their jobs in the tourist industry in the Algarve alone and we probably haven't seen the true impact on the lives of many families just yet.

The local Portuguese are very resilient though when it comes to crisis and many can fall back on growing vegetables and rearing few hens on the many abandoned farms that many of them or their families own. However, for the many immigrant communities and especially the many Brazilian immigrants who have come here in search of a better life, they have no such safety net. Many are left trying to pay expensive rents and support their families back in Brazil. Sadly, out of desperation many turn to crime in times like these.

Just recently I heard of a large villa being broken into and nothing was stolen apart from the food in the cupboards! We are greatly concerned for many Brazilian families that have been attending our church and we pray that those in the fellowship who are able, will take it upon themselves to support those in need.

In Many respects we have been so blessed here in the Algarve with the freedom to resume physical services since June last year. We are also so thankful to God for the space on this site to be able to social distance and although we have had to curtail any social events, our Sunday services and Bible studies have continued on site up to now, pretty much as normal. With sunny days and the ability to open the sliding doors at the back of the church the congregation can spread out into

the open air as we relay the services through speakers so those scattered outside can be part of the service going on inside.

Our services are also now online for anyone to view from anywhere in the world and those who are not able to come to Portugal at the moment are able to keep connected. This week however, it looks like we are now heading for a national lockdown until the end of January at least, so it looks like we will have to make do with online services and Zoom Bible studies, prayer meetings and home groups for a while. Despite all these obstacles, we see God at work in the lives of our congregation and see a growing hunger for spiritual things across the land of Portugal.

We thank you for standing with us in prayer as we continue to serve the Lord through these difficult times.

Glenn Bowden

IECA, Portugal

Philippians 2:4 "let each of you look not only to his own interest, but also to the interests of others..." Thank you so much for all of your support both prayerfully and financially. There are no words to describe how much you - the Acre family - have blessed us here out in the mission field and to know that even in the midst of all this madness we have you holding us up before God.

Because of your prayers we have seen our students impacted and shaped by God's Word in term one and now as we enter term two all our students have returned and it's so exciting to see what our God will do in and through each of their lives. Please pray for the students here at Itlc Portugal as they seek God's wisdom and guidance in where He will lead them in the future. Also as they minister here at the International Church of the Algarve with the youth each Friday night where every week they seek every opportunity to share the Gospel with so many kids from so many different backgrounds and cultures. Please pray also for the football outreach that the guy students have been running each Saturday. It started with just them having a kick around each week and asking local kids who were there to join them in a game of football. The last Saturday before Christmas break they had 35 random young people turn up. They really want to use this time to build relationships and look for opportunities to share the Gospel with many kids who would never darken the door of a church.

We, as a team, have decided to move ahead with organising Camp Sunshine 2021 and putting plans in place for this July. Camp is such an amazing outreach with over 300 kids coming over a 3-week period and it's so wonderful to see how God has used it over the many years we have held it here in the Algarve. What is more, to see young people coming along, not just on Friday nights, but to the Sunday service every week has been such a blessing. Please pray as we plan and put programs in place it's not easy when Covid-19 has been going on to get back into our stride especially when so many plans have fallen through but we need to be ready in and out of season.

Continue to remember my mum Myrtle as she has had mobility issues and her leg has been causing a lot of problems but, praise God, it has started to heal and even the wound doctor cannot believe it as it is in her disabled leg with really bad circulation. Prayer is such a powerful thing.

Thanks again for all your support. We couldn't do what God is calling us to do without you, so thank you for your partnership in the Gospel.

PRAY *for our* **BRAZILIAN WORKERS**

Pastor Jose & Eurides Carlos, Manaus: These are difficult days in Manaus as we face another lockdown. Every day we are getting news of friends being tested positive for Covid and also some friends who have sadly passed away because of the virus. We are thankful that we have recovered well from Covid.

Altina, Eliana & Jonas, Children's Ministry, Manaus: Altina's husband and son have been ill with Covid. They are recovering slowly. The schools are on holiday at present and they don't know when we will be able to return to teach the Bible because of the current situation.

The De Souza Family, IBEE Schools, Manaus: Please continue to pray for the schools during this pandemic. These are difficult days for us. We are hoping that we will be able to open the schools again on 8th February, but this is uncertain because of the Pandemic.

PRAY for our BRAZILIAN WORKERS *continued*

Raimundo Nonato: Market Ministry, Manaus: Again, the ministry is limited at the market during these difficult days of the Covid pandemic. Pray for God's protection on Raimundo and his wife. Pray for the thousands of pieces of literature that has been distributed over the past year.

Pastor Iran & Socorro, Campo Redondo, NE: The work here in Campo Redondo has commenced 2021 with a "New Normal". We are following the rules and regulations set out by the government for the Covid19 pandemic. Thousands of people have died, and millions have been affected. Thankfully here in our town the number of cases has decreased. We hope it stays that way. We had good services towards the end of last year and on Christmas night a young woman called Jossana trusted the Saviour.

