

The Shields Family

Serving the Lord in Aruba

Dear Brethern in Christ,

Spring, 2021

What exciting times we live in! So often we tend to look at the negative with the situations going on around us now, but if we look at the possibilities that lie around us, we can be grateful for many things, one of them being the opportunities that we have to serve Him. In dark times we can shine brighter. It seems as if not just the times are strange, but some personal situations have taken us to this realization as well. We have much to share with you, so we will make this simple in format and as concise as possible. In advance, thanks for reading our letter and praying over these requests!

In the ministry we have had our ups and downs...as usual. Some people have decided the walk was not worth it and have gone back to their old ways, and others have decided to follow on. It is after all a daily decision. One example among many is Janixio. It was a great victory when he accepted Christ after the lifestyle he had lived. He was firm for a while, but 'messed up' a time or two, and has almost been embarrassed to come back. We have seen him a time or two in the last couple of weeks, which has been encouraging, but he is still wavering. Please keep him and others like him in your prayers

We enjoyed having the Hershberger family from AR with us in January. They were a blessing not only to our family but to the ministry. The fellowship and service were refreshing. Thank you, Bro. Jeremiah and family, for taking the time and the effort to come visit our ministry!

Shortly after they left, we started seriously considering Caleb's visa problem. Once we found out that we could not apply for a family visa until AFTER Matt's 6th visa (official residency), then we needed to figure out what to do with him since he would no longer be a minor. At this point in time, work nor student visas are possible or the wisest decision for him. We were told it would be better if he were off the island by the time he turned 18, and never have to have the status of being illegal affecting

his entrance. After much prayer and consideration, Caleb left to go live part-time with Naomi's brother, Stephen, and part-time with her parents in Missouri. He works with Stephen on some days, and is also working on finishing his high school requirements. He has no immediate plans after graduation, so please help us pray that God's will would be clear to him in the next few months. As to his leaving, he has left a large hole! We greatly miss him and his participation here, but we are excited for the opportunity he has to be with family, to work, and continue to grow.

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We have had two baptisms since the beginning of the year. Bro. Lesly and his wife Maria, and the next Sunday Bro. Gunter. Both men are from our English service and were brought by one of our faithful members, Bro. Lyndon, who is their co-worker. They were both saved,

but had never been serious nor firm in their walk. Bro. Lyndon told them before-hand that Baptism was to publicly show your identity in Christ, so they should make it public. Bro. Lesly decided to post pictures to his FB page and the next day at work his co-workers made fun of him, but he stayed strong in his stand! Bro. Gunter saw all of that, but the next week when he got baptized decided to do the same and received the same treatment on Monday, and was also not ashamed! Praise the Lord for their commitment! Please pray for Gunter's wife and family. She refuses to have anything to do with church and says it's all a phase for him, but he's been coming off and on for over two years. Now that he has become faithful, he's praying that his testimony will start to be a witness to her. Also, praise the Lord for continually adding men to the Church!

Speaking of the English service, we have come to a decision to make it a separate entity from the Spanish church. We now have Lighthouse Baptist Mission, and have added a Thursday evening service. It's an extra activity for our family, but it has been worth it to have more time with this group. There are around 30 of us, and though a few have not come on Thursday, it is our time to visit and fellowship. Until then we only had Sunday morning from 8:30 to 10:15 and Spanish service starts at 10:30. It was pretty much just in and out. We have tried an extra service in the past that didn't work out, but this time the people were ready for it. Of course this means that we are now pastoring two "separate" congregations and ministries.

In the middle of February, our 12-year-old, Enoch, severely cut his hand. He was using the chop saw, and he doesn't really know what happened. He has been taught the proper procedures and has never had an accident before, but accidents do happen. He had to have surgery to repair tendons and ligaments, and was in the hospital for three days, but praise the Lord the Dr. thinks he will recover most of his original use. His finger bends only about 1/3 of what it should right now, but Tirsia, our 16-year-old that wants to be a nurse, is helping him with his therapy every night. It seems they are making head-way.

We decided to suspend children's club for a while. The covid cases skyrocketed, and the government tightened up restrictions again. Although this time we were grateful that they recognized "Separation of Church and State," and only restricted us to follow protocol and all activities must be on church property, they did plead for all religious organizations to use caution and only continue with necessary activities. Many of the parents that were bringing their children just simply quit bringing them. Our attendance dropped from about 25 to about 8 and four of them were ours. We are still trying to keep up with random activities with the kids.

We have been trying for a while now to be able to get into the jail system or into the Coast Guard illegal immigrant holding to start service with the inmates. There have been no open doors, and we didn't even know if there would be a possibility. One of our church men, **Bro. Daniel**, is here from Venezuela with a refugee permit, but as is the case, refugees are not allowed to work. And, as is the case with all refugees, he was working, and he was caught. **As he was in the Coast Guard hold, he began Bible studies with the other men in there and it grew!** Although Matt was unable to see him, he was allowed to take him Bibles, and we took him around 20 Bibles, a guitar, and other material at different times. That we know of, eleven men received Christ through his "ministry" that was unplanned and a blessing in disguise! They were supposed to be deported a few weeks ago, but Venezuela stopped all flights from Aruba, so they were just let go with a promise to leave on the next flight. We have met most of the men that were with him, and several of them have a desire to continue on and grow. There is a flight scheduled for next Tuesday. Please pray for these men as they go back to their families especially considering their new faith and the situation they will be facing in Venezuela. Many of going back to

cities and villages where there are no Bible-believing churches. **A special thanks to BEAM's Bibles since all the Bibles that we were able to get in to these new converts were provided by BEAM's.**

The **Bible Institute classes** are coming to a close and we are getting ready to start a new session of classes next Saturday. The new classes are **Romans, the Gospel of John, and Homiletics.**

We have almost completed the **bathrooms for the church.** They have been using our house bathroom since we moved into our new building a year ago and this has been a project on our list for a while now.

The **Radio ministry** continues to bring in contacts. Some have come to church and left, some have come and stayed, and some so far have just been contacts through messaging. There is rarely a week that goes by that we do not hear of, or meet, someone new that has been listening to the program. It is a lot of time and effort, but please continue to pray with us for wisdom in programming and fruit from this area of ministry. **If you ever want to listen in (it is in Spanish though) you can do so by going to Mega88fm.com from 12 – 1:00 pm.**

We are looking forward to an **almost sure visit this summer from a youth group in VA, and another possible one from NC.** Our summer schedule is quickly filling with different aspects of service. **Please continue to pray for our visa situation.** We both have our adult visas but in June we should be able to apply for the residency, and under that residence we can apply for a family reunification visa and get the kids papers in order... **and then, we can fly and prep our trip to the USA!**

Once again, **thank you from our hearts for your prayers and participation in this ministry that the Lord has allowed us to partake in!** Our apologies for a three-page letter, but thanks be to God for much to report on!
All for His Glory!

Your Ambassadors to the people of Aruba,

Matt & Naomi Shields

(Caleb - 18, Tirsah - 16, Selah -14, Enoch - 12, Judah -10, Mercy - 8, Yosef - 5, and Belen - 2)

Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof.

Isaiah 42:10