



SHIELDS FAMILY

Missionaries in Aruba

CONTACTS

PHONE:
+297-748-6216

Address:
Seneblar 2
Orajnestad, Aruba

EMAIL:
MNSHIELDS@HOTMAIL.COM

Dear Brethern,

Aug, 2020

It is with much love and gratitude that I sit down to write this report to each of you. It is my prayer that each of you, as individuals and congregations, are well, and that the Lord's hand of grace be upon you in every possible way.

Much has happened in our corner of the world in this first half of 2020... amidst this whole Covid19 situation our ministry has changed a little in appearance, but in reality, it is still the same; it is all about reaching people for Christ and edifying the Saints of Berea Baptist Church in Aruba! We went in to "Lock-Down" as an Island on the 15th of March; opened up with restrictions again on the 24th of May; and now, just as things were going back to "normal", we have been hit again with the virus. Although there are many infected, at this moment it has not claimed any more lives on the Island. During this time of change and in some ways "forced inactivity" we have remained very busy and I would like to even say productive for the Lord's cause and glory. Amidst Covid19 we have been able to focus on:

1. **Finishing our Church Sanctuary** – What seemed impossible last year is now a reality thanks to so many of you who helped and supported our new building! In the initial two months of lock-down (April – May) we were able to finish about 90% of the project and we are now working on the remaining 10% as we can. It is all metal and wood and mostly can be reused in a permanent building one day down the road.
2. **Preaching and Ministering as we can** – For those of you that know me better, you know that I am not very techy nor up-with-the-times, nor am I comfortable with it; but I have to praise the Lord for the Facebook and WhatsApp as we have used these venues almost constantly in order to serve and reach out through these different times. Due to these venues, we are seeing people reached in many different countries all across Latin America - some of them new to the Gospel, others believers in places where there are no good churches to attend. Praise the Lord for using this pandemic to touch hearts and bring people to Himself.
3. **We moved homes** – We lived at our previous house for a little over 4 years, but now by the grace of God we were able to move into the house in front of where we built the new church building. Among the many benefits

As to the family all seems well, we continue to serve together and it is a particular joy to see the older of our children step up and take responsibilities within the ministry. Caleb, Tirsa and Selah are 3 of the 6 young people in charge of our children's club on Saturdays. They usually average around 30 plus kids.

Caleb is 17 and is dependable. He preached his first message to the whole church a few weeks ago and seems to be growing in the Lord.

Tirsa is 15 and is a great help in the kitchen and in any kind of kids' ministry.

Selah is 13 and she is as tall as I am! She always has a smile and is very active in all church activities.

Enoch is almost 12 and is turning into a focused young man who is definitely a people person.

Judah will be 10 in two weeks and is a head-strong boy who loves a good laugh and is always smiling.

Mercy just turned 8 and is starting to show traits of character and a desire to help more each day.

Yosef Will be 5 in November and is a sweet child who still loves snuggling and sitting on our lap. Always smiling, yet still very timid.

Belen is 16 months old! She only has a few focuses and those revolve around running, eating, and then sleeping. She appears to be close to talking.

Naomi and I, are well, we just celebrated 18 years of marriage in May and although we are mostly tired and running like crazy, we are still very much in love! We are blessed to serve together. **On a side note, please pray for both our permits as they are both in process of confirmation at this time.**

brought by this move, probably the greatest is that we now pay one rent instead of two. We will spend less on rent and gas and save time in transportation. The house is a little smaller, but we are delighted with the move and look forward to living in this home several years.

4. **Impacting our Society** - During these Covid 19 days we have tried as a missionary family and a Church to reach out and leave the fingerprints of Christ on as many people as we can. There is much need all around and sadly it seems like few churches are stepping up to meet these needs in their communities. During these months we have handed out much food to many families, helped in different medical situations, volunteered in food shelters, and above all we have tried to point people to Christ in every conversation and divine opportunity. Praise the Lord souls have been saved!

Since we were "allowed" to open up our building again on the 24th of May we have been able to hold regular services in our new building and we had 8 weeks of amazing services! For many of the Sundays, we had people standing and sitting back in the overflow rooms. There were many first-time visitors and also many return visitors that usually have not had time for the things of God. Then, a week ago, we were hit with government restrictions of mandatory mask, all the safety protocols, no singing, and a limit of 25 people per service. At this time, we are having multiple services to accommodate everybody and hoping that this new situation will not last long. **Praise the Lord that His church is alive and growing!**

Last week a local man was severely burned while lighting a barbecue pit, and sadly it seems he died without knowing the Lord. We sang, prayed, and preached twice at their home and then I was invited for the funeral service on Monday... through it all, His widow Carmen, and his cousin Deibis, **both received Christ and plan on being in our service tonight!** Praise the Lord, and may He continue to build His church!

Thank you to each of you as you stand with us in reaching and serving the people of Aruba, you are a vital part of this ministry. We know that many of you are facing difficult situations within your own ministries, and we pray for the Lord to use and guide each of you as you serve your Master day by day. It is an honor to serve with you.

Yours in Christ – Matt for the Shields Family