

Missionary Prayer Bulletin



December 2019

NORTH AMERICA

◆ Jamaica

Little London—Richard Craig & Randy Gunnings

The Little London congregation thanks Toronto Free Presbyterian Church for once again making possible the Christmas dinner for the boys and girls and the elderly on December 20, 2019. Please pray that as people come for the dinner at the special occasion they may know and understand the true and biblical meaning of the Christmas season.

The mission church would also like to express its appreciation to the Mission Board for assisting it in installing new windows in the church building. For months they struggled with the original board-and-glass windows which had become weak and fragile since they were installed when the church was built. Now they have sliding windows which are much easier to handle and appear to be more stable.

Richard Craig wants to wholeheartedly thank Rev. Geoff Banister and Rev. Myron Mooney as they sacrifice their time each week in lecturing him in the biblical study of God's Word. He says, "May the God of all grace continue to shower His blessings in their lives and their congregations."

In Jamaica, only a few churches are considered to be of the Reformed faith. Richard and Randy ask for prayer as they wrestle against the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements in Jamaica, that the Lord would truly speak in men's and women's hearts concerning the accuracy of God's Word.

They thank the Lord that they are seeing an increase in the attendance at the children's meetings.

◆ Dominican Republic

Los Frailes—Ramón & Wendy Sosa

Ramón Sosa reports that by the grace of God the work in the Dominican Republic

continues to grow. They have had record attendance at their Sunday services over the last few weeks.

He asks prayer for himself as pastor, husband, and father, that he might be an example where the Lord has called him to minister.

Please pray especially for the Sosas' twin daughters, Esmirna and Rachel, as they need treatment for health needs. Pray also for them spiritually. The Lord willing, the girls will be baptized before the end of the year.

Pray for economic help for their family and for their church. They would like to buy a vehicle that would be used for church ministry. Ramón praises God for generous offerings that have been sent to them over the last few months, but they still are praying for financial help to stabilize their economic need.

Please pray for the congregation, that they would be motivated to evangelize and also that the Lord would mature His people and bring more people into the church. They have begun a discipleship training group for the men, praying that the Lord would raise up elders and leaders to help in the ministry.

Finally, pray for their preschool program, that it would continue to function as an outreach in the community and also that people would be able to sponsor the children so that the ministry may continue.

◆ Mexico

Mexico City—Jason & Danielle Boyle

The Boyles are thankful for an encouraging recent trip Jason took to the Dominican Republic to visit with Ramón Sosa, his family, and church. Jason had the privilege of preaching on the Sunday, teaching at an extra meeting on what it would mean to be a mission church of the FPC Mexico City church, seeing their needs first hand, and encouraging the Sosa family.

The church body in Mexico City continues to take to heart the need to move forward in purchasing a permanent place for the church. Through special offerings and fundraising initiatives they have been blessed to see sac-

rificial giving and unity within the church. They just finished a poinsettia fundraising effort, which earned a modest amount. The Boyles say, "Even if the profits aren't worth mentioning, what IS worth mentioning is the hardworking spirit and solidarity of the church."

On January 5 the church will have a baptismal service with five or six persons being baptized. It will be a very special way to celebrate the church's seventh anniversary.

Please pray for the Boyle family as they make adoption-related decisions, as well as figure out the timing for future deputation meetings. Please also pray that the Lord would guide them to the best help for their son Caleb, who was recently diagnosed with severe hearing loss in both ears (something he was born with). The hearing loss affects his speech and language acquisition, something that Jason and Danielle want to be on top of, especially since he is learning two languages. He is two years five months old. They say, "Thank you for keeping the Mexican FPC ministry close to your heart and frequently in your prayers. Your prayers encourage us enormously."

EUROPE

◆ Spain

Madrid—John & Noranna Hanna

Rev. John Hanna has been hard at work on their new building. He says the work on the building is progressing very quickly, so quickly that he is having a hard time trying to keep up as he is responsible for all the work in the basement. They hope to be using the sanctuary for their services by the end of December, although there will still be more work to be done after that.

The Hannas are grateful for everyone's prayers. Please continue to remember them and the work in Spain. They wish all a happy Christmas and a blessed and prosperous New Year.

AFRICA

◆ Liberia

Monrovia—*David DiCanio*

Rev. David DiCanio says this time of year brings lots of government paperwork. Since Liberia has no mail service, everything must be done in person. They are applying again for their permit for the radio station with two different government ministries, the Ministry of Information, which regulates content, and the Liberia Telecommunications Authority, which regulates frequencies. The local newspaper recently reported that 79 radio stations are operating without legal authority and that only 15 are properly registered. Thankfully, the mission's station is legally registered and licensed.

