



In Touch

ACRE INTERNATIONAL

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Acre Gospel Mission

Prayer Letter July 2021

Now He That Planteth...

I was just reading this morning again 1st Corinthians 3 8-9 *"Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one; and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God"*.

As a Mission we are so thankful to so many people who are faithful in standing with us both practically and prayerfully month by month. We look back over the past number of months and are overwhelmed at the faithfulness of God in so many ways. It's such an encouragement to see the work of the Lord progressing, souls coming to the Saviour, new contacts being made and God building His church. Robert Morrison sailed as a missionary to China. The ship's captain constantly criticised him and, as he left the ship, the captain taunted and said, "I suppose you think you are going to make an impression on China." Morrison replied, "No, but I believe God will." When we are in partnership with God, the potential is unlimited.

Thank you for continuing to remember the work in Brazil at this time. Things have improved with hospitals now being able to cope with those who are ill from the Covid-19 virus. Still, in many places in Amazonas and Acre, people are contracting the virus, but many are recovering. Please remember Lucimar's Mum, Frances, who was very ill but is now recovering well. She has more hospital appointments in the coming month. Pray for Lucimar's brother, his wife and their son who have all been hospitalised and are now on a very slow road to full recovery. They are not saved.

The work in the Northeast continues to bring great encouragement. Thank you for remembering the families who are serving with our mission there. Pastor Iran and Socorro are thrilled that the Lord has answered prayer in a mighty way for them. They have been working in another town called Serra Do Doutor for the past number of years doing outreach and having meetings in a garage. They recently were able



Pastor Iran at the new church build in Serra Do Doutor, NE Brazil

to purchase a piece of ground through a gift from friends in Northern Ireland. At a recent meeting, someone heard about this new church plant and God put it in their heart to give a gift of £20,000 to build the church there. This is a great answer to prayer as we labour together in the Gospel. The foundations of the church building are being put in at present. We pray that this church will be the means of seeing many souls come to Christ in the coming days.

Over the summer months Karen and I have several meetings, pulpit supply and Drive-In services. We value prayer for these. Also we have planned along with Jeff and Marianna, A number of outreach days here at home. If you know any young people who would be interested in helping us distribute literature in various towns and villages, please get them to contact us as soon as possible.

The dates are:

County Down Outreach
Monday 19th – Wednesday 21st July

County Antrim/Londonderry Outreach
Thursday 19th – Sunday 22nd August

Thank you again for labouring together with us in the work of Acre.

Keith & Karen Lindsay

Victor & Audrey Maxwell

Our emergence from the long pandemic period might confront us with changing and challenging times but the ongoing work of the gospel requires our full commitment to the Saviour and the work of the kingdom. We are grateful to you all for your encouragement in standing by our missionaries throughout this time.

We are looking forward to meeting up with many of you in the near future at various meetings and Acre events. Thank you for your prayers and rejoice with us for what God is doing on the various fields.

Pastor Ricardo & Sandra, Lanzarote

We send greetings to all the brothers and sisters in Christ and to all our friends in the Acre family.

We are thankful to the Lord that here in Lanzarote, as in Europe, the social, economic and spiritual life of the Island is starting to recover.

In Lanzarote the vaccination process is progressing successfully. Almost all of the members of our church have been vaccinated. Little by little the face-to-face services and activities are nearly back to normal with some restrictions in place. Please remember our sister Mariana Martínez who works in the hospital. She has tested positive with the covid and has been very ill but has now started to recover.

We still have some families that are in great need. Some have lost their jobs and some are sick but God is providing, sustaining and strengthening them with the help of others in the church.

Recently, on May 30, we were able to hold two special Canarian Day services. We had to have two as we were restricted with numbers attending. We give thanks that a good number of unsaved folk attended.

There was a special programme put together with

the children, youth and Ladies all taking part and Jesus, one of the church leaders who is Canarian

The Bible school for children is being held every Saturday either by zoom or in person at the church and has around 15 attending each week. Some of the children are from unsaved homes and its a blessing to get the Gospel into them. Pray for Brenda, Karina and Melli who are the teachers. We are sorry that Brenda will be leaving us in August to start a new job in Germany. Please remember her in prayer.

We have just recommenced our Mens meeting with a good number of unsaved in attendance,

We are excited to see 4 African people recently accept the Lord as Saviour. Three others who attend are also very sympathetic with the Gospel. We look to the Lord for their salvation.

