

Happy Friday, New South Family. Welcome to the 71st edition of the Weekly Word – this for the week ending December 4, 2020.

-----Announcements and Resources-----

Announcements

- 1) **FM History and Polity** The conference is planning to offer FM H & P in Wilmore or via Zoom this spring in a Friday evening / Saturday format for two weekends. If you are interested, [please email me for more information.](#)
- 2) **MEG Interviews** The MEG Board will be conducting Zoom interviews in early December. If you need or want an appointment with the MEG, [please email me.](#)
- 3) **December Global Prayer and Praise Guide Attached** “Although Thanksgiving is an American holiday, Advent is celebrated by Christians around the world. Think of the world Jesus entered: no atonement yet because of the cross; no miracle of the resurrection; no power available to every believer because of Pentecost. Our neighbors spent hours yesterday decorating their yard for Christmas. I'll enjoy their lights, but even more I look forward to this special God-with-us time of year. May we enter the Holy of Holies together with both adoration and intercession. What a privilege!”
~ Lois Huff, Conference Missions Promoter
- 4) **The Latest Light and Life Magazine** – Digital Edition, [is available by clicking here.](#)
- 5) **Center For Pastoral Formation** The Free Methodist Church USA is entering a partnership with Greenville University to host a new, donor-funded Center for Pastoral Formation. Working directly under the Board of Bishops and in close relationship with Annual Conference Superintendents and Boards of Ministerial Education and Guidance, the Director of the Center will oversee our nationwide system of identifying, mentoring, educating and equipping candidates for ministry. The position of Director is open. If you would like more information about the position, [contact Superintendent Daryl.](#)
- 6) **December EPP Reimbursement** Pastors, you and/or your treasurers should have received a note from the Conference Finance Office which included two important things.

The first is the announcement that, due to lower conference expenses (and especially travel) the BOA approved the Finance Team's proposal to waive every church's December 2020 EPP payment. You will NOT receive an invoice for December EPP nor will your bank account be drafted on December 15th (if you are set up for auto-draft payment.) Also, the proposal came with a request that the “saved” December EPP money might be used to bless your pastor(s) in what has been a challenging and stressful year and / or sending a year-end love gift to a missionary you support. In other words, please consider “passing it on” however the Spirit would lead you.

The second item included in that note was your church's EPP monthly amount for next year, 2021. That amount is calculated using annual report data submitted to headquarters for calendar year 2019.

- 7) **Living and Leading in Difficult Days** If you are like me, you have friends...people in your church and family...who disagree with just about everything concerning this virus: masks or no masks, gather or don't gather, shop or don't shop, shake hands or don't, and on and on. The news shows don't really help either, since, as I've mentioned before, no matter what your opinion, you can find a talking head or an article on the internet or TV that will substantiate it.

These are difficult days for any leader, so I hope you pray for all the leaders of people that you know, first and foremost, your pastor. No pastor enjoys disappointing people, but every decision a pastor makes these days seems to disappoint someone

Just the same, these are difficult days for anyone who is in relationship with other people – which, of course, includes all of us. So as we relate with others, please remember that followers of Jesus are to be peacemakers. Now, that

doesn't mean that we pursue peace at any expense, and especially at the expense of truth. We are to be seekers of truth.

But being a peacemaker and unifier in these days includes, **1) recognizing that just about everyone is under added stress right now**, and people usually react rather than respond when they're stressed. This moment in time is something of a perfect storm for reactions out of stress. Family issues, the holidays, politics, job issues, lockdowns...all of these are coalescing to affect people. Simply remembering that will help us offer grace.

And speaking of grace, being a peacemaker also includes, **2) choosing to give people more room for those reactions.** Show grace – unmerited favor – and patience with others, which may involve, **3) simply ignoring some peoples' comments or posts.** It's a very freeing thing to recognize that we don't have to respond to everything other people say. The fact is, they may soon regret saying or posting it. (I mean, don't we all wish we could take back some dumb words we've said in days past?) Sometimes the most gracious thing we can do is just let something someone said or posted go...or maybe let whole of social media thing go for a season.

