



NEWS FROM

BARRANTES FAMILY

Serving together
in Chiriqui Province,
Panama

Alvaro, Mauren, Josué, Sofia and Elisa

MAY 2020

What has happened?

Hello, everyone! It has been six months since we sent our last letter. It's amazing how quickly time goes by! Many things have happened since that letter and we want to keep you informed about our ministry and how our Lord Jesus Christ has provided in everything to continue this work. We keep focused on sharing the grace of God and ultimately planting churches here in Panama which will teach it as well.

As we mentioned in the last letter, we had visited different churches and different ministries. We had the opportunity to make new friends among them. By doing so, we met the leaders of CEC Panama (Community of Christian Students).

In early January, they invited us to speak at their annual summer conference in Colón Province near Panama City, an 8-hour drive from our hometown in Chiriqui Province. Mauren and I were speakers in a workshop, Life Priority Management, from a biblical perspective. We received very positive feedback and were able to make more contacts with people from all over the country. This trip al-

lowed us to see other places in this beautiful country and it enabled us to begin doing discipleship with many of the youth who attended the camp and also live here in Chiriqui Province. Some of them are new Christians and others are leaders who need to be studying and growing in their knowledge of Bible truths.

In February, we received a visit from Iglesia Biblica de la Gracia (Alajuela) Mission Team from our former church in Costa Rica. Working together, we performed an outreach activity we had planned a while ago. Our neighborhood has about 300 houses and we invited the entire community to participate in an activity at our neighborhood's basketball court. Once there, we played games and had sandwiches, sodas, lollipops, and popcorn. We closed the activity by showing the film *Courageous*. It was so gratifying



Outreach activity at the basketball court

to see the attendance with whom we were able to make contact and strengthen the relationships we had with some of them.

In November 2019 and February 2020, I had the opportunity to help in a ministry called God's Eyes International that gives eye tests and glasses to those people in need. This ministry is focused in places with social risk and poverty. Each time more than 400 people attended the activity and I had the opportunity to personally preach the gospel to 50 people— three of them made decisions to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior! I praise the Lord for that.

In late February, I was invited to share the gospel in a refugee camp with people from Africa, Asia, Cuba, Haiti, and Central America in Gualaca City. There were more than 700 people, including little children. Alvaro also had the opportunity to share the gospel with two Haitian families who did not know about the grace of God.

Where are we now?

In general, we are doing well, but the quarantine continues with extreme measures due to the

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Collage of ministry activities

pandemic and the high number of cases here in Panama. All businesses, stores, and schools have been closed since March. People have been assigned specific days and times to go out for shopping purposes only based on gender and ID—these measures are stressful. However, it has been a good time of making new plans and goals, as well as being a more gratifying time to continue seeking God’s direction. It has been a time to spend as a family; do home-schooling; and study the Bible with our children. We are also keeping in touch and continuing our ministry of discipleship via social media with most of the people we knew already and we are moving forward in the ministry.

Something that makes us extremely happy is that thanks to the faithfulness of God and each one of you who invests in this ministry, we have been able to help out two families who are going through difficult times.

A family of Venezuelans with four little children and a Panamanian

family with two teenagers. In both cases there is no income due to loss of jobs because of the coronavirus. They had no money for several weeks. By God’s grace, we were able to help them with food for at least a month trying to give them a hand until the government’s restrictions change.

We have also been blessed by our neighbors and friends in many different ways. Some of them have brought and shared with us food, fruits, and coffee. Even our next door neighbor called us one day to give us a swimming pool that they no longer used. Our children have been blessed and are now having fun in our backyard. Our children had been praying several months for a swimming pool and this is a great demonstration of mutual



Fun in the pool

love and God’s provision even in the “smallest” details.

Where are we going?

We pray that the world situation will change and we will once again have the personal contact which is extremely necessary for the ministry. We are planning the next outreach activity as soon as we return to normal life. We are hopeful that after this situation, many people will need advice, counseling, and a listening ear. That will be a great opportunity to talk about things to come and the firm hope Christians have, considering that the afflictions of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us and the manifestation of the children of God as the Apostle Paul said in the Epistle of Romans 8:18-19. It will be a time of great opportunities to reach out and meet new people and comfort them with the gospel of the grace of God and work for new believers and disciples. In addition, I think it will be a nice time to continue looking for land to buy for our future church building.

Help us in prayer for the brethren we are discipling: Alejandro, Ricardo, Lency, Yibis, Raquel, as well as for our neighbors—the Pinedas and the Quiroz.

Every day we pray for you all, for Panama, Costa Rica, and the U.S.A. Thanks to each one of you for being part of this wonderful ministry.

Love in Christ Jesus,
Alvaro, Mauren, Josue, Sofia, and Elisa