Our son Daniel is slowly responding well to treatment. Although the medical diagnosis was sad for us as a family, we are very hopeful that God will touch his life. We continue to trust the Lord.

We are always very grateful for the support and love that the ACRE family gives us.



Barry & Raquel Henry, International Evangelical Church, Portugal

Hello to all from the Algarve.

It has been a quiet 2021 on many fronts. Another lockdown and more streamed services meant that many were once again confined to home and not able to meet face to face on a Sunday. But God has been good and has used the technology to reach out to many; even as far as Brazil!



Things opened up again after a couple of months and we have been back together in the main building meeting face to face. The time has really underlined the importance of walking alongside one another and we feel that God has been moving in people's lives and using this situation for their growth and maturity. We had been praying for the Spirit of God to work in each of us and to give us the right focus and path on which to follow in regards the future of the Portuguese speaking side of the ministry and God has answered! A group of more of the mature men of the congregation began to meet up once a week to study and do life together as Jesus did with His disciples. This in turn led to each of us walking with others from within the church congregation, doing life together based on God's Word. It has been amazing to see the change in people and it was an even greater answer to prayer as we saw a group of the mature ladies of the congregation begin to do what we have done with the



intention of replicating it with others as they do life together. We have realised that Sunday is important but not enough when it comes to helping each other grow and mature as disciples. Please continue to pray for this as the enemy is always not far behind trying to lay out stumbling blocks against the work!

Raquel has also applied for another year with the Evangelical Alliance and it has been an exciting time for her as she is currently working to get the Gospel taught within the schools of the Madeira and Azores islands, which until now had not been happening. God has been opening doors and we would value our prayers in regards to this.



Matt has finished his first year at ITLC and it has been amazing watching him and also his desire to be more used in regards discipling the young Portuguese speaking people of the congregation. It has been wonderful to see him alongside two other young men (Luís and Jónatas) of the congregation be responsible for feeding God's Word into the young people that make up the youth of our church. Matt and Luís have also shown their willingness to prepare for preaching over the next academic year, so please pray for them as I walk alongside Luís and a Brazilian pastor (Carlos) who is part of our congregation, will walk alongside Matt. We are also thankful and excited as we have about five or six of the younger people of the church who have shown their desire to be baptised. Pray as I go through baptism class with them and pray that the restrictions allow for us to have the baptisms at the beach.

We realise that there is a lot of work ahead of us but we thank God that He goes before us and guides us as we seek His directions. Once again, we thank you for everything you do for us there, especially your prayers!

May God continue to bless each and every one of you in Christ.

Glenn Bowden working with the International Evangelical Church ITLC Bible School , Algarve, Portugal

I would like to start by thanking you for your partnership in the Gospel and for all your prayers, encouragement, and support. I can't get my mind round the fact that the students have finished their first year of college and that now we are getting ready for year two. It hasn't been an easy year with global pandemics, lockdowns, zoom meetings and a cold winter here in the Algarve but it has been a productive and God glorifying year. A year to see God answer prayer, provide, and shape and mould the lives of our 10 students here at ITLC. We have so much to thank God for, great is His faithfulness.

I'm so thankful to all the lecturers, who didn't just teach information, but spiritual transformation. Many went the extra mile to see that the students understood and grasped many theological truths.



One of the things that stood out to me over this year was the way the students interacted with the youth here at the International Church of the Algarve. They served Christ in how they taught God's Word, and showed His love to each of the young people that have attended. Even during lockdown they kept in touch by text message just to see if they were okay or needed prayer for anything. It has been so exciting to see over 50+ young people attending throughout the year, from so many different nationalities, cultures, and backgrounds. They arrive at eight and every week they are staying longer and longer and we can't get them to leave because they're having far too much fun.

Another big part of the college course is serving the body of Christ here at IECA, opportunities to lead the services, pray for the church, be part of the welcoming team, and much more. It was a real blessing to see them interact with families and our seniors who have just loved having all these young people in the church over the past year.

It's exciting to think that eight out of the ten are prayerfully considering next year with seven of them

already handing in their applications for year two. We also have started advertising for ten new students to start their first year in October with interest shown from, Holland, Spain, Ireland, and the North of Portugal.

