Dear,

Look at this opening line from my last prayer letter: “I hope you have had a great start to your year! January/February is one of the two busier seasons as a Region Rep.” My, how times have changed! I had back to back weekends serving students and professionals in Ohio and Virginia – and it was at the last weekend in February where I was learning about the COVID-19 outbreak, in of all places, about a half-mile from my house. It seems this outbreak has now come within a half-mile of all of us. I hope this email finds you well, healthy, and coping with a new normal for all of us, at least, for a while.

(I will continue to share in this letter, but before I do, let me just say that I don’t know what situation this letter finds you – health-wise, job-wise, etc. – so if you need someone to talk to or pray with, please, do.)

So, as for Shannon and me, we are healthy but certainly affected by this virus. Jobs in the ministry and development world are certainly affected. We at CVM have found ways in which God will be using us. One of the main ways begins with our students. As you may know, school of all types has been halted or altered – including vet school. Our future veterinarians find themselves in all different types of situations with school. Some are fully online. Yet, as you can imagine, online simulation of veterinary practices is not the easiest thing to replicate for those in the clinical years. Some students remain on or near their campuses, while many have been sent home. For those in their 4th year, all in-person graduations have been canceled. Years and years of education to achieve their doctorate will not have quite the pictured ending. They are as much a Dr. as others, and I am excited to see them become spectacular veterinarians who use that skill to serve the Lord and others. But missing the traditional celebration is a loss for them.

At CVM, we can’t fix this. But we have tried to love, encourage, and serve these students as creatively and lovingly as we can. We started an online Bible study on Psalm 23 on Monday nights. We are halfway through the series, and we already have 130 who have been a part of this. These students may not have a graduation – but we at CVM have been hatching a plan to have an online Baccalaureate Service for them. We envision a way for families to attend from all over the U.S. via Zoom online video. We plan to have the Dean of the Vet School at Auburn speak. We are lining up others to share. Each Region Rep is planning to read the names of the graduates from his or her region that...
we have been serving. It may not be what was envisioned, but we hope to bring encouragement and hope to them as they launch into their veterinary careers.

Speaking of career veterinarians, the professionals that we serve are feeling the impact of this virus too. Some states have deemed them essential – somehow, other states have not. Either way, their businesses are being affected. They, like some of you who are working, are not able to do so ‘from home,’ thus exposure to the virus is possible. Some have had to lay off staff or be laid off. For April, we have held an online group for vets and vet techs as well. One week is a Bible study; the next week will feature Rev. Dr. Rob Goodman, who is a veterinarian and seminary classmate, who will talk about spiritual practices that sustain. God is with them, and you, during this season. We trust Him to be a good God. As Psalm 23 says, He is the “good shepherd.” May we all let Him lead us to still waters and restore our souls.

Prayer Requests

• Pray for – each other. This is a challenging season for everyone right now.

• Pray for the CVM students – as they navigate online classes and unplanned changes.

• Pray for our professionals – as they navigate challenges in practice and business.

Serving alongside you,

-Curtiss Gibbs