



Dear friends

Warm greetings on a fine spring day. It is time to share our news once again.

We continue to be busy with our ministry. Last week Steve was involved in organising an on-line half day conference for mission agency staff who are responsible for member care and families. There were 58 attendees from many different organisations. Gill has been doing some research into how COVID 19 has affected our families across the world, and she gave a presentation of her findings.

How has COVID 19 affected missionary families?

There has been huge disruption to travel. Some families had to leave their field of service at short notice, and have not been allowed to return, so they are stuck in their passport country for an indefinite time. Others are in-country but due to border closures, they are not allowed to leave for home assignments. In some places there are movement restrictions within the country.

Some of our members have had the virus but have thankfully recovered. In one remote location, the whole team were ill. They had to stop their church planting programme as the virus was so rampant, but their work has now restarted.

Some have been confined to their apartments with their children for long periods, such as the team in Spain. It has been a challenge to maintain team cohesion where members cannot meet up properly and some have been displaced.

As in the UK, missionary parents have had to become home-schooling teachers at short notice. This is complicated by many factors – sometimes the parents don't have enough knowledge of the language in which their children are being educated. On-line learning has not always been well-organised, especially in locally-run schools. New workers have been unable to make progress in their language learning, due to the need to do home schooling.

Children and young people have responded in different ways. More introverted children have often enjoyed being at home, whereas extroverted ones struggle with the lack of interaction. It is depressing for some, and mental health has been affected.

Please pray for missionaries facing these challenges. We have shared some resources with them through our Educare magazine and by writing to leaders and recommending videos, presentations and materials for families and teenagers to help them process their experiences.

What about the MK Schools?

Many schools have been closed, but some are now open again. BCS in Senegal restarted fully in January, complete with the boarding students. There are many precautions in place. We are encouraged to report that the next batch of new staff who did our training course in July are now in place – a teacher with four children and a young woman from Brazil. Three further staff members from the same course are due to travel to Senegal in the summer.

Pray for new directors for BCS. The couple from Australia who were due to replace the current director are no longer able to commit to the role. **This is an urgent need.** Pray also for peace and stability in Senegal.

Last time we mentioned a couple heading for Chiang Mai to look after boarding teenagers in the WEC Hostel there. We praise the Lord that Jaehee and Mary are now in place – pray for them to develop a good relationship with the students and adapt well to the culture.

What about recruitment?

Due to the pandemic, we are seeing a drop in the numbers of people applying for MK ministry. Despite this there are some encouragements. An experienced teacher from the UK is now delivering on-line classes to teachers and students at a school in Central Asia. We have one person registered for the Zoom-based MK Staff Training course in July so far.

Working online

We continue to work online most of the time, with many Zoom meetings, emails and chats. In the next few months we hope to organise some online meetings within WEC for training and fellowship. **Pray that we will be able to engage people with these possibilities.**

How are we doing?

We have both stayed well and have recently had our first dose of the vaccine. We were so impressed with the efficiency and dedication that we saw at our local vaccination centre, and feel privileged that we can have this protection against the virus. So many countries do not have access to the health care that we have here.

Staying at home has given us more time together, and saved on fuel and air miles. Steve has done one or two DIY jobs that had been waiting for a long time.

Like many others, we long to see our family. We are able to see David every week as he lives locally and he is in a 'bubble' with us. We last saw Peter and Miriam in September, and Michael and Bethany in August last year. It is now a year since we last saw Steve's mum. Thankfully all of them are well, and our sons and daughters-in-law are able to carry on working. Michael is currently in Liberia on a four week trip.

Find out more about missions

MomentumYes is a free 6 week online course about missions. It is very contemporary and interactive and well worth signing up for. It starts on Tuesday 20th April. Have a look at it here: <https://wec-uk.org/events/momentумыes>

As always, we want to thank you for your ongoing interest, support and prayers. Let us know how we can pray for you too.

Many blessings

Steve and Gill

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