Please pray for the students who will be leaving us this year as they go home to get involved in what God is calling them into. Pray that they would know God's leading, empowering, and direction in their lives. Remember our returning students, that they would not only get rest and refreshment over the summer break but also opportunities to serve and to use what God has taught them over the past year to impact the lives of others.

Please pray as we advertise for next year's student intake, that they would be of God's choosing and that they would come with an eagerness to get to know their God and a burden to make Him known. Pray especially that God would raise up Portuguese nationals who would take His word to the people of Portugal and that we would see a revival in our time in such a spiritual needy, dry land.

Unfortunately there will be no camp Sunshine this summer due to the pandemic. I really believe God has got such a big plan for us here in Portugal amongst this generation. I can already see that He is working in wakening people up to His love and grace and wouldn't it be amazing that we would see many of these young people won for Him, sitting under His Word, growing in the love and knowledge of who He is, and maybe just maybe sitting in our college training to be set out to impact our world, I know this is my prayer but also know this is God's Heart for the nation of Portugal and beyond.

Please continue to remember my mum Myrtle, she is in very good form but has struggled like everyone else during the lockdowns. I haven't been home in a year now and I know she is missing me so hopefully I can get home in August.



Aroldo & Emmanuelle Areas, Santo Andre, Portugal

We praise God that God is not limited in time, space and provision. He provides without limits to those who love Him and are sincerely doing His Will. Acre Gospel Mission is an example of this as over the past 84 years they have trusted the Lord to meet every need in faith.

Here in Santo André we are very thankful to the Lord because He has provided our lovely church building and the ground beside the church. There was a lot of work needed to be able to tidy up the ground and make it usable. We needed brick pavers to make a patio area but it was going to be very expensive to buy them for the area we needed. God has wonderfully provided all the pavers that we needed to make the new area and to build a Pergola on it too.

The supermarket LIDL, next door to the church, was renovating its own building and car park and the building contractor asked us if we wanted the old pavements and we accepted. They gave us over 5000 blocks for us to pave the area under our pergola. We praise God for this provision. The pavements were very expensive and we got them all free. God is good and we praise Him for his faithfulness, goodness and abundant love to his people.



We built this pergola outside the church to be able to do different events like:

- Services outside because of Covid-19
- Baptism services, if people cannot or do not want to go to the sea
- Wedding ceremonies
- Summer Camps
- Chill out with friends and brothers and sisters in the Lord.

We are very grateful for those who prayed for us for that to happen and for those who helped financially and practically.

On Saturday the 6th of June, Emmanuelle had a special ladies outreach meeting outside. The weather was great, they had a great time of fellowship, played some games, got some presents, had coffee and tea and

some buns. Thirteen women attended the meeting. The Word of God was preached and they had a blessed time.



Before the women's meeting, we had a BBQ for those who wanted to come. We hope to have more times like this in this space in the future.

Since this pandemic started, many damages occurred in the Christian churches all over the world and because of that a lot of work stopped. The outreach in Fatima is one example of this situation.

We haven't been there in Fatima since October 2019 and we don't know when we will be able to go back there again. Please pray that the hundreds of thousands of pieces of literature that have been distributed there over the years will continue to bear fruit.

Summer camps have also been cancelled. Maybe next year, it will be possible to hold one.

The work in Santo André Church is progressing slowly. We are having visitors who find us, thanks to our Church website that Mario has started. Some come for a few weeks, others for only one service. Some of our church members are going through difficulties (family, jobs, spiritual or financial problems) and we are trying to encourage them and pray with them as much as we can.

Our kids are doing well and we praise God for that. For those who do not know it yet, we are going to be grandparents in November. We are excited about that. Thank you for all your prayers, support, love and friendship.



Mark & Judith Loney, International Evangelical Church Algarve, Portugal

After many months of virtually empty skies, just recently, we have begun to notice the contrails of passing jets standing out once again against the blue skies of southern Portugal! During the month of May the Algarve seemed to be buzzing again with tourists pouring into many of the coastal resorts. However, Boris suddenly burst that tourist bubble by putting Portugal back on the amber list of countries and the tourist industry has once again come to a screeching halt. We do pray that God will use this calamity to awaken people to their spiritual needs and seek God in the midst of all this trouble. Although in some ways we have enjoyed the quietness from the usual hustle and bustle of a tourist region like the Algarve, we do realise that these visitors are the lifeline to the local economy which has suffered so badly from the lockdown and restrictions on travel in recent times.