Also, it's important for us all to **4) remember that our opinion may be the one that is proven wrong over time.** Especially regarding the virus, everyone has been wrong in one way or another over these past months. I want others to bear with my errors, so I'd better be ready to bear with theirs. Humility is a foundational Christian virtue, and we all are being challenged to practice it.

Followers of Jesus are called to be bridge-builders whenever possible, but right now the tone and tenor of our nation is to destroy bridges. A builder of bridges will always shine brighter in that kind of darkness.

8) Covid and the Church Knowing how to respond to the virus numbers and managing these lockdowns and governmental requests in the church is a tricky business. Since it's all quite different from state to state, about the best advice I can give you is this: try to keep in balance 1) the biblical instruction in Romans 13 to honor our civil authorities, 2) the encouragement of Hebrews 10 to not neglect gathering for worship, and 3) the biblical mandate to love others – which includes giving up our rights and privileges at times for the sake of, in this case, those who are especially vulnerable to COVID and all those who care for them.

Again, the number I keep a close eye on is the hospital headroom percentage – how much room hospitals have for COVID patients. To me, that tells the story better than mere case numbers or even deaths. I also take into consideration the health of hospital staffs. Just last night, a hospital nurse and member of Wilmore FMC, told me that hospital staff is stretched thin due to Covid cases and quarantines in the staff itself. Doctors and nurses need to stay healthy too, in order to treat all who are hospitalized and need care, and sometimes how the church responds affects their ability to do so.

December Birthdays (*that we know of)

John Swaim	12 / 9	Joe Wang	12 / 17
Randy Scarborough	12 / 19	Dwight Winter	12 / 20
Al Buckta	12 / 21	Chris Cole	12 / 21
Bea VanValin	12 / 27		

*I would love to know the birthdays of all those related to the NSC who receive this communique – pastors, elders, delegates, special friends, etc. Please send month and day to Timothy at newsouthconference@gmail.com

This Week's Passage, Quote and Joke

Passage: This week we continue our Advent series, "Here Comes..." which looks expectantly for Jesus' birth, and noting all the different roles He fills in His coming to earth as a baby to save us from our sins...this week looking at John 6 and Jesus' claim to be the Bread of Life.

Quote: “Millions call themselves by His name, it is true, and pay some token homage to Him, but a simple test will show how little He is really honored among them. Let the average man be put to the proof on the question of who or what is ABOVE, and his true position will be exposed. Let him be forced into making a choice between God and money, between God and men, between God and personal ambition, God and self, God and human love, and God will take second place every time. Those other things will be exalted above. However the man may protest, the proof is in the choice he makes day after day throughout his life.” ~ A. W. Tozer

Joke: A young man asked an old rich man how he made his money.

The old guy fingered his worsted wool vest and said, “Well, son, it was 1932, the depth of the Great Depression. I was down to my last nickel.

I invested that nickel in an apple. I spent the entire day polishing the apple and, at the end of the day, I sold the apple for ten cents.

The next morning, I invested those ten cents in two apples. I spent the entire day polishing them and sold them at 5:00 pm for 20 cents. I continued this system for a week, by the end of which I’d accumulated a fortune of \$6.40.

Then my wife’s father died and left us two million dollars.”

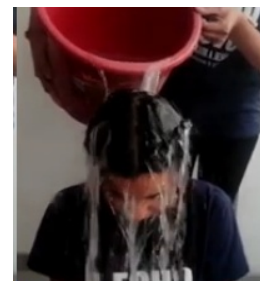
Blessings on your worship this weekend!

