

The Heerahs



TENTMAKERS Bible Mission

Trinidad Project – June 2021

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Dear Prayer and Ministry Partners,

We hope this update meets you enjoying the goodness of God's grace and mercy and cherishing every moment you have in His presence on this side of heaven. We truly believe it won't be long before the Lord comes to take us home to heaven. (John 14:1-3)

Over the last eight months we've had our fair share of mountain top experiences and dark valleys. Please allow us to share some of our highlights and some of our challenges.

In November 2020 we celebrated 10 years as a church. God has been faithful. However, as many other churches across the world, HCC has gone through some rough times. Attendance is now down by 75 %. Giving is down by more than 50% and some of the saints have drawn back in their walk with God.

Even as we write this newsletter, our country is in another lock down with churches again prohibited from meeting in person. Only 5% of the population has been vaccinated so far. For our small country of 1.6 million people, our healthcare system is overwhelmed. The India strain of the virus as well as the UK and South America variants are now on the island and both the young and the old are succumbing to the virus, even those without any prior illnesses.

On the other side of this grim report is the good news that the ministry of Hope Community Church continues online. We are thankful to have Justin our eldest at home at this time to handle all of the technical stuff and set the church in place for the future of online ministry. It has also been a blessing to have seen and heard him preach the Word twice in the last 2 months. He is presently finishing his bachelor's



degree online at Lancaster Bible College and is hoping to graduate in May 2022. He has also been accepted to Frontier School of the Bible in Wyoming to get some more solid Bible teaching and preparation for ministry. He completed 2 1/2 years of Worship Ministry training at Cedarville University.

Joseph, our second son, turned 21 in May and has landed a job with an online Secondary School as their Online Content Creator. He loves his job and is going to be working from home for the next year. He is still passionate about pursuing aviation as his career. He hopes to start soon in God's timing.

Charissa is now 15 years old and serves on the worship team. She has had her challenges also with school moving to online. It has been online for the last 14 months and will probably remain this way for another year. She is trying her best to cope with it and still be the fun one in our home.

Covid has certainly allowed us all to be together more as a family. However, life seemed to have changed for some of us in the last year, and we all have our own schedules. We continue to try to maintain family fun nights and a family worship/bible study once a week.

January 2021 brought with it some great expectations and much anticipated opportunities. We all hoped things were going to normalize to some extent with Covid easing up somewhat. However, these hopes were short-lived and life has been a bit tough for us since then.

Ronnie contracted Covid-19 in January 2021. It was a mild case and we praise God for a speedy recovery. Initially, he decided to take February off to refresh and

restrengthen himself before coming back into ministry. However, during this time of rest and reflection, God showed us that he needed more than just physical rest; he also needed rest for his own soul.

As some of you know, it is a healthy practice for those who serve in leadership capacities and especially in pastoral ministries to take a sabbatical. One of the main responsibilities of a pastor is to care for his people. However, ministry needs to include a rhythm of rest where he takes care of his own soul as well as that of his family. This is very much like the 'Oxygen Mask' principle of flying in an aircraft where in case of an emergency, you put on your own mask first before attempting to assist others.

Over the past 7 years of ministry, God has done much for us to celebrate. However, these years have also been accompanied with some challenging seasons. It is now clear that pressing hard without a time to refresh has definitely taken a toll on Ronnie physically, emotionally and spiritually. We believe the Lord showed us during this time that it was necessary for him to take a sabbatical.

We have since spoken with our local church leaders and our mission board at Tentmakers Bible Mission. We have also sought the advice of some of our spiritual mentors and godly counsellors locally as we revisit our life's priorities and seek to bring re-alignment, refocus and recalibration to our lives. We have been advised that we should not rush this process but take the necessary time needed. This time away so far has been very good for us. We are reminded in Matthew 11:28-30 that Jesus says, *"28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

We have been walking through the Psalms as we listen to God's voice to us in this season. Without a doubt God's Word is all-sufficient for us every day, regardless of what we are facing. Our family is also walking through Psalm 119 as we study it together and find wisdom, peace, healing, comfort and guidance in these troublesome times we are living in. Ronnie is also reading a couple of books ("Dangerous Calling" by Paul Tripp, "Your Best Life In Jesus' Easy

Yoke" by Bill Gaultierre) as well as a couple books for married couples like "What Did You Expect " by Paul Tripp and "Date Your Wife" by Justin Buzzard. Meela is reading "Help I'm Married To My Pastor" by Jani Ortlund and "The Pastor's Wife" by Gloria Furman. We celebrated 33 years of marriage on May 21 and we are extremely grateful to God for His grace and mercy as we journey together.

As a family, we have been very blessed to be led in worship and to be ministered to by the men of the church in God's Word. The building is presently closed because of Covid regulations but the church continues to function online. Our children continue to serve faithfully in the ministry at this time. Ronnie meets with the elders and deacons once a month and he also spends time coaching them in their preparation and delivery of their sermons. Meela continues to do a few administrative tasks but she really enjoys this time away and seeing Ronnie get the much needed break. We sense that God may be leading us to return to a limited ministry involvement beginning in July.

We've enjoyed doing some house projects like re-painting the interior of our home and planting a new flower garden. Please continue to lift us up in your prayers as we also pray for you all. May the Lord bless you all.

Prayer Requests:

- Justin's F1 visa appointment on July 12
- God's healing and restoration for Ronnie
- Our marriage to a strong example to all.
- God's provision as our support has dropped (Need another \$600 US per month)
- Our church members to hold fast to their confession of faith without wavering.
- Our health and safety during this pandemic

If the Lord leads you to give financially, please visit: www.tentmakersbiblemission.org and see options for online giving to the work here. All checks or other forms of giving must be designated to the "Trinidad Project."

Thanks so much for your prayerful support and love. May God continue to bless you as you serve Him faithfully until He comes.

For God's Glory alone,
Ronnie, Meela, Justin, Joseph and Charissa