

Serving Christ, the King

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Oct. /Dec. 2020 Report



Dear Mission Partners,

Greetings from Malaga! What an amazing year this has been! We started the year on an optimistic note preparing ourselves for the normal activities we have every year, planning ahead for special ones (intensive bilingual bible courses, outreach activities, trips, etc.) to make a greater impact with the Gospel. Then came the pandemic and the Coronavirus suddenly dominated everything. The first lockdown started in mid-March and we suddenly saw ourselves having to learn new ways to do ministry. It has certainly been challenging and difficult, especially dealing with the glitches that the internet produces when you are half way into delivering a sermon! But we are learning and have become more appreciative of what we still have. As we approach the end of the year we also look back at how the Lord has cared for us and worked positively in our lives so we could grow through this ordeal.

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

There is a song we sing at church called **Count Your Blessings**, written by Johnson Oatman in 1898. The first verse goes like this:

***"When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
when you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
and it will surprise you what the Lord has done".***

So, where can we find encouragement when we see ourselves in the middle of unpredictable adversity? I find that this old hymn gives us the answer -- Count your blessings! There are countless blessings the Lord has given us. Let me share some with you.

Despite all the millions of infections and deaths cause by Covid-19, the Lord has given us good health and many wonderful opportunities to serve Him. He has also given us a new granddaughter called Aria (that makes us grandparents of 7 beautiful healthy grandchildren). The only problem is that they are all far way. However, we can be thankful for that also, because if they were here with us we would HUG THEM TO DEATH! Ha! Also, two ladies in church have given birth to beautiful babies. On top of that we have been used to see six new spiritual births and two baptisms this year. Five people have finished discipleship classes and are now serving actively in church ministry and two new families have joining the church. Through it all we had countless opportunities to minister the Word of God to people, not only here in Southern Spain, but also in other countries through social media. On a sad note, we have also seen some dear friends pass away, some caused by Covid-19 and others by terminal cancer. The one that hit closest to home was the death of a very faithful servant in our church called Paola. During the nine months we've

dealing with the pandemic she fought a lonely battle in the hospital with cancer, limiting the special attention she needed from doctors. Paola passed away alone, quietly in her room. But even this can be considered gain if we look at it from a biblical perspective (Phil. 1:20-21). We have been trying to set a date for her memorial service, but due to the city's meeting restrictions we haven't been able to up till now. Thankfully the restrictions have been lifted so we should be able to get together now to commemorate, not her death, but her LIFE. In a few weeks we will also be able to witness another great event; the wedding of Magnus and Tatiana. If you can recall from our last newsletter, they got baptized in September and shortly after began preparing for their wedding. But this too will be a bitter-sweet experience, for right after the wedding they will be moving to Norway.

LIMITATIONS DUE TO THE RESTRICTIONS ENFORCED

As I said before, Covid has changed everything. Family gatherings for Christmas, especially for Christmas Eve which is the most cherished family gathering of the year, has been limited to 10 people in a family group. Any major social gathering will also face restrictions, which means we will not be able to have our bilingual Christmas Carol service and banquet at church this year. Instead, we plan to have two separate services, with smaller groups. And no Christmas banquet. Instead, we will give out dozens of bags to our congregation to give away, with typical Christmas sweets including a special tract explaining that the best gift that anyone can ever receive is the one that Christ paid for on the cross of Calvary.

LOOKING BEYOND, TO A NEW YEAR

Lord willing, in a few weeks we will be contemplating a brand-new year & new challenges stretching us to depend on the Lord more than ever. We would like for you to pray that our wonderful Savior will give us wisdom to make the right decisions, and strength to take the steps to advance our missionary work.

We feel so grateful for being able to partner with you to reach this corner of Spain with the soul-saving message of the Gospel. So, more than ever we want to express our appreciation to all of you who give sacrificially to make this possible. May you all have a wonderful Covid-free, Christ-Centered Christmas and a blessed, fruitful new year!

*Serving the Savior of the World,
Eusebio "Sam" & Marytxa*