Even though the lockdown has had many negative consequences on our church and ministry that depends on visitors coming from all over the world, there is no doubt that it has also created opportunities and God has been working in the lives of many people. We have had to adapt and think of new creative ways to keep the ministry going and this has been extremely challenging. We were forced to introduce things like online streaming and endless Zoom meetings which work tremendously well for a congregation like this one that is very transient anyway. Now the system is in place for those who are unable to be here all year round to be part of the fellowship and keep connected wherever they happen to be at any time of the year. The amazing thing to me is that even with the pandemic, many people seem to be moving to this region, making Portugal their new home. Some of them Christians already and others seeking friendship and relationship with English speakers. As the restrictions have begun to ease it has been such a blessing to meet new people and welcome back those who have basically been locked away during the pandemic!

Looking back over this past year, we can say that the challenges have been many, but God has been faithful,

and His work and Kingdom continue to grow and expand. Sadly, we have had to cancel many activities that we have done in the past such as Campsonshine and Bethlehem Village, but at the same time have taken advantage of the circumstances we find ourselves in and have done quite a bit of practical work on site which is always easier to do while there are less activities going on. We are now looking forward to what we feel is a new chapter in the life of this church and ministry. We would ask for prayer as we look for ways to nurture those who are new Christians and evangelise those who still need to hear. Also, that God will continue to give us vision for the future of the ministry here in the Algarve.

On a personal level we would ask prayer for our girls Klara and Laura - that God would lead and provide for them for their futures.

Laura is just about to finish her first year at Jordanstown University which she attended via the computer in her bedroom here in Portugal. We have been blessed to have her back with us for an unexpected extra year thanks to the university going online! Klara has been working voluntarily on various farms in the south of Ireland off and on for about a year getting experience with horses, and cattle. She has just returned to Portugal for the summer and both her and Laura plan to go to Northern Ireland on the 1st September. Laura to study at Jordanstown and Klara hoping to find a job on a farm of some kind with the goal of studying animal management when she can get settled. We are praying that God will provide them with affordable accommodation and be able to get on with their lives and careers. I (Mark) plan to go over with them in September for a few weeks to help get them settled in and Judith hopes to go over later to spend some time with them also.

This change in family circumstances creates a lot of concern and even anxiety at times as we think of all the uncertainties, but we keep on trusting that God has everything in hand and will continue to provide for us and our family as He had always done in the past.

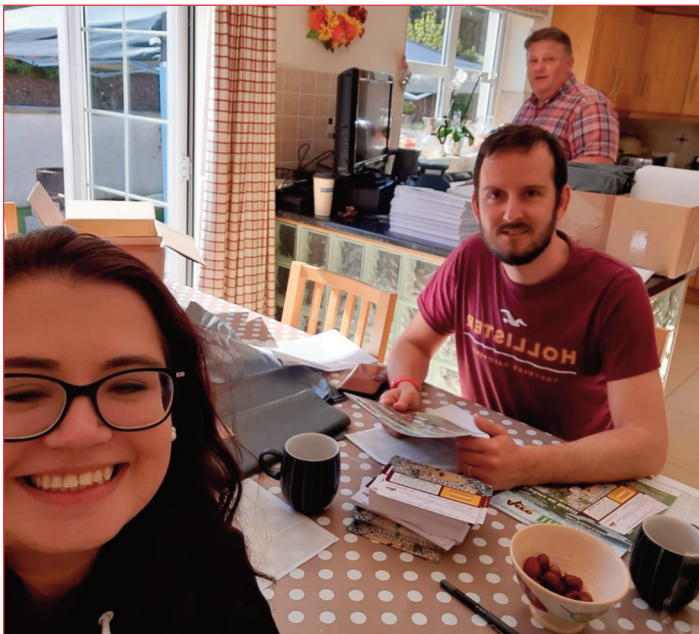


Jeffrey & Marianna Ferguson: Northern Ireland

Psalm 126:3 says *“The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad”*.

It is always amazing to see when we look back how God always goes before us and prepares the way for us, even when we don't see it at the time. The last few months have been a challenge for us, returning to Northern Ireland and leaving Portugal behind, but we can say as the Psalmist did in the verse above that the Lord has indeed done great things for us, and we are glad about that.

