



July 2020

the SHIELDS family

Third generation missionaries church planting in Panama

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March: First confirmed case of Covid-19. Only grocery stores and pharmacies are open. Everything else is closed, including beaches, rivers, and parks. Masks are obligatory. Fines apply if you leave your home outside of your allotted time frame or if you do not wear a mask. Vehicles can be towed as well. Sanitary fences are in place to prohibit travel between provinces. No one can pass sanitary fences without special travel permission papers. Checkpoints are established all throughout the country to take your temperature and sanitize your vehicle. Sundays no one but essential workers are allowed out of their homes.

May 13: Kids are now allowed outside only during the two hour period permitted to a parent. **May 18:** Adults are now allowed outside to exercise no further than one kilometer from home during their time slot.

June 1: Absolute quarantine was lifted for most of the country, except the two provinces that include Panama City and its suburbs. In our province, we no longer have a two hour allotment on certain days of the week and now have curfew hours from 7pm to 5am. Children are now allowed out of their homes from 4pm to 7pm. Hardware stores and industrial fabrication open.

June 7: Churches are now open with major restrictions. **We held our first church service of any kind in twelve whole weeks at our main church in San Félix!** We had to schedule the service at 5pm during the hours children are allowed out. It was rather odd with all of the restrictions and there are no Sunday School classes, but it was SO good to be in church as a family and with our church family! Praise the Lord!



Unfortunately, the comarca (the indigenous territory where we do the majority of our ministry), has been closed to foreigners since March. People are literally starving to death. A five year old girl died in May in the comarca. Ethan has only been permitted to enter the outskirts on a few occasions to deliver food to some of our pastors. **Thank you** to those who have sent funds to be able to purchase food. Not only is it helping the Ngäbe people physically, it is helping them spiritually too. Pastor Alcibiades took some of the food to a struggling family in his community. ***This provided him an opportunity to share the gospel with this family and some of them accepted Christ!***



We have been able to provide food for various pastors and some of their people on multiple occasions these last four months. Two of the pastors are Ngäbe and work in the comarca, Pastor Ramon Guerra of Molejón and Pastor Alcibiades Santos of Rio Fonseca. The other one is Pastor Josúe Alvarado from Venezuela who works in the Panamanian village of Alto Nancito. His father is a pastor in Venezuela who was here visiting when Coronavirus struck and has been stranded here since then. We are **grateful** for all who have given sacrificially so that these men can continue to share the Word!

There is much unrest right now in Panama due to the pandemic, lost jobs, schools closed mid-academic year, and political issues. Please **pray** for the leaders and people of Panama.