

**Zoom Zoom Zoom
June 2020**

*Dear supporters, friends, family members,
greetings from Mexico City!*

Since we wrote you in February, the whole world has been turned upside down. Here is a summary of our experience of the pandemic, and more importantly, of the grace of God.

In mid-February we flew to the Dominican Republic for our mission's annual regional retreat. We had a great time reconnecting with missionaries scattered across Mexico and the Caribbean – except for my supervisor. He lives in Miami, and that city got hit early by the coronavirus, so he decided to stay back. From the D.R. we wondered whether we would be able to get back to Mexico. We walked cautiously through the half-empty Miami airport on our way home.

Upon our return, businesses began closing down, and people on the street started selling masks. Banking meant standing in line for hours. Since our return from the D.R. we have stayed in our home, except for shopping or medical needs, and for me to walk our dog Muffin. I even shaved all my hair off in April to avoid needing a trip to the barber. And praise God, we are all safe from COVID to date. One health hiccup: Daniel had a fall down the stairs early on, breaking a bone in his foot, and had crutches and a boot. But now he is finishing several weeks of physical therapy, and is down to a cane and a heel brace.

Kids' club has gone on hold, but praise God, everything else continues. Ministry feels like an old Mazda commercial - Zoom Zoom Zoom! Preaching, teaching, Timothy leadership training, final year students' professional exams, faculty meetings, mission business meetings, Bible studies – all by Zoom. My seminarians even took their final exam on a Google Form. And on June 1, we organized four Zooms with Blanca's

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family and friends in Mexico and Honduras to surprise her for her birthday.

COMPAs (InterVarsity's counterpart in Mexico) invited me to lead a Bible study for their annual training camp. Most of the participants were actually from South America. Great response. I love working with COMPAs. Now I am leading a four week Bible study on Titus with COMPAs leaders.

While the seminary semester is over, seminary work continues into the summer. This weekend I hope to read two student theses - for the fourth time. The two seminarians will defend their 100 page theses next Tuesday.

One wrote about the importance of covenant theology for Christian education in the home. Another looked at connections between the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 and the doctrine of the kingdom of God. Heavy stuff! The editing experience I got at Words of Hope during my seminary years was good preparation for guiding students with their theses. It's interesting how God equips us at one moment to prepare us for other moments years later.

As the pandemic dug in its heels, I was forced to cancel travel in Mexico to evaluate the other missionaries. And our planned Reconnect for this July-October has now been postponed until July 2021, and will last six months. To be honest, hearing about the scope of COVID-19 in the US, lockdowns and protests, police brutality and riots, and shouting matches on Facebook, we are

content to stay here in Mexico another year, where we feel safe and welcome. In sharp contrast with the chaos we read about online, we have never been more impressed with Resonate leadership and support staff than with their handling of the pandemic. They made tough decisions, kept us all informed, and helped us navigate the many implications of COVID-19 for our mission. Praise God for them.

Being an introvert by nature, I was looking forward to having extra time at home to read and write. 'Twas not to be. Mission-related work and ministry have kept Blanca and me busier than normal. I envy the people who complain of being bored in lockdown. Nevertheless, God has given me short slots of time to work on several projects, little by little: I redesigned the front pages of our website, giffmex.org; I am reading books on transformation and pastoral care, and publishing my English notes online; and I am slowly creating an online website in Spanish of information on all the passages of the Gospels.

Something fascinating and unexpected took place in the last couple months: I came up with major improvements to the free notetaking program I wrote about in our last prayer letter, and renamed it Stroll. God used an young man of Middle Eastern descent in Paris to help me finish Stroll, and used a French young woman blogging in London to promote it, and suddenly Stroll has been well-received on Twitter and Youtube. I was even going to be interviewed online about it by the creator of TiddlyWiki, the program Stroll is built upon. But the day before the interview was scheduled, he let me know he had COVID. Praise the Lord that he is recovering, albeit slowly.

We are thankful that the church members and others we know here in Mexico City have kept safe from COVID-19. But our church's WhatsApp group continues to light up with prayer requests for COVID patients, families of people who have died from it, and families who are struggling financially.

Please pray for them. We are grateful that we can buy groceries for the church pantry to help people in need. Another Resonate family in Mexico turned their streetside lending library box into a streetside pantry as well.

Finally, we and the rest of Resonate look to the next fiscal year, wondering how our support will be affected, and how much we will need to reduce our already tight field budgets.

But for now, our support as of late May is at 90%, with one month to go. God is good, and is moving his people. Despite the financial crunch people back home are facing, they continue to pray for us and send in support to Resonate for the ministry here. We will never forget that. *Thank you all for your prayers, financial support, and words of encouragement! God bless you all in Christ Jesus!*

Dave, Blanca, Daniel and Alexandra Gifford