After moving from Portugal to Northern Ireland mid February, we had a period of time to settle into our new home, and to organise our things and acquire the various pieces of furniture we needed around the house. We have been slowly taking up our new role assisting the mission co-ordinator, and we have already spoken at a number of online meetings, sharing about the work of Acre, and now that in person meetings are possible again, we have a number of bookings between now and the end of the year. Next week, Sunday 20th June, Marianna will take part in a Children's Day service and, in the evening, we will be back at the same church to take part in their drive-in outreach meeting.



We were also glad to be able to hold the first Acre Prayer Group meeting for the Mid-Ulster area, in person, at the end of May. This is something which has been desired by the mission for some time, that a prayer meeting would open up in this area of NI, and we are very happy to be involved in that. We pray that as this group develops, we would have many faithful prayer warriors in the Mid-Ulster area who will stand with us in prayer for the work of the mission.

It is our desire as a mission to see a kid's ministry developed, and Marianna has been involved with that.



She has designed a small kid's magazine which will be available to the children by subscription, and each addition they receive will tell them another part of a story, in this case the Bill Woods' story, accompanied by little quizzes and fun facts about Brazil. As time goes on and other editions are released there will be other stories covering the life stories of various other missionaries. We trust this little magazine will be a blessing to the children who read it. There are other plans in place for other types of events for the children and we are currently working out all the necessary details for these.

We are looking forward also to taking part in the NI Outreach events which have been planned for the summer. Sadly, due to travel restrictions, we cannot take teams abroad for summer outreach, but we believe that there is still a work for us to do here at home and so we hope to have a good team of people who will join us as we go out with the gospel message into needy areas of NI.

Over the last year, since the lockdowns started, the Revive ministry among the young people has not been meeting regularly. We were asked to take over this work and to help get it started again (please see other report on Revive).

We thank God for these many opportunities that are before us in the coming days, and we look to Him for many more in the days to come. Thank you for your prayers for us as we adapt to this new role, and we ask you to continue to pray that God would be our help, guide and protector as we continue to do this work for His honour and glory.



REVIVE : Acre Youth Ministry

Revive is the youth work within the mission, which was started a number of years ago, with the vision of bringing young people together (18-30s) to encourage them in their faith, to challenge them about mission, and to help them build friendships within the Christian community. The meetings were held mainly in the Coffee Inc coffee shop in Lisburn (kindly granted), and we have had many good evenings of fellowship and missionary challenge. Several of the young folk who attend have been involved in summer teams, in particular summer camps in Lanzarote.

After coming back home to NI, we were asked if we could get involved with the running and organisation of Revive. It had been some time since the young people had met physically, due to the local lockdowns and restrictions, but we felt it would be good to try and bring them together online. So, we spoke with the other young folk who sit on our small organising committee, and we planned a couple of meetings. On the first meeting we were able to interview a young Portuguese man whom we have known for several years and who attends the International Church of the Algarve. He shared with the young people about how life is for young Christians growing up in Portugal. At the second meeting we were able to invite a friend of ours from our Bible College days to come and share her testimony. We were challenged as we listened to her story of how she became involved in the occult, and how God saved her and led her out of that life and into a life of mission, and that she now has the opportunity to witness to other ladies with the same background in the country she now works in. About 20 young folks had signed into the Zoom meetings on both nights and we pray that they were blessed and encouraged through taking part.

We hope, God willing, to meet in person with the young people this weekend, to go on a walk together and then have coffee and ice cream afterward. If current restrictions allow, we hope to recommence in person meetings again in September.

We believe that the young Christians of Northern Ireland have a desire to get involved and be a part of a group like this, where they can meet a community of other like-minded people and have the opportunity to go on mission teams to serve alongside the missionaries we have shared with them about over the years. We want to be able to offer these things to them, to help them in their walk with the Lord, and also to be an encouragement for our missionaries as they receive these teams.

We ask you to pray for this work that it would continue to grow and that when meetings resume in September the young people would come back out again and join us.

MY RESPONSE

- I would like to receive your monthly prayer letter / magazine
- I would like a gift aid form
- I have enclosed a gift of £..... to help present the Gospel message to the millions of people in Brazil, Portugal, Lanzarote and Northern Ireland.

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