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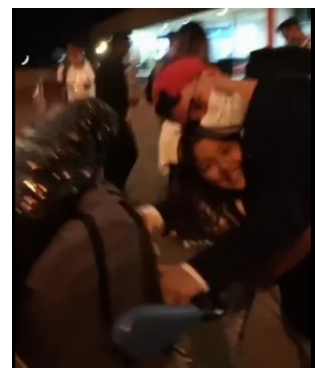
December, 2020 Global Prayer & Praise Guide



Tuesday, December 1 - David Lopez is a Venezuelan national serving as a national leader in **Peru**. From his online church services, he shares this story. A church member named Vanesa recently participated in their online Community Church Planting training. She shared the gospel with her neighbor Cris who began participating in a virtual new believer group and confessed her profound need for God. After answering Pastor David's questions in a Zoom church service, Vanesa baptized Cris in her home. Even though it's in Spanish, this beautiful two-minute video is worth your time to share in their joy! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDrNCsQk8Oo>



Wednesday, December 2 - Several years ago the FMC in Portugal took a missions team to the islands of **San Tomé and Príncipe** off the west coast of Africa. This led to their sending the missionary couple, Moises and Jacione Souza, to serve there two years ago. Now one of the church's young men, Matheus Gonçalves, is commissioned here by Pastor Cindi Angelo to serve with the Souzas for several months. To the right Matheus is arriving at the San Tomé airport on November 13, where the Souzas joyfully welcomed him. He is hugging their daughter, Filipa, who has gone to church with Matheus all her life –until they moved to San Tomé.



Thursday, December 3 - Rose Brewer, SEED administrator writes how they have been working hard to help provide livelihood groups with work during the coronavirus shutdowns. Mango Showers is one of their partner groups unable to go to the market for materials or even to ship products. So their international-level designer and leader, pictured here, designed special paper craft shapes. It's not too late to take advantage of SEED's free starter design used to wrap gifts, or to purchase a full paper craft art kit before Christmas.



Friday, December 4 - Last month the Győr FMC in **Hungary** welcomed these two ladies, Sylvia Páliné Nyiri and Sarah Anderson, as conference ministerial candidates. Irish missionaries, Gerry and Kathi McNamara have led the church there for several years, and recently Chad and Sarah Anderson from the Decatur, Illinois FMC have joined them as VISA associates. The church reaches out to a local orphanage as well as doing work with a student group from the university. Gerry serves as regional director of Central and Eastern Europe and leads the MEG board process across Europe.



Saturday, December 5 - A story from an **Impact Middle East** leader tells how this 8-year-old boy experienced a stinging pain in his leg. As it didn't improve, his mother took him to the hospital where the doctor confirmed he'd been bitten by a viper. The antidote was delayed, but the church prayed, and although he could have experienced severe complications, they are praising God for being a wonderful Healer as this child of His has completely recovered.



Sunday, December 6 - In a recent video narrated by Beth Gomez, she praises God for His work being carried out in **Latin America** during the pandemic. Bi-weekly Zoom meetings with all of their leaders and missionaries have resulted in a more united Latin America than ever. Unable to meet in the church buildings, small groups sprang up in people's homes and on line. In the 3rd quarter of 2020, 60 new house churches opened with at least 570 people becoming believers. Once restrictions eased, multiple baptisms happened across the area. Pictured here is a church in Columbia that works with Venezuelan immigrants with 8 baptisms on the first Sunday groups were allowed to meet together. Watch the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KqjEYlwy06Y>



Monday, December 7 - Tim and Lily Kinkead (2nd and 3rd from right) co-pastor in **Taiwan**. The church is part of a food bank ministry, which has opened new doors to the community. Other outreach includes giving out gospel tracts, participating in the flea market and working with a group of junior high youth. They recently called on an immigrant family from Viet Nam who are Buddhists. The father came to church the next Sunday. Pray for the family's salvation. They captioned this picture, "We work together in love."



