

January 2025

Dear praying friends,

Thanks so much for your recent notes of love and encouragement to me while I was ill.

**A little update of what has happened with me health-wise since we last wrote....**

We weren't able to go home on Thursday, Oct 31<sup>st</sup>, like we had planned because I got really sick and weak again with a gut infection and a bladder infection. I had to go back to the ER and get IV meds. Praise the Lord that the doctors finally found the source of my weakness and other issues. After a week, I responded well to the medicines that I was given, and I was strong enough to travel home on Monday, Nov.4<sup>th</sup>, right before the elections. Praise the Lord, day by day, I have been gaining my strength back. Every Thursday night, we have our weekly church Bible study/supper. The first Thursday that we were back, it was our time to bring the groceries to the cooks so they could prepare the meal. I was so touched by their concern and care for me as I cut up onions for the chicken and noodles that they like to make. So many of my precious friends came up and told me they were praying for me. I really felt the love of the body of Christ. As a missionary, it's easy to think that I am there to serve and care for the Indigenous people that God has given us the joy of working with, but then God allows me to be needy and weak and frail, and then it gives them the opportunity to serve, love and care for me too. How beautiful is the body of Christ!!

It is amazing how God really gets our attention when we feel our frailty. So many times, in weakness, I think He shows us His promises and truths that we can cling to, believe in, and really make our own.

These are a few promises that have encouraged me and that I have been clinging to in the past 2 months.

***Psalms 91:1-4 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the LORD, He is my***

**refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.** 3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence. 4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

**Psa 94: 17-19 Unless the LORD had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O LORD, held me up. In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.**

**2 Corinthians 12:8-10 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.**

For the past month, I have gradually been getting back into teaching my classes. God has been so good to bring some new ladies to some of the Bible studies, and it is wonderful to see the growth in their lives and how God's Word is becoming practical in how they can live out the Christ life daily in the situations that they find themselves in.

### **December has been an impactful month...**

From Dec.6-9th, the PaiP church that we work with hosted a special youth camp. 97 youth and youth workers came and had a wonderful time. There were about a dozen or more people from the local church that gave of their time and energy to cook for and oversee the camp. It was so neat seeing how everyone worked together in very simple surroundings to make it an unforgettable camp. The guest speaker was a Paraguayan pastor who works a lot with the indigenous people groups in this area. He gave a clear gospel message. In the evenings we showed two of the Tetelestai video series that share what Jesus did on the cross for us. It was so cool to hear from several youths about the impact that the gospel had on them. One boy said he was really impacted by God's great love for him in dying on the

cross and taking his place like Jesus did for Barabbas. He prayed the most beautiful closing prayer of thankfulness to Jesus for his death on the cross for him.

We praise God for working in the lives of the youth that weekend. They were challenged to make their life count for the Lord.

**A special visitor.** On Dec. 17, our son, Connor, arrived back in Paraguay and spent two weeks with us during part of his Christmas break from his missionary training school in Durham at Ethnos Training. It was wonderful to spend time with Connor, to get a chance to spoil him and to hear all the things he's been learning during his first semester of training. On New Year's Eve, Connor arrived back in Ontario. We miss him already.

### **Christmas Eve service**

The PaiP church decided to plan a supper and put on a Christmas pageant on Christmas Eve. It was so neat how everyone worked together to make a wonderful evening for the church to enjoy together and to celebrate the Savior's birth. In the afternoon, the children played several outdoor games. Then we had a delicious supper of Paraguayan cornbread, rice noodles and meat and cabbage salad. The kids put on their Christmas pageant and did an amazing job. They really entered into their parts and sang their hearts out with the Christmas songs that went with the play. I had so much joy seeing them make the Christmas story come to life. God is doing a work in these young people's lives, and I really pray that they trust Christ as their Savior and let God use their lives for His glory. Please pray for a young man named Elgidio. He loves the Lord so much and really wanted to be a part of the Christmas play, but he had an epileptic seizure right at the front of the church before we started the pageant. Poor guy. His seizures have limited him so much in participating in ministry opportunities that he wants to be a part of. May God help him in this time of weakness and helplessness to keep walking with the Lord and hoping in Christ's mercy and grace in his life.