Both Joanne and Mr. DiCanio were thankful to be able to renew their work permits with the Ministry of Labor, and Mr. DiCanio was granted another resident permit and, additionally, a re-entry permit with the Bureau of Immigration. Joanne has been working on getting their certificate from the Ministry of Health, and they recently fulfilled the expensive process with the Liberian Fire Bureau to recharge all their fire extinguishers and get permits for the office, dwellings, and vehicles.

They have also added a few part-time employees. The missionaries were required to help the new hires get proper identification: birth certificates, social security cards, and tax identification numbers. The process is getting more efficient in some sectors, but not in every case. In Liberia they are required to file monthly tax returns and to pay monthly social security payments. They must also do payroll every two weeks. They have acquired salary bank accounts for their employees and gotten them ATM cards. It is a new process for the Liberians, and they are not overly excited about it, but they are getting used to it. Mr. DiCanio says they can now do payroll online which is a nice time saver.

Liberia has been facing a currency crisis over the past several months. They've had trouble with extreme inflation (from \$60 Liberian dollars to the USD when they first arrived, to \$210 Liberian dollars to the USD today). The economy runs on both Liberian dollars and United States dollars, and both are in short supply in the market, which means most ATM machines have shut down and banks will not allow very much money to be withdrawn. Mr. DiCanio is thankful that even in this depressed economy, the bookstore has

been meeting its bills (especially salaries) each month.

The Commissioner General of the Liberia Revenue Authority (which is a cabinet-level position under the Liberian president) recently stopped by the mission property to check whether they were in compliance. Mr. DiCanio says the man used to be the CEO of the Carter Center and is a very nice gentleman. The missionaries, of course, had all their documents in order and had just renewed their Tax Clearance Certificate, which certifies that they have done all their payroll taxes accurately on their six employees. The commissioner was mainly checking on property tax payment, something that they are exempt from because of their non-profit status. He asked how the radio station was going, and Mr. DiCanio told him it has become extremely popular because it is extremely conservative. The commissioner found that amusing.

The missionaries were very encouraged to finally get electricity at the NGO headquarters/bookstore in Paynesville; however, the meter was stolen within a week. Their neighbor also had his stolen. The missionaries have started the process of applying for electrical power again, a process that took two years last time!

Thankfully the missionaries have heard nothing more about the claim on the mission's land. Just in case, Mr. DiCanio spent time in the national archives obtaining confirmation letters and certified copies of deeds going back to the 1950s to back up their lawyer's due diligence work done in 2012.

The rainy season is coming to an end in Liberia and Mr. DiCanio is thankful that to this point they have had no issues with lightning hitting the radio station. They've also been encouraged to see visitors continue to come to the church. They have probably added about ten people to the congregation who have come from the radio station.

Monrovia—*Joanne Greer*

At the end of another year, Joanne would like to thank everyone for their prayers and support in the Lord's work in Liberia during 2019. She hopes everyone has a blessed Christmas and New Year.

They had the Children's Day program earlier than usual this year, on November 10, when seventeen children presented choruses and memory work based on the theme of God's Word. Joanne was glad to have her sister, brother, and sister-in-law visiting her in early November, and they were able to help out with playing piano and conducting the singing during the program. They also

assisted with a singing workshop held one Saturday morning, when about 35 people enjoyed learning some basic musical concepts about good posture, breathing, round-singing, and harmony.

For the last two years, Joanne has been working on getting her Liberian nursing license. Because her United Kingdom nursing license expired in 2015 and Liberia does not recognize qualifications such as first aid certificates, the Ministry of Health advised Joanne that she would have no legal backing if, for example, she gave basic first aid and something went wrong. So this was a matter she felt led to pursue to help safeguard the children's ministry.

After taking seven exams and doing some volunteer work in a nearby hospital, she has finally been granted a permanent nursing license by the Liberian nursing board. This means that she now has a legal basis on which to give first aid, teach first aid to the church people, act as a school nurse, or even work in a hospital or clinic.

For the next two months, Joanne is taking care of the radio station while Mr. DiCanio is on vacation. She will also be handling the finances and managing other aspects of the work that Mr. DiCanio usually takes care of, so it will be a heavy workload, and she would really value prayer for grace and strength and wisdom.

◆ Uganda

Nsaalu—*Stephen & Ruth Miller*

Stephen Miller has had to resign from his position as a missionary under the Ulster Mission Board in Uganda. Stephen, who has had Type 1 diabetes for most of his life, had been experiencing ongoing difficulties controlling it over the past year. The Mission Board had recently granted the Millers a medical leave of absence so that he could return to Northern Ireland to address the problems. At the beginning of December Stephen posted the following on the Mission Board's website:

"Thank you for your prayers as I receive ongoing medical care for my diabetic condition.

