



EFM COVID-19 UPDATES

PRAY FOR ASIA



There are Evangelical Friends who are serving in what we call “creative access” areas of the world, especially on the continent of Asia. They go into these areas as professionals in fields like education, health, counseling, and business. At the same time they let the light of Jesus Christ shine through who they are, the kind of work they do, and the answers they give to people who start asking questions about the light they see. This prayer update focuses on three households that are doing this kind of ministry. For security purposes we will use only their initials.

M. and K. L. and their children are located in a small, rural village. They are planting the seeds of the Gospel in very international ways. Here is how they answered the questions that I sent to missionaries and national leaders:

How is COVID-19 affecting those who live in the area where you live and minister?

- They've closed all educational facilities in our state and have closed the main market in our area. They're also limiting tourists from coming into our area, which will impact most people's livelihoods. There's also a sense of fear and hostility associated with this virus.

How is this situation affecting the ministry you lead?

- We see more children in our homes because they are out of school. My wife has been taking a lot of blood pressures which has brought more adults to our home as well. As the virus continues to come closer and closer, we are trying to figure out how to educate people about distancing themselves and also minister at the same time.

What are some opportunities you are seeing for sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with those who don't know him?

- The virus has become the talk of our small village. The main "small talk" is about the weather, what work they are going to do today, and what's happening in the world of coronavirus. So we see opportunities to speak peace into uncertain times.

What are two or three prayer requests we can use to pray for you and those you lead?

- You can pray that we can best communicate the reason for our peace during these times.
- You can also pray that it doesn't spread up into our area (and/or for protection if it does).



I.S. is one of two young adults teaching English to university students in Asia. They are part of a program that Northwest Yearly Meeting created twenty years ago that gives followers of Jesus Christ opportunities to be a witness for him. I.S. is currently in the U.S., and this is how he answered the questions:

How is COVID-19 affecting those who live in the area where you live and minister?

- My students either live in the city or go to school in the city. Many of them had returned to their homes before the city was shut down due to the coronavirus. Regardless of where they are now at, they are all feeling the strain of being stuck inside. They have between 8-10 hours of online schoolwork per day, and for many of them this is very challenging psychologically and emotionally.

How is this situation affecting the ministry you lead?

- I was stuck outside of the city when it was shut down, so now I am geographically separated from my students. However, this separation opened the door for ministry in the Philippines, where I got to teach English at two schools and reach around 200 students. My interaction with my students back in the other country has gone completely virtual, which presents challenges for communication. However, it has also resulted in vulnerability from students as they tell me what the experience of quarantine is like for them. I don't think this vulnerability would exist in face-to-face conversation, at least not in a classroom context.

What are some opportunities you are seeing for sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with those who don't know Him?

- Before the virus, students almost never disclosed hardships of their life to me. Now, with such a widespread event, it seems like it has become culturally appropriate to reveal the hardships arising from the virus situation. This is a very vulnerable, delicate, and beautiful thing. My prayer is that the Spirit shows me the best ways to share the Gospel for each unique student in the way that he or she needs most. I was also able to share the Gospel in the Philippines with a school/village of Ati, a poor minority group there. However, the sharing went both ways. :)

And what are two or three prayer requests that we can use as we pray for you and those you lead?

- Wisdom in what being a good teacher and follower of Jesus looks like as an online teacher for my pupils.
- Personal growth during this time that will prepare me to enter into my student's lives better when I am reunited with them.



Finally, here is a brief note from a couple (D. and M. C.) who is connected to Evangelical Friends Church-Eastern Region and is serving under World Gospel Mission in Asia:

We have basically been in shut-down mode here since the end of December, but things are slowly getting back to our new “normal.” People are going back to work, but schools and churches are still closed. We continue to minister by Zoom video chats and that has worked wonderfully. People are connecting together and lifting each other up.