## **Happy New Year!!!**

What does 2025 hold? No one knows, but GOD, what is going to happen tomorrow. We can all make plans, but the future is in God's hands. He has a plan that He is working out for His world. At Christmas, we celebrate God's fulfillment of sending Jesus as the Savior of the world. He came and lived and died and rose again. Now He lives in heaven ever interceding on our behalf to the Father. Jesus is our hope for the year! He will help us face whatever comes our way! Praise his name

## **Vacation time**

We are so thankful to the Lord for providing for us to take some time away from our ministry in Paraguay to go on a vacation with some family and friends. In Florida, we met up with our son Spencer and his family and Odie's brother and sister-in-law, who is turning 50, to celebrate her birthday. Her parents, sister, brother-in-law, and some other friends were also in the group. We had an amazing time together and got to do a lot of fun activities. We especially had a great time with our three grandkids, who are growing up so fast! It was hard to say goodbye to everyone.

## **Visitors**

Tonight, we are headed back home - 6 hours on the bus. At the end of this week, a couple and three single ladies from Brazil are coming to our missionary station to do their final practicum for missionary training. They will be studying the PaiP language ( Guarani) and culture for the next month. We will be hosting them in our home.

Pray for us as we prepare for their stay and as we seek to encourage them and come alongside them in this training time. Pray that they can build great friendships with the PaiP and make an eternal impact on their lives.

## **Ways to pray for us this coming month.**

1. I (Odie) still have health/ gastritis issues even as I have been traveling. Please pray that I can heal up completely and build up my resistance to illness.

2. Pray for the 1 couple and 3 single Brazilian missionaries coming to stay with us this week. Pray for us as we host them for 1 month. We have a lot to do to get ready in the next couple of days for their arrival.

Pray, too, that as they interact with the PaiB, they can make good connections with the PaiB and learn a lot from this experience.

3. Pray for us we pour our lives into many people. May we continually be filled up spiritually ourselves so we can pour out God's love to others.

4. Pray that many more PaiB will trust in Christ as their Savior and that the believers will be strong witnesses to their family and friends.

5. Pray for our grown sons. -Anthony and his wife and daughter learning the K language in West Brazil. They are working alone without coworkers now. - Spencer, Joanna, and family just started a short furlough and are sharing the work they are going to be doing with the X people group when they go back to West Brazil. – Connor is in missionary training in Durham, ON. Pray for him to learn a lot and that God will give him clear direction for what He has for him in the future. We praise God for our boys and that they are serving the Lord.

6. We praise God that we have Mark's elderly dad, Dean, living with us. He has been such a blessing and encouragement in the work we are doing. He was a missionary in Paraguay for many years and has a lot of wisdom to give us as we teach and disciple people. Currently, we are having a bathroom built on to our house for him to have off his bedroom. With all the extra company coming, we are glad for an extra bathroom. It's almost done.

Thanks so much for standing with us in prayer and financially. We can't do this job on our own. We need the body of Christ, and we are so grateful for each one of you. As it says in *1 Corinthians 12: 26,27* *And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now, you are the body of Christ and members individually. NKJV*

All for now,  
Love Mark and Odie Goddard

(Working with Ethnos360 in the USA and Ethnos Canada)

**Our phone numbers in Paraguay are: Mark :**

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**\*Our US number is now active as well.** We have Connor's old number now. It is **1-262-399-2574.**

**We are also on WhatsApp, (our WhatsApp phone numbers are Odie+595-982-332-238, Mark +595-983-445-491), Facebook, Signal and Telegram if you want to get a hold of us there just send us a message and we will try to be more connected.**

**Our mailing address: Mark and Odie Goddard Casilla 131195 Asuncion, Paraguay, South America 1209**

**To give financially to help our ministry: You can give online at <https://ethnos360.org/give> and designate it to Mark and Odie Goddard or in Canada you can give online at <https://ethnos.ca/missionaries/> and designate it for Mark and Odie Goddard**

**Or you can mail a check to one of the addresses below. Make the check out to either Ethnos360 or Ethnos Canada with a memo that it is for Mark and Odie Goddard**

**Ethnos360 address:** 312 West First Street, Sanford, FL 32771 USA

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