"I have now completed a number of medical consultations and unfortunately the consensus of medical opinion is that it is not possible for me to maintain the level of diabetic control that I would require, while living in Uganda.

"I have therefore, reluctantly, decided that I can no longer continue in the work in Uganda and have resigned from my position as a missionary under the Mission Board. Ruth and I are sad that we cannot continue

to be part of the ministry in Uganda, where we have lived and worked for the past three years but accept that it is not God's will for us.

"It has been our privilege to have had the opportunity to be part of the work in Uganda, and we are thankful for the prayerful and practical support of the Lord's people during our time there. We would value your prayers as we consider the next steps in our journey, that the Lord would open other doors of service."

Nsaalu—Noreen McAfee

Noreen thanks God for bringing them through to the end of another year at Emmanuel Christian School.

She says all the students were able to complete their examinations as planned and they are trusting God for the results.

Rev. & Mrs. Maurice Baxter were able to go help in Uganda while the Millers were on medical leave. Noreen says they were a great encouragement and blessing. They returned home on December 9. Pray for the Lord's provision of others to assist in the work now that the Millers are not able to return.

The team has also been encouraged by a brief visit from Rev. David McMillan and Mr. Barry Stewart, who stopped with them for a couple of days on their way home from Kenya. As well as chairing the school board meeting, Mr. McMillan was able to officially open two community boreholes which had been drilled for the people in the surrounding area. Both occasions gave further opportunity for the preaching of the gospel.

These visitors were closely followed by Mr. Kyle Wenlock and Mr. Richard Foster, who came to survey the work needed for connection to a mains electricity supply. Pray that God would give wisdom as to the best way to proceed and that He would provide all that is needed for this project.

The annual school Speech Day held on November 28 was very enjoyable with approximately 600 people in attendance. Rev. Baxter brought a gospel message and the children performed various pieces. Now both staff and students have gone home for a well-deserved break.

Noreen asks us to pray that God would keep them all safe over this holiday season and especially those who continue to be treated for or to recover from serious illness. Blessing is doing well, Daniela has a six-month scan scheduled for December 18 to check on her tumor, and John Mark is on a six-month treatment regime for tuberculosis.

◆ Kenya

Kapenguria—Margaret Russell

Another year is drawing to a close and as Margaret looks back over the year she does return to the Lord sincere thanks for His many mercies. Margaret thanks everyone for their continued prayers and generosity to her and the ministry she has been involved in throughout 2019.

God undertook for the finishing of the school year in the Academy. They also knew God's help in the national examinations during November. The results for Primary have been released and they are encouraged with the improvement in grades and particularly encouraged by their top student, who got the best grade in Pokot County! This received much publicity locally and nationally. The school does need earnest prayer, however, as they plan for the new school year in January 2020. The challenges are many and the financial needs are great. Pray that the enrolment will improve.

Over the past two weeks due to continued heavy rainfall that is totally out of season, Kenya has known a series of landslides with over 100 people losing their lives and 200,000 being displaced and housed in schools and makeshift tents. Several of the landslides happened in West Pokot County where 43 people lost their lives. Please pray much that this emergency situation will be contained, that the rain would ease, and that people will receive the supplies and help they so much need.

At the end of October Margaret was greatly saddened by the passing of Eunice, who succumbed to cancer which was just diagnosed in May this year. She was one of the BCFC Sunday school teachers and was just 46 years of age. Pray for her husband and children.

Margaret is thankful that her brother-in-law Rev. Ian Harris has finished his treatment and is now recovering and looking to the Lord that in the New Year he would be enabled to ease back into the ministry.

Throughout the year the Lord opened the door for the registration of a Kenyan church that would work under the FPC Mission Board. Pray for the establishment of this new church (Glory Bible Church) and for the two pastors (Andrew and Patrice) who are working closely with it, that God will give them wisdom and zeal as they seek to expand the work of the gospel in Western Kenya. Most of all, pray that there would be a move of God when many will truly turn to Christ.

By far the biggest challenge for Margaret this year was her move from her home in

Kapenguria where she had lived for 35 years. God did give a lot of grace and, though the process did take several months, she is happy that it is now behind her. She is now living in Kitale and plans to retire in May 2020. She does value much prayer over the next few months as she seeks to finalize many things, particularly the coordination of the Sunday school work after her retirement. It is her earnest desire to see that the ministry which she has been involved in since 1984 will continue even in her absence, that she will be able to pass on the baton to those Kenyan Sunday school teachers whom she has worked with for many years, and indeed, that God will raise up other missionaries to strengthen their hands.

