

# In the Shadows

## 30 Years!

News from Juan and Rose Cárdenas

Spring 2020

### 30 Years of God's Faithfulness

On May 11, 1990, we said goodbye to family and friends and boarded a plane bound for Islamabad, Pakistan, where we began our overseas work. We had planned to serve in Nepal, but after our visa application was denied, our agency asked us to join the work among Iranian and Afghan refugees in Pakistan instead.

That was thirty years ago, and God set us on a journey to peoples and lands we did not know. He has made us ambassadors of Christ to the Persian and Pashtu-speaking people of Central Asia.

During these last thirty years, we have experienced great blessings and joy. We have worked with and learned from the most extraordinary people. We have gathered much fruit because of the faithfulness of those heroes who went before us and prepared the soil. We have seen the growth of house churches and disciples and trained the most brave and incredible people. We have been truly blessed.

We want to thank you for being part of our journey during these last thirty years. Your sacrifice in giving financially to our work and your many prayers for us and those God gave to us have greatly enriched this ministry. Thank you!

### What is Ahead in Our Journey

The Iranian and Afghan churches are some of the fastest-growing churches among Muslims. We are witnessing new and growing fellowships of believers of Afghans and Iranians across the world. We are also seeing more believers taking on the responsibilities of sharing, teaching, and leading. Even though they are risking their lives, rejection, and economic loss, many new workers are obeying and serving the new emerging church. So, is there still work for us to do?

While the church is growing fast, new leaders need training. Since 2012, we have been holding Bible and leadership courses on a small scale. As the church continues to grow, the need for this training has increased greatly. We need to find methods to address specific needs in the development of these leaders. For the next few years, Juan will focus his research on identifying these needs and developing materials and training courses to meet them.

While we have seen a growing harvest among Persian speakers, one large people group in the area still lacks workers and materials in their own language. These are the Pashtun people, hardened by tribal codes, wars,



and conflicts and very proud of their ethnicity and religion. A few foreign workers and agencies have tried to reach these people for many years, but because of restrictions, opposition, and conflicts, we have seen little fruit. We believe that God is going to do a mighty work among these people. In recent years, we have had the privilege to disciple and work with a few men who are leading an effort to reach their own people. We have also been working with a few of them to translate and record the New Testament into the Pashtu language.

We are seeking God's will for the next phase of our own journey and pursuing the possibility of moving to Greece to partner with others who have the vision to reach, develop, and train new church leaders among the hundreds of thousands of Afghan and Iranian refugees now living there. We are open to going wherever the Lord leads us as we look forward to the next part of our journey.

### **Endings and Beginnings in Our Family**

We are happy to announce that, even with cancellation of school and stay-home orders, Luca has graduated from high school. He now belongs to the amazing Class of 2020. Sadly, he could not finish his last high school season of baseball, but he had a wonderful year playing basketball and baseball with a local Christian school. Luca has also been accepted and given a partial scholarship to attend the postgrad baseball training program at Inspiration Academy in Bradenton, Florida, which will begin in August. With this, he's been given a wonderful opportunity to develop his baseball skills in anticipation of playing in college, be mentored by godly coaches, and grow in maturity and faith as a young adult.



In May, Juan stepped down as Ministry Area Leader for Afghanistan after serving in this position for ten years. Because of COVID-19, he had to cancel the spring training course in India, but Juan has kept in touch with his students and given encouragement to them during this difficult time. Rose has finished her many years as a homeschool teacher and is now preparing for our next period of service. She will be involved with Juan in the ministry, helping Luca transition to adulthood, and continuing her part-time job as a magazine copy editor and writer. We are both enjoying returning to language study with Juan taking on Pushtu and Rose beginning studies in Greek.

Thank you all again for your faithfulness and partnership with us in seeing the nations reached for His glory.

With grateful hearts,

*Juan, Rose, and Luca Cárdenas*

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