We continue with the Radio Ministry each day between 1.30pm and 2.30pm. We have outreach work in Lauro Maia each Wednesday with an attendance of around 35 people. We hope to commence a children's ministry there soon. The outreach in Serra Do Doutor every two weeks also proves to be a great blessing. We have recently found a piece of ground that we would like to buy to build a church building on. This will cost around £3500.00 Please pray that God will supply the need for this. The work in Malhada Vermelha continues each Sunday but as yet we haven't started the children's ministry there again. Thank you for your prayers for all of the work in NE Brazil.

Pastor Junior & Christina in Nissa Floresta, NE: We are so thankful to the Lord for His blessings on the work here and for the partnership that we have with our friends in the UK. A number of people have trusted the Lord recently. Please pray for Erimar, Dona Rosany and Nataly. Pray that they will take their stand and remain faithful in the ways of the Lord. Please pray for the restoration of a couple called Kleber and Ozinete. They have recently separated but we are praying that their marriage will be restored again. James our son gets married to Andressa on 6th March and we pray God will bless them together in the future.

Pastor Diego & Susanna in Sao Paulo do Potengi NE: Thank you for continuing to pray for the work here in Sao Paulo do Potengi and also our outreach work in the town of Lajes do Cabugi. Please pray that the work here amongst the children will soon be able to be open again. Please pray that God will also direct a new Pastor for the work here in SPP. We feel led of the Lord to move from here to Lajes do Cabugi full time. We feel that the work there needs the presence of a Pastor who can be there reaching out in the community and conducting Bible studies and Evangelism. Please also pray for sister Julia from the town who has been having treatment for cancer. Sadly, the treatment has had little effect. Thank you for your continued prayers.

Pastor Marcio and Luzivânia, Lajes Pintadas, NE: Thank you for your prayers for us as we have just commenced working in this needy town of Lajes Pintadas. We arrived here on 7th December and have been able to distribute literature and despite the pandemic are gradually resuming all of the services in the church. We are careful to follow all the protocols of the health authorities here. Thank you for praying for us and we look forward to what God is going to do here in this needy place.

Acre Pastor Luiz & Aldeneide, Passa é Fica, NE: We thank the Lord as we look back over 2020 for the many blessing that He has given us here in the work. We rejoice in 3 souls that have recently come to Christ and for a baptismal service that we had in September. The Ladies meetings every two weeks have brought in a number of unsaved ladies. We are hoping that very soon we will be able to commence the services in our new church building. The building work is nearly complete. Please pray for these unbelievers who attend our church: Laura, Eliane, Lucia, Neco, Bráz, Geovani, Messias.

Pastor Adriano & Maria, Varzea, NE: We look back over the past year and although things were very different, we rejoice in the way the Lord has blessed and encouraged us. Please continue to pray that in the year ahead we would know wisdom and see spiritual growth in the lives of the believers here. Pray also for our evangelism both here and in Espirito Santo. Pray that the Lord will

open up the way for us even during this Corona-virus Pandemic. We are having many problems with our car at present. Please pray for this.

Pastor Walkenio & Hadassa, Montanas, NE: We rejoice that some people have trusted the Lord recently. We are conducting discipleship classes with Deyvison, Ingrid and Otony. They are also hoping to be baptised soon. We are looking at a piece of ground to be able to build a church building. It costs around £3000. Please pray with us that the Lord will supply the need for this as a witness in our town. We also ask prayer for my wife who is expecting our second child.

Pastor Neto & Layze, Joao Camara, NE: We continue on with our discipleship classes each week and also rejoice that a number of new members have joined the church here. We have the election to choose the new church oversight in the next weeks and would value prayer for this also.

Pastor Abraham & Pricilla, Saô Jose NE: The construction work at the church has stopped as it is holiday time here in Brazil. We are at the process of putting up the beams and the roof on the building. The building work will commence again in February. We continue to meet in the open air at the church site and have been blessed and encouraged by the good numbers attending. We are praying for salvation blessing on our town. Thank you for standing with us in the Gospel.

Pastor Jose Soares, Santa Cruz, NE: The work here has been hindered a lot because of the pandemic. Please pray that God will speak clearly to people who are living in fear. We are thankful for the hope that we have in Christ. Thank you for remembering all of the workers here in North East Brazil.

Pastor Ageu & Riza, Feijo, Acre: Here in our town of Feijo we are seeing a big increase in Covid 19. A number of people from the church have been infected but are recovering well. The church and our village outreach to the Indians have remained open and we are able to conduct our services with the usual restrictions. Please pray for the strengthening of believers and the evangelism programme that we have in place, that we would see many come to know Christ. Please also pray for our son Micah who has now completed High School and is seeking the Lord for his future and for the college he should apply to.

Pastor Fabiomar & Marilene in Labrea: Please remember the ongoing ministry here in this remote part of Amazonas. Pray for the church services and the radio ministry each day.

Pastor Carlos Alberto & Family: Manuel Urbano, Acre: Things in Acre are in an alert stage again because of the pandemic. Many people are sick with the virus and many dying. We continue with two evening services on Sundays and Wednesdays. We use the church WhatsApp group to share messages online, prayer requests and important information.

Evangelist Plinio, Sena Madureira, Acre: Pray for the work amongst the outlying congregations and for safety in travel to these various small churches in the forest.

BRAZIL EMERGENCY FUND

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MY RESPONSE

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