Tuesday, December 8 - Pictured here with Missionary Vickie Reynen is Pastor Solomon Otieno known as The Evangelist. Tumaini Women of **Kenya**, an NGO that gives low interest loans helping women –and men– rise above poverty, helped Solomon with school fees when he was a Bible college student. Then he took out a loan to purchase a motorcycle and start a taxi business. Paying off his loans allowed him to borrow more money to create employment for others and also have money to tithe. A number of bi-vocational FM pastors in Kenya have taken advantage of TWK's loan program as most pastors do not receive a salary. They serve as role models for their people showing how saving money, paying back loans and building a small business can actually happen.

Wednesday, December 9 - **Asia** Area Director Eric asks that we pray for an overcoming and courageous spirit for the contacts and established ministries in at least 20 Asian countries to stand strong in a great spiritual battle against the strongholds of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, and tribal religions. With many cultural and language barriers, pray for good communication. The vision to reach 1 million Asians for Jesus requires added missionaries and national leaders while funds are also needed to show compassion to those who lack life's necessities. Pray, and to God be the glory!



Thursday, December 10 - Julie Yerger, who served as a neonatal nurse in **Rwanda** for many years is now working and learning in a hospital in Washington state. She is excited about construction of the new maternity building going on now where she served at Kibagora. She says, "Soon new mothers will not have to share the same bed, or nurses step over mothers sleeping on the floor next to their baby's incubator. May funds come in for a speedy completion!"



Friday, December 11 - As Rodrigo and Tonya Rosado wait in Dearborn, MI for both funding and travel permission to serve in **Argentina**, God has called them to be faithful where they are. Like the exiles in Jeremiah, they are praying for the peace and prosperity of the city where they plan to serve. Tanya has helped with tutoring new neighbors, Rodrigo has begun attending a small men's prayer group, they continue to build relationships with two of their next door neighbors and they attend and support the church plant for Arabic speakers. They pray for wisdom to discern how to do partnership building in these times. Here, Ellia celebrates her drive-by birthday party.



Saturday, December 12 - Phyllis Sortor writes how God is surprising her again in her work with the Fulani Muslims in **Nigeria**. While explaining grazing reserves and Schools for Africa to a new group of Fulani men, she mentioned the name 'Mogodi.' a man who had previously helped her. This man, pictured here to her right, jumped up and said, "Mogodi is my brother! I know about all of this!" Then he went on to encourage the men to support Phyllis' work. She says, "Wow! What an open door!"



Sunday, December 13 - Much of the work in Asia is creative access, which means many prayer requests and praises cannot be openly shared. Pictured here are missionaries serving in **Thailand** after dinner together just before Seth and Hlawn Hlawn Van Tifflin(far right) came to the US in May. Others are Jenna and Keith Battleson, Ellen and Roger Haskins, Connie and Corey Persing, Cherry Moe, Solomon and Roman Battleson and Noah and Jason Van Tifflin.



Monday, December 14 - These mentors, Susana Castro, Jairo Leal, Casto Rojas, Thad Roller and Glenn Lorenz, walk alongside conference superintendents and district leaders in **Latin America** providing the leadership that has marked CCP - community church planting – for powerful success. Praise God for the technical capabilities that allow 'face to face' meetings without travel. They are a huge help for Latin American Area Director Ricardo Gomez as they also help with day-to-day ministry, pastoral care and administration. As Cindi Angelo writes in her new book, *He Gave Gifts to Men*, just as plants produce what they are, leaders produce the kind of believers they are. Thank God for gifted leaders!

Tuesday, December 15 - Missionary to **Bulgaria** Dee Dee Galloway writes, "The Farm and Feeding project has been especially needed this year due to Covid. We have been able to get food to much needed areas and communities – \$12,000 of food and medicine to over 25 communities in the spring when people needed it the most, and another 2,000 lbs. of potatoes and other vegetables to widows and others in the summer and autumn during the harvest season. The church has worked so hard and it has truly paid off!"





