

# the Arce Family NEWSLETTER

## 3RD GENERATION MISSIONARIES TO VENEZUELA



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### Season for everything.

Hello from Venezuela! May God bless everyone of you in a special way. I would like to start by thanking every person of every church that has prayed for us, sent boxes for our family or the ministry, and have faithfully given towards missions. Thank you for your faithfulness in such a trying time. Serving the Lord in Venezuela during the quarantine has proven quite difficult but not impossible!

The Present Situation in Venezuela - There is a very strict quarantine here in Venezuela with the rules changing ever other week about what we are allowed to do. We are still facing power outages for 4-8 hour periods every day in several areas of the country. These power outages have caused an almost complete power failure in our small town of Sanare, rendering most electrical appliances useless, except for the lighting. Praise the Lord, there is a lot more food coming into the country now, but at very high prices which make it difficult for most people to purchase. For almost a year now Venezuela has been struggling with one of its main sources of income - oil. The government has mishandled and abused the oil industry for its personal gain and now it has fallen into disrepair. This has affected its ability to pay off debts and to produce gasoline for Venezuela. This last part has really been felt in the past few months, producing long gas lines everywhere, usually taking 2 - 3 weeks to get 40 liters of gasoline. This affects everything. Farmers can't take their goods to market, people can't go and purchase said goods, and workers struggle to make it to work. This has intensified an already tense situation. All of this without mentioning the very real risk of Covid-19.

Ministry Situation - Late in February we received the notice from the government that no gatherings where allowed, including religious ones. Also, the country was going into a strict quarantine. We began recording messages and streaming the video online so

the church could see. This did not work out very well, because most people do not have internet at home. Some have access on their phones but very limited. So, we changed from sending video to audio and written messages. During the months of March through June we continued visiting every week. Pastor Julio and I would mask ourselves and go to Sanare; visiting in people's homes, praying, discipling, ministering, and taking food to the church family. We could not go every day. We were limited by government-required travel permits to move around in the city. In June things seemed to loosen up. We spoke with the town mayor and she said we could gather at church as long as we... used masks; provided hand sanitizer; if possible, measure body temperature; practice social distancing in family groups. We did this for a few weeks and every Sunday we had more and more people coming. We had 250 people at our last church service in June. Social distancing was not working and it was hard convincing people in Sanare of the reality of this virus since until then, there had barely been 10 cases registered in the whole country and not a single one in Sanare. So we started 5 small family groups that would gather once on Wednesday and we established 5 leaders that would tend to the groups. Pastor Julio and I would visit Saturdays and Sundays and minister at different times to each of the 5 groups. This worked well for several weeks up until the gas started to get increasingly hard to find. People would stand in line for days, fill their vehicles with gas, then siphon some out and give it to us. Pastor Julio and I would take turns waiting in line to get a tank full of gas so we could visit the church and minister to the people. However, sadly, we are at a standstill. It has been 3 weeks going on a month in which we have not been able to visit Sanare or minister except through sending audio notes, calling, or texting. It has been difficult to be so distant from the church members, but God has given us some quality family time - time to talk, pray, and study the Word of God in a special way. We are thankful for every season.

Prayer Requests - Pray for Venezuela! I suppose that by the end of this year the quarantine will begin to end, but the country is still in a huge crisis and the government may use the pandemic as an excuse to continue the quarantine (in reality, they want to keep people home so they can't protest the lack of gas or food reaching their towns). Pray, because the Venezuelans have been confined to their homes for far too long and people are starting to ignore the rules while the pandemic is just now starting to hit. We have around 20 possible cases in Sanare and more and more I hear of people getting sick. Pray, as we try to get gas to visit Sanare in order to minister and take food. Pray, for our family as we are relocating in the city of Barquisimeto. Because of the transportation issue in the country, it is easier to find our basic needs (food, medicine, gas for transportation and generators) here. This also involves several new adjustments in our daily life.

Praises - We praise the Lord for the 5 small groups as they have continued to gather for prayer and to encourage one another. One of those groups is here in our home. We are gathering with the people that live in Barquisimeto, but would travel up to Sanare for church services. We are seeing growth and maturity. We praise the Lord for a young couple in our church, Leonarda and Irais Lopez, who have left Sanare to travel to a new town with the desire to start a church. Pray for them! We praise God for Marvin, a young boy that I lead to Christ and has now grown and married, and is serving God in Sanare with the youth in a great way. I praise God for the time he has given me with my family. I did not realize how much we needed it. We praise God for every person that has given beyond what they have promised in a time such as this. We are blown away with your faith and generosity! May God bless each and everyone of you. Thank you so very much for your prayers.

Loving God... Loving others *Nathan Arce*

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