ASIA

◆ Nepal

Kathmandu—Wesley & Carol Graham

In October and November, the Grahams visited Nepal, India, and Bangladesh. They say the trip was deeply stirring as they witnessed the advance of God's kingdom and the enthusiasm of His people. In Nepal they travelled to Chitwan, about four hours southwest of Kathmandu, where they had the privilege of opening a new church building for a recently ordained minister. Mr. Graham notes that these church buildings are very basic, but they are a vast improvement on what the people had before.

After this the annual youth conference was held in Kathmandu. Rev. Jonathan Creane preached eight times over two days on lessons from the early life of Moses. It was thrilling once more to see over 200 young people gathered to hear the Word set forth.

Then, along with Joy Gillespie, the Grahams travelled to India to visit a couple of churches connected to the Nepal Free Presbyterian Church. One church is just outside the city of Delhi, while the other is 200 miles north in Himachal Pradesh. These churches in the main are made up of Nepali people who have gone to India for work. They usually remain in India for about ten years and then return to their own villages in Nepal. Paul Thapa sees these churches in India as an opportunity to teach the Nepalese the Word of God so that when they go back home they will be the means of starting churches in their own villages or strengthening churches that already exist.

On visits to both these places the Grahams and Joy saw just how poor the pastors and believers are, but their poverty does not dampen their zeal for the Lord. For example, the pastor

up north lives in a tin house on the edge of a steep mountain and his church meets in a room which is also a very basic flat tin construction. The Grahams would like to thank those who prayed for their safety on this trip. Mr. Graham says, "Our taxi man was quite a speedy driver and had to be checked on one occasion for his driving."

The Presbytery of the Nepal Free Presbyterian Church usually meets in one of the churches in Nepal, but for this meeting it broke with its usual practice and met in Delhi, India. It was a great encouragement to the believers in Delhi as it forged a link between them and the main body of the church in Nepal. Some 22 ministers and elders made the grueling 36-hour journey by bus from Nepal to Delhi. For most it was their first visit to India and certainly to Delhi. Mr. Grahams says, "It is so encouraging to see how Rev. Paul Thapa and his officers conduct the matters relating to the whole church and demonstrates a deep maturity on their part."

In addition to the presbytery meeting, a conference was held in Dehli over two days when Mr. Graham preached on the Five Solas of the Reformation. Joy Gillespie took the children to another room and held meetings for them there so that their parents could hear the Word of God without distraction.

Finally, the Grahams stopped in Bangladesh where they spent three days with Sarita, the young woman from Nepal who wants to become a medical missionary. They say it was truly a blessing to see her again after three years and to see her progress in her studies. She still remains focused to return to Nepal to do whatever the Lord has for her. Please continue to remember Sarita in your prayers.

Kathmandu—Joy Gillespie

Joy wishes everyone a very happy Christmas and prosperous New Year. Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Joy is grateful for your continued prayers for the work in Nepal. Please especially pray for the Christians that they will grow in their faith and that they will be strong in the Lord in a hostile environment.

In the past month Joy has been given the opportunity to write a 500–600 word article for a weekly newspaper. There are some restrictions and limitations in what she can say, as it is illegal to try and change someone's religion, but it is a wonderful opportunity to

present truths from the scripture each week before the people. Pray that God will lead and guide in what to write and that He will use each article, despite the restrictions, for His glory. Pray for the paper and the management that they will continue to give permission. If someone complains, the door could close. Joy says, "The paper has already received letters so please pray that the devil won't get the upper hand and close the door. I have also received correspondence so would ask you to pray for wisdom from Almighty God in how to reply. Again I must be very careful in what I can say to keep within the law. Pray that God will save souls through this avenue."

Continue to pray for students for the English school. Joy has moved the school to new premises recently, and this has brought people inquiring about classes. Pray that they will come back and that she will have plenty of names on the books for when the inspector comes in January. Joy's visa is dependent on the success of the business and is due to be renewed in January. Pray that all will go well, that no problems will arise, and that she will have another year to serve God in Nepal.

Remember the children in the children's home. There have been some sickness and small operations among them. Pray that God will be the great healer both spiritually and physically for each child.

AUSTRALIA

Perth, Western Australia—Philip & Cherith Gardiner

Philip Gardiner and Ralph Hall (Tasmania) were in the Philippines December 2–8 speaking at two Bible conferences on behalf of the FPC of Ulster Mission Board.

Philip requests prayer for their youth camp in mid-December. Please pray that the Lord will touch the hearts of young people. Matthew Higgins, who is a graduate of the Whitefield College of the Bible, will be the speaker.

The church in Perth will be holding a carol service in the public housing unit where they hold a weekly Bible study. Please pray for the unconverted to come and hear God's Word.

Brethren, pray for us.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:25

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See the FPCNA Mission Board website at www.fpcnamissions.org for more news, prayer requests, and pictures. For more information about missionaries serving under the Ulster Mission Board see www.fpcmission.org.