Wednesday, December 16 - A Middle East pastor in **Iraq** writes about a Syrian family from a Muslim background attending a service where he preached about the cross. They had come because of the humanitarian aid they'd received from another IME leader who had also talked to them about Jesus. As the pastor shared how Christ has power over death, the Holy Spirit touched the family's hearts. They returned home and contacted the leader who had first talked to them about Jesus to let him know they were seeking redemption. They prayed, began to grow in their relationship with God and were baptized –wanting everyone to know of their decision. May they be a blessing to their neighbors, and may leaders have much wisdom as they share the Gospel in the Middle East.



Thursday, December 17 - As Latin America Area Director Ricardo Gomez continues to fulfill his multiple responsibilities, his family is also working hard. Juliana has been busy with final exams for finishing 10th grade. Jonathan hopes to finish two classes before Christmas and is working particularly hard on algebra. In addition to administrative responsibilities, Beth does communication pieces and is working with a special team on the Advent program for the whole area. She is thankful for a great international team and says, "These are exciting and busy times

for sure!"



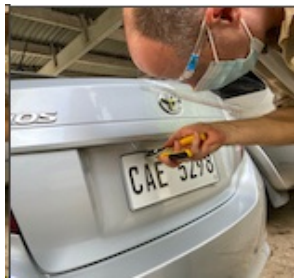
Friday, December 18 - The FMC in Portugal supports the church-in-formation in Guinea Bissau and is thrilled with the construction of this school with 60 children already enrolled from a Muslim village. Missionary Cindi Angelo's new book illustrating Bible stories for little ones is ready for sending 1200 copies to both **Guinea Bissau** and **São Tomé**.



Saturday, December 19 - Mike and Maria Long send word that in November Thessaloniki, **Greece**, became one of the first cities to go under total lockdown. ICU beds were overloaded with talk of transferring patients to Athens by train. Nurses and doctors from as far away as Crete voluntarily flew in to boost exhausted medical care givers. Bishops, priests, and even the archbishop were infected, but as of the Longs' newsletter, all FM missionaries, church staff, and church members were COVID free. They write, "Forget about the economy ... Almighty God, help us and the whole world to survive." The lockdown is particularly hard on the immigrant membership who do not receive lockdown aid.



Sunday, December 20 - **Myanmar** national leader Pa Kep thanks all those who have sent assistance so the people there have food. He praises God for baptisms in spite of not being able to meet for services, and he gives thanks to all who partner with the ministry.



Monday, December 21 - A praise from Darin and Jill Land as they prepared to return to the US earlier this month from the **Philippines**. Needing to sell their car, they thought it would be easier if the logistical hurdle was cleared for getting permanent tags, but the plates were at the original dealership outside their region. It would be very difficult to retrieve them during the quarantine. How good to serve a God Who cares about life's details. Here Darin is installing the tags after they did arrive by courier. They are also thankful for training partners like Ron White, a US pastor who recently completed the entire draft of video scripts for the Wesleyan Theology and History module used for equipping pastors and leaders across Asia.



Tuesday, December 22 - Only 3% of **Asia's** four billion people are evangelical Christians. Free Methodist leadership has set a goal of reaching one million Asians for Christ in the coming years. So in small ways and big ways, one person at a time, one home at a time, one neighborhood at time, they are looking to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith for salvation for all people. Watch this video at <https://vimeo.com/342538245> and pray in faith for revival in Asia.

