

The Shields Family

Planting Baptist Churches in Aruba

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In the last few weeks we've had a few health situations with our kids, among the normal colds and such we had a case of strep throat and a terrible ear infection, and now we are dealing with some skin rashes. Praise the Lord it seems as though we're through the roughest of it though. As for school, we have two down; three to go! Caleb started a job in March, and though it's been tough on him, it's been a good teacher in working with people and in balancing time and other areas of life.

We appreciate your prayers, and your notes of encouragement! As always, if there is anything that we can specifically hold up in prayer for you, please let us know!

Yours in Christ,

Matt, Naomi, and Kids

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

May, 2018

It's been two months since our last letter! Matt was in the States last month for two weeks, and since he's been back there's been a lot of catching up for us to do! There is also a lot of news to catch up on as well, so we will just dive right in!

We had a young man from the States come visit us for a week in March and he was a blessing to us in many ways! **Thanks, Micah**, for being always willing to help out in any way possible.

We had yet another couple have to leave the Island. They had to go back to Venezuela because the job situation here shifted. We were blessed to have them stay their last few days here with us after they'd turned the apartment back in. **One of our biggest prayers for them was for them to find a good church close to where they live in Venezuela, and praise the Lord, they have found one!**

Matt spent a few weeks, off and on, helping one of our widows get a house set up that the Lord provided for her. It needed MUCH work, and we are grateful that we and several of the church people were able to help them get repairs finished, and moved. Matter of fact, these next few weeks we are doing the same for another widowed lady and her 59-year-old disabled son from church.

Since the end of March, **Naomi has started a Bible study with two of our ladies, Jaqueline and Nirina**. It's truly been as much as a blessing to her as it has been to the ladies. It's so exciting to see people hunger for truth.

Matt's visit to the States went very well! **He was able to visit one new church and three supporting churches**. Thank you to each of you in the SC and NC area that helped him along the way.

A couple of days before Matt's return, one of the men in our church suffered a stroke. He has no insurance here because his visa is still in process, so they sent him home. His ex-wife lives in Florida and flew back to take care of him. There were several meals, hospital visits, payments, and just visits to check on them involved. He seems to be doing well considering, and he showed up to church on Sunday - although he probably should not have been out. **We'd appreciate your prayers for Bro. Gonzalo**. The Dr. says his condition is still delicate and his wife is going to return to the USA soon so we will be making daily check-ups on him.

One of the men that we've worked with but has rarely attended church, his mother is actually one of the most faithful ladies in church, came for

a couple of services and asked for a visit with Matt. One afternoon they went out, and when asked about his salvation he said, *"I've always been in the Gospel, but I have never been of the Gospel!"* What a blessing to see him accept Christ and know by experience now, and not just by head knowledge what Christ has done for us. **Please pray for Camilo to continue growing.**

For Mother's Day, our family made the gifts for the mothers, and it was fun to work together as a family on that project. We made picture/key hangers out of pallets, something that there's an abundance of here in Aruba. We had 100 people present **with 34 mothers** and enjoyed a time of fellowship with the families after the a.m. service.

This past Sunday we had baptisms **with four people deciding to follow the Lord with this step:** Sis. **Alcira**, Sis. **Jaqueline** (one of the ladies in the Bible study), **Bryan** (one of our weekend boys), and our son **Judah!** As always, it was exciting to see them publicly show their obedience to Christ.

This week we as a church took a huge new step. **We started services in English! We are adding on a Service at 8:30 a.m. on Sundays and one on Thursday evening.** It will be a challenge for us as there will be added study time, bus route time, and extra service time, but we have seen the need for this addition more and more, and are praying that we will have a greater outreach now. On Sunday, we had a family of four visit for the first time, and they seem to be sincerely interested.

We as a church have come across some difficulties recently. In January we started paying taxes, which no one was ever sure how much it would be or how it would work, (it seems that's the case here until you actually get into a situation.) Back in October when we started renting our current building, we had the funds to do so with no problems. Now that we have started paying taxes, we have had to eat into our treasury and have pretty much depleted it. We are looking into a few options, but this is not a 'one time and it will be over' deal; it's a monthly, payment that is about \$800 for at least the next couple of years! None of us had connected the dots to and realized the amount of the payment that we would now be making! **Please pray for wisdom in the decisions we will have to be making.** Basically we as Missionaries are needing to cover this expense at this time, so some of our options are: for Matt to go to the USA and try to get some more monthly support, or get a part time job here in Aruba, or simply take it month by month and pray the next few years through... which is what we do anyway :) (There are many aspects, explanations, complications, and laws that influence this situation, but this is the simplest explanation. If you would like to understand better, we are willing to clarify anything.)

God Bless and thanks for taking the time to read our letter,

The Shields