

The Shields Family

Missionaries to Aruba

Jan - March, 2020

Greetings in the name of our wonderful Savior Jesus Christ,

Wow! What a time to be alive and in the service of the Lord! I hope that each of you are well and that each day you are aware of the abundant grace and love of our Savior in your life, family, and ministry. God is always good, and His blessings are always to be counted, but in times like these I think it is even more important to remind ourselves of just how blessed we are!

I'm sure that much of what we are going through with the COVID 19 is probably the same for you, as it is for most the world today. It seems like most of the world is being affected by this situation all at once. Here in Aruba the panic hit about 10 days ago. All the tourist left and over 25,000 people were sent home because of a lack of work. Of course, there is the scare with the COVID 19, but most of the fear I am seeing here has more to do with what are we going to do once this passes. The tourism will not just bounce back, and it is Aruba's only income! As of last week, we already had people who had been sent home without pay and no near hope of working in the next few months; and I believe that it is going to get tighter for many before it will get back to normal.

One of the blessings that we are seeing amidst all of this scare is the new doors of ministry that are being opened to us! As many of you, we are putting our services on Facebook live and doing about everything and anything we can to stay in touch with our people through the means available to us in this modern world. This of course means that the public reach of our messages and ministry is reaching a lot further than our normal ministry has in the past! We have people asking questions and getting involved from many of the Latin countries, and people who have never had time for the things of God, all of a sudden are interested. May the Lord give us all wisdom and dedication to use this time to reach out and impact a lost and dying world! May we be salt and light in this dark and confused world. Truly, the whole world is a mission-field, every neighbor a needy heart, and every believer the hands and feet of the grace, love, and mercy of God!

Before all of this hit a few weeks ago and changed so much of our daily ministry there was much that happened that we want to tell you about. The congregation of Berea Baptist here in Aruba has continued to grow and there are usually 1 to 3 visitors in a normal week. In our annual business meeting in January we added 10 new members to our membership roll, and we have a new family coming regularly to the English services. We also added another missionary to our list of supported missionaries and have plans to bring on board another two or three this year. We had two adults get baptized in January, and in

these months the Lord has brought another three older mature ladies who were seeking a Bible based church to attend. It is a blessing to see the LORD grow HIS church in HIS time!

Family News

On the side of family, we have been blessed to see 4 of our children have birthdays these last two months. Selah turned 13 in Feb, Caleb turned 17, Tirsa turned 15, and Belen turned 1 in March. It is kind of scary to have kids who are now almost my size! One of the highlights this past month was for Tirsas BD. We have always planned on making the kids 15th BD a special one, and the idea was a road trip or something like that. But, when you live on an island of 19 x 6 miles and you cant travel there are only so many optionsâ€¦ so, Tirsa chose to SKYDIVE! I (*Matt*) had always dreamed of jumping from an airplane so when she said she wanted to, we saved up our money from our sea-glass sales and took the leap over beautiful Aruba! It was an amazing experience and we both created a memory that we will never forget.

The whole family is well and home-school under quarantine is not all that different than the normal schedule anyway. Other than regular dental trips we are all doing well health-wise and we are grateful to serve our Lord side by side!

Dont forget to check out our Facebook pages [MattNaomi Shields](#) and [Iglesia Bautista Berea de Aruba](#) for pictures and occasional videos.

THE NEW SANCTUARY!

Our big news this letter is about our new sanctuary that we are in the process of building! In our last letter, we told you about how the Lord allowed us to find a rent home which is ideal for our situation. Instead of paying two rents per month for a combined \$3,150.00 USD we found a place where we are paying \$1,430.00 USD a month for both our home and the church combined in the same place. To make it happen we needed to build a shack church in the back yard of the house on a concrete slab completely floating without any kind of a foundation.

Well, in December we put a letter out explaining our need and asking for our supporting churches help with this project. We were and still are amazed at how once again the Lord has provided through the generosity of His people! So far, we have received in hand and used \$16,200 dollars. There are more offerings coming in and they should, Lord-willing, help cover the remaining expense of the building. Since we received more than we expected we were able to do some extra things like put insulation in the walls and buy a better-quality tin roof. All materials were chosen with the idea of taking this building apart and rebuilding on our own land one day in the future. We have paid no labor and have tried to be simple and keep things to the bare necessities of a building such as this.

The floor is made out of pallets (of which there is a great abundance in Aruba) covered with plywood and the structure is all wood with a galvanized tin roof. It has two classrooms, an office, and a small kitchen. By mission-field standards we should be able to easily fit over 100 people in our new sanctuary. At this point we still have drywall to hang and finish, all the electric to run, a little plumbing, painting, sound system and some kind of flooring to cover the plywood floor. Then, after the building is done, and if the owner approves it, we want to build two temporary bathrooms outside the building; if not, the church will have to use the bathroom in our

house. Many from the church have gotten involved although this lock-down due to COVID 19 has not helped our progress. Caleb and I plan on camping out at church for the rest of the virus period and hope to get most of what is left of it done. **THANK YOU to each of you individuals and Churches that helped with the donations to make this building a reality! Literally we could not have done this without your loving donations!**

Some have asked if we could still use donations and the obvious answer is yes! We have enough to finish the basics and we have been able to build better than we originally hoped and thought would be possible, but we still have the bathrooms to build and we need to do something about our sound system. That is all extra and not classified as urgent at this moment. On top of all of this I know and understand that the current economic situation is going to affect many of our churches and eventually missionary support, so we are content to continue trusting the Lord and live by faith day by day. We pray for each of our supporting churches and individuals and thank you each for your faithful support and prayers; we are honored to serve alongside you!

**Your Ambassadors in Christ,
Matt for the 10 Shields in Aruba
II Cor. 3:18**