

Dear brothers, and sisters in Christ,

After an unusually hot July with no rain, the last two days so far we have received almost three inches of rain. The short break from mowing I'm sure has come to an end, at least for awhile.

After the first month of Niranjana working full time in the ministry as director of lamp Lighters in Sri Lanka I am even more convinced that our great God has brought this to pass and it is His will.

I've had many phone conversations over the month as Niranjana has had many questions but that has been good. He is genuinely doing his best to make sure things are done properly in the ministry. He has a lot of enthusiasm for the work he has undertaken.

Sometimes God brings major changes into our lives which can seem difficult to experience and understand. But as long as we are truly listening to Him we know that everything is going to work out.

Trusting God is not a one time experience but one that is life long, and the more we learn to trust Him the greater our peace knowing He is in control!

As always we thank you for your continued prayers and financial support for the ministry. God continues to bless and provide everything for the work in Sri Lanka to continue.

Our prayer is that He will continue to bless you as well for your faithfulness. And that God will graciously give you all you need to serve Him where you are.

Because of Christ, Steve

NIRANJANA'S NEWS

A month has gone by with the new responsibilities and activities of ministry being carried on by God's great grace and peace.

It has been a difficult month but God is great all the time. As I submit to our Lord Jesus, His hand guides me in wonderful ways that cannot be explained. He continually gives wisdom for handling every situation at every moment. I trust only in Him and that His words will continue to lead me to carry on the ministry.

FIRST STAFF MEETING IN SEVERAL MONTHS

We were able to hold our first staff meeting with the coworkers this month since the Covid 19 struck. The government had lifted enough restrictions we were able to meet together.

The founder and director of Lamp Lighters made a video call which we were able to put on a screen so all could see him and hear him speak to us.

During the call he personally shared the ministry changes, meaning that I would now be the director over the ministry. This had been shared by letter previously but was important for all the coworkers to hear it come directly from him.

During this month I have been able to visit all the churches and was able to preach to the believers as well. I have also had personal conversations with each coworker and their families and they shared about their ministries with me.

It has been a good month but the churches are still facing many difficulties which started with the Easter bombings last year and now continue with the Covid epidemic. Please continue to pray for us and the churches here.

SECOND WAVE OF COVID HITS

Two weeks ago it was announced by the government that a second wave of Covid 19 had hit Sri Lanka and was again beginning to spread. Some areas were especially hard hit by this.

The schools which had just reopened were immediately closed, and all the precautions of hand washing, social distancing was to be observed by everyone.

God has heard our prayers and it has been controlled in the short term. The schools are now scheduled to reopen the week of August 10th.

PRAYERS FOR OUR GOVERNMENT

Our parliamentary elections are scheduled for August 5th . This can be a tense time in the country as sometimes rioting occurs.

Please pray that a good government will be elected that will truly care for the needs of the citizens.

PRAYERS NEEDED FOR VBS PLANS

Normally August is the month when schools are closed and we can hold our VBS programs. Because of Covid 19 and all the restrictions and schools being closed when they are normally open we cannot have VBS during August this year. As mentioned earlier schools will reopen immediately after the elections.

The schools are now scheduled to be closed during the month of October with the regular exams being held then as well. But this poses some problems for us.

We are hoping to at least be able to hold one or two day programs but even this will be difficult to do as it will be so late in the year. Christmas will follow closely and the churches begin their preparations for those programs in November.

God will give wisdom and work out everything necessary as we wait on Him to work and we continue in our prayers and praise to Him! We are trusting in Him to change the situation here.

PERSONAL NEWS FROM STEVE

As I stated earlier I am more convinced that ever that bringing in Niranjana as the director has been a wise and good decision. I'm very pleased with the way he is working and even advising the coworkers in their ministry efforts. I am confident that God will work through him for many years to grow and bring positive change to the ministry.

The universities which Sowmiya and Tharsha attend have not reopened due to Covid 19 but they are transitioning to online studies, something we will all deal with here this fall when our schools reopen.

Even their exams will be held online. By God's grace they have at least been able to continue in their education in this manner.

Tharsha told me that she has applied already for a job once her education is completed.

Tharshini and Prashanth's visa interviews did not go as we had hoped. The person doing the interview felt that more information was needed to confirm that they are indeed my children and that they are being brought here as such not as household servants.

The embassy requested photographs and other documents specifically showing they were being treated in this manner. Not easy as we never really took many photos of the kids including us in the picture but with Niranjana's help we were able to get some photos and I had some school documents I had signed. Hopefully this will be enough to satisfy them and the visas will be issued.

The big problem now is the Covid still has the airport closed.

PRAYER CONCERNS

1. Covid to be controlled so that normal worship and programs can resume. That God would give wisdom and knowledge for a vaccine to be produced.
2. For the believers to remain faithful to God during this difficult time.
3. The coworkers to carry out the responsibilities of ministry faithfully and that I would act according to God's will.
4. For Tharshini and Prashanth's visas to be issued and somehow they would be able to come to the States. Nothing is impossible with our God!
5. For God's wisdom for me, Steve, as I work in my new ministry here and continue to advise and oversee the ministry in Sri Lanka.