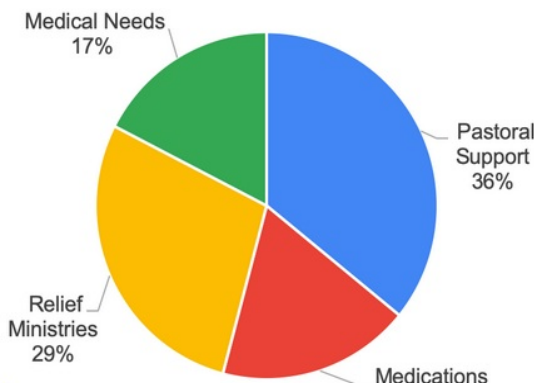


Wednesday, December 23 - A very poor church in one of the most isolated communities of **Peru** now has running water! It took the whole community working together, to make this possible. The FMC continues to be a light in these communities through the transformational work done in planting community churches. So many lives have been transformed in these areas that wonderful social change is happening. As a recent Latin America video said, "We don't just want to plant churches. We want to plant transformational churches that bring about Biblical

restoration.



Thursday, December 24 - As many of us here in the US spend happy time with our families tonight, we pray for an ICCM student in a **creative access country** named Vir. Life was so hard for his family that his mother took poison, but thankfully did not die. Now the church is giving practical help to sustain the family in this time of need. Most importantly, they believe this family will come to know Jesus personally and experience His love and care. Extend Your Table Funds have allowed ICCM to give assistance to families like this in many countries around the world. May the loving, caring hands of God's people lead many families to Him.



Friday, December 25 - Christmas and Giving are synonymous. This report from Latin America praises God that as of October the Bishop's Crisis Response Fund had made nearly \$100,000 available for humanitarian aid across that area. Today, may we also give the gift of prayer for God's continued provision, and our part in it, for those in need. And as we look ahead to 2021, let us ask for wisdom as to how best to use our resources in ways that will justify God saying to us one day, "Well done, good and faithful stewards."



Saturday, December 26 - Sent by the Free Methodist Church in Portugal, Moisés and Jacione Souza serve as international missionaries to the islands of **São Tomé and Príncipe** off the west coast of Africa. They launched the first Free Methodist Church in São Tomé in January 2019, and work through various discipleship ministries for children, youth and adults. Many believers are growing in their faith, and now their goal is to raise up leaders to be trained for pastoral ministry. Both Moisés and Jacione were ordained as elders at the 2020 annual meeting of the Free Methodist Church of Portugal. Because that is the sending church, this mission district is under the European area. How good to work together for the harvest!



Sunday, December 27 - Women and children constitute over two-thirds of most of the refugee camps' populations in Kurdistan. Some camps in the **Middle East** are being closed with the government saying it's time for "safe and voluntary return." But being required to leave on short notice, many without proper identification papers, can pose serious problems since refugees do not know if it is even possible to return to the areas they came from.

Monday, December 28 - You can just barely see the swimming pool in this picture where Emily, an ICCM-sponsored child was baptized. ICCM Brazil Regional Coordinator Ray Babcock, shared this picture sent to him by Emily's pastor who serves in Rompe Gibão, Bahia, **Brazil**. Ray writes, "Sponsorship has made an enormous difference in Emily's life. I've been in her home to share a simple meal. I was honored to talk at length with Emily's parents and grandmother. Her father works very hard cutting granite cobblestones. He uses a three-pound hammer and 2-3 different chisels. He earns approximately \$200 a month for this very strenuous work. Sponsorship means Emily can have school supplies and clothes."



Tuesday, December 29 - Conrad Bitoye, Director of Evart Bible College in **Tanzania** reported that a brief seminar on fire fighting was added to the August training session. The training was organized for church members and college guards after purchasing fire extinguishers for the entire campus as well as for churches in the area. Fire brigade officers directed the training when they visited these church buildings and the college campus for inspection. May God protect this campus!



Wednesday, December 30 - The FMC in **Portugal** continues to do 80% of their ministry digitally. Cindi Angelo writes, "About 70 people gather for on-line prayer every Wednesday to cry out for God's mercy." What an awesome God that can meet individually with every one according to his/her need!

Thursday, December 31 - Genesis 1:14 - And God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times and days and years. Perhaps we delight in the fresh start of a new year as it was God's idea to divide time into years. May

2021, whatever else it brings, lead us into more earnest and effective prayer for the world!

