Living Hope

June 2020

Dear Friends,

It is certainly an interesting time, isn’t it? Normal has changed rather quickly and it has left us wondering what the future holds. Ministry at CVM has been impacted in a big way. This week several staff were furloughed and many others had pay and time reductions. In 2008, a similar financial crisis caused many difficult decisions to be made. At that time, US-based staff was let go to allow missionaries to remain on the field. It was quite a sacrifice and as missionaries that benefited from that sacrifice, we were humbled. Looking back I can’t imagine what would have happened to the Gumuz ministry if we were forced to return. Today I am on the other end of that decision and gladly have my work with CVM USA cut back to help preserve the whole. I will continue to create and publish materials for e-learning with CVM but on a much more limited basis.

My next focus with CVM is on creating video interviews with current CVM missionaries. These interviews will be conducted online so people can attend and ask questions. Promotional materials will be sent out to keep everyone informed of dates and times. Once the interviews are concluded, the recorded segments will be put onto the e-learning platform to be viewed in the future. I am excited about producing these interactive segments and look forward to sharing many wonderful stories from our veterinary missionaries. God has worked in such powerful and inspirational ways in their lives and sharing those stories will be a blessing to many.

While my role with CVM changes a bit, my role as a pastor also changes. Social distancing has created a whole new level of complication. As a church, we were a bit behind in the technology department, but we caught up quickly. Within a matter of days, we were able to live stream a Sunday afternoon children’s program, worship service, and Bible study. It has brought some new challenges but has been a great blessing. For far too long the church has been comfortable being spoon-fed a relationship with God within the four walls of a church building. We are now challenged to live out our lives of worship and spiritual development in a whole new context. It is necessary to make an effort. Things don’t look the same. I realize that I need to take on more responsibility in my walk with the Lord. Overall, the church is being shaken and I think it is for the better. Fighting to get back inside a building isn’t the new calling of the church. The new calling is living for Christ and growing in Him beyond the building.

At the same time, we are all facing the challenges of increased isolation and stressed interper-
sonal interactions. Colette and I both agree that this is a lot like living on the mission field. We are forced to be better communicators with one another. We must be more forgiving and encouraging. We look for points of stress and work hard to help each other. It has given us a new time to grow as a family. Horrible things are going on in the world, but we know that God is in control just as much today as He was last year. We consider it a blessing that we have this time to cultivate a stronger walk with the Lord and one another.

Thank you for your ongoing support of our many ministries that are being redefined. Without your partnership, none of this would be possible. Looking forward to all the wonderful blessings God has in store for us all.

Blessings,

Barry for the Schwenks