



Responding to the Pandemic

By Steven Shepard

On March 16th I returned from my last trip to Peru, barely making it out of Lima an hour before the airport closed. Since that time, I've been teaching God's Word through Zoom in both Peru and Spain, and CPI has been involved in helping those in need due to the global pandemic and lockdowns. We have concentrated primarily in Uganda and Peru, sending funds monthly since March to buy food and medicines. CPI has four Peruvian co-workers that make distributions – two in Lima and two in the jungles. There are also four co-workers in Uganda – two in the city of Kampala and two in a rural mountainous region in west Uganda. CPI has also helped in three other countries including Mexico, Myanmar and Kenya. Hundreds of families have been helped in the distributions. The outreach is ongoing. Here is a sampling from reports we have received from the field:

From Pastor Benard in rural Uganda: *"I want to thank you for the donation you sent to help the most needy people who are being affected by the lockdown and have nothing to eat. Many people have had questions like, 'Is God angry with us? Has the end time come?' I visited a family with seven children. The children were crying asking for food, but the parents had nothing to give them. The family survives only after the father gets a job to dig in someone's garden, and then he is given food. But no one is giving him a job because of the lockdown. His wife is even pregnant. The first time I visited them, I brought them food. The second visit I brought also chicken, eggs, beans, posho*

(corn meal), and clothes for the children. They were so excited as they were appreciating and they danced. They said since they were born, their father has never brought them eggs or chicken. When I entered their house, I saw that both parents and children sleep on the same bed on banana leaves. The third time I visited them, I brought them two mattresses, two blankets, two pairs of bed sheets and food. They were so excited as they were receiving their bedding and food. I had the opportunity of sharing the gospel to neighbors and one woman gave her life to Christ."

From Pastor Samuel in the jungles of Peru: *"The brothers and sisters who live in Nueva Era (Shipibo community) are suffering a lot from this coronavirus plague. They cannot go out to work. Children cry from hunger and the same is happening in other communities. Many Shipibos are also stranded in cities. Because they no longer can pay for rooms, they have been evicted and are on the streets. There are many who have started walking from Lima to Pucallpa (about 500 miles over high mountains). All this fills me with much sadness in my heart. I cry for these problems we are going through. Many families no longer have food or money to buy medicine."*

From Elizabeth in Lima, Peru: *"The situation in our country is very sad. The number of infected and dying continues to increase. Hospitals don't have needed supplies and have collapsed. People are dying on the doorstep of hospitals and on the streets. We as believers are praying that this will end."*



Above: Food distribution in Lima, Peru

Left: Pastor Marcial distributes food to a Shipibo lady in the Peruvian jungles

Center: Ugandan lady receiving a bag of staple food in her village

Contending for the Gospel In Turbulent Times

by Steven Shepard

Jude 1:3b ...exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

What most concerns me in these turbulent times of COVID-19 and social unrest is that the church remains faithful to the biblical Gospel of forgiveness through Christ alone. Though the gospel powerfully impacts every area of our lives, the gospel remains fundamentally spiritual rather than social, and prioritizes the eternal over the temporal. The following biblical principles are offered as encouragements and gospel clarifications relating to the issues of race and justice:

- The Bible does not speak of different races, but rather ethnic groups or nations. Race is a social construct, not a biblical one. People from all ethnic groups are created in the image of God, and are precious. All people are descended from the same original parents. (*Genesis 1:27; Acts 17:26*)
- Although there may be problems inherent in our social, economic, or governmental systems, ultimately the source of our problems lies in our own hearts. (*Isaiah 64:6; Jer 17:9*)
- Biblical justice means adherence to God's perfect and unchangeable moral standard. It is not based on

ethnicity, the color of our skin, or whether we obtain as much as others of the things of this world. (*Rom 7:12; 1 John 3:4*)

- Not one of us is just. Everyone has come short of God's perfect moral standard. God will hold everyone responsible for their actions. The righteous penalty for breaking God's moral law is exclusion from His presence forever. (*Romans 3:10-12, 23; Romans 2:6-11; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9*)
- God offers total forgiveness for all wrong doings to everyone who puts their trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Jesus' perfect sacrifice as payment for our sins is the only solution for our guilt. (*Acts 10:43; Colossians 2:13-14*)
- As believers, Christ has already reconciled us to Himself and to each other through His atoning death on the cross. People of all skin colors and from all ethnic groups have been made one in Christ. Any partiality or lack of love or acceptance of a fellow believer calls for repentance. The church is to be an example of unity and love to a divided and hate-filled world. (*Col 1:21-22; 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28*)
- No matter how difficult our world becomes, God is calling us to trust Him. He is in control, and has promised that everything will ultimately work out for the good of His people. As believers in Jesus, we have a joy and peace that this world cannot take away. And we have eternal life. May all of us that are in Christ continue to be faithful, love people, and proclaim the gospel of salvation to a needy and dying world! (*Daniel 4:35; Eph 1:11; Rom 8:28, 38-39, John 14:27*)

Medical Clinic Opens in Uganda

CPI is partnering with our close co-worker, Pastor Michael Dakitali to launch the **Calvary Medical Clinic** in a needy community in Kampala, Uganda. Calvary Medical Clinic opened on February 3rd and employs a doctor, nurse-midwife, and lab worker to treat diseases, deliver babies, and dispense medicines. Pictured with Pastor Michael from left to right: wife Grace, lab worker Robina, and nurse Sarah.



Above, Pastor Isaac of west Uganda:
"We have been able to reach out to over 250 families that have been greatly affected by this pandemic and are almost starving of hunger. When Jemima received the food I gave her, she became very happy saying, 'I am not going to die of hunger now, for God has remembered me.'"

Visit CPI's website at:
www.churchplantinginternational.org

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ministries, and how to get involved.
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and listen to audio teachings.

Thank you to all who give and pray for our mission!

