

Rob and Rebecca Gaebler - serving at Gospel for Asia

# SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM



*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ~ Matthew 6:33*

We find ourselves living in a very interesting time of history, do we not? But what comfort we can take in remembering that, no matter what changes we experience in our lives, God does not change and He is not surprised by events of history. "... For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure...'" (Isaiah 46:9b-10)

## COVID-19 Unable to Halt Ministry

We are doing well here at GFA, and are so grateful that during the time of lockdown we were still able to support the work of our brothers and sisters in Asia. In no way do we want to belittle the loss of life and economic struggle in our nation, even affecting many of you reading this newsletter, but we are also burdened by the enormous toll brought upon the people of Asia by the necessary



Migrant laborers walking hundreds of miles back to their native places (photo from www.indiatoday.in)

restrictions. Millions across South Asia are now jobless: rickshaw and taxi drivers, daily wage laborers, food service and retail workers, rag pickers... even beggars no longer

have anyone to beg from, as transportation has been halted. These families had no margin, and many are facing starvation.

In the midst of the struggle, the Lord has opened doors for GFA-supported workers to minister to hundreds of desperate families and individuals. After obtaining permission from local authorities, pastors and congregations have served their communities by preparing meals, distributing dry food packets, and providing face masks and soap. Several Bridge of Hope centers have been transformed into "community kitchens" to provide cooked meals for needy families, which is especially helpful for those who are not able to purchase fuel. GFA-supported workers also educate attendees about the virus and explain what preventative measures can be taken to limit the spread of the

disease. And most importantly, they share the good news of the hope found in Christ as they show His love tangibly.

The following images and quotes are taken from our web pages dedicated to providing updates and prayer points for the coronavirus situation in Asia: [www.gfa.org/coronavirus](http://www.gfa.org/coronavirus)

Distributing dry food rations



Using a school bus to distribute bags of vegetables to 150 families



*"We were praying for someone to come and help us. Really, God has sent you. We are so grateful to the pastor and his church."*

*~ Recipient*

*"I am surprised that a Christian missionary took initiative and convinced us to help our own Buddhist friends and villagers... This is a great act of love..."*

*~ Buddhist businessman who contributed to a food distribution at his village in Sri Lanka*

Preparing food packets



Observing proper social distancing while waiting in line



As we write this letter, we want to take the opportunity to **thank** each one of **you** for your faithful support. We could not be here if you were not standing behind us! We have been praying for you during these challenging times, and would love to hear from you if there is a specific need we can pray for. Please feel free to call, text, email, write a letter, Skype, Zoom... whatever method of communication you prefer! As always, you can find our contact information at the end of this newsletter.

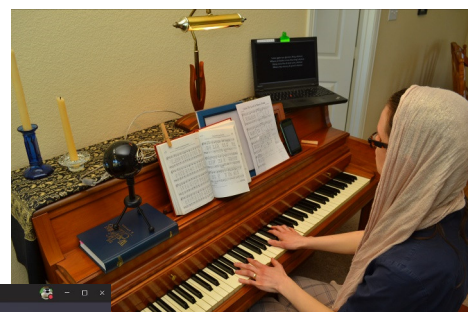
## Shelter-in-Place at GFA

While we have experienced changes in our routine due to the coronavirus crisis, we have definitely not been negatively impacted as so many people in our country and around the world have been. And we recognize this as a gift from the Lord - not something we deserved or obtained by our own efforts.

Our shelter-in-place restriction ran from March 26 to April 30. We only had two days advance notice, which was not much time for us in IT to assess and complete the necessary steps for equipping the staff to work from home. That was challenging, but the Lord answered many prayers and enabled us to get almost everything ready in time. And thankfully, we were able to handle the few remaining issues remotely. One major miracle He provided was a method for us to continue taking incoming ministry phone calls.

So on that Thursday morning, the normal stream of people heading from our homes on campus into the admin building did not occur. Some of the staff did have to go to the office: Fulfillment and some of the Donor Services processes were considered “essential services” and could not be moved to a home environment. The majority of us, however, logged into our computers from our bedrooms, dining rooms, and front porches. Both of us brought various computer equipment from the office to build our “home desks,” and

Home desk set-up



Above: leading adoration for prayer meeting, remotely  
Left: Rob leading one of our afternoon times of prayer over Microsoft Teams

Rebecca even figured out how to construct a standing desk.

We're very grateful that we were able to continue working during the season of sheltering in place. And even though we haven't been gathering in groups, we've still found ways to connect with people. One of our neighbors set up a “neighborhood chat time” meeting on Monday nights; we went for a bike ride with one of the staff families on a gorgeous Sunday afternoon; Rebecca participated in a mini-concert (a recorder trio playing a couple of Easter hymns). The shelter-in-place order didn't forbid walking and running, so we have been able to keep up our normal exercise routines and go for walks around campus. Those walks often end up including conversations with other people (from the other side of the road) who are also out walking.

We set up all our prayer meetings to be online, using Microsoft Teams for the short prayer times we have two or three times daily, and then using Zoom for our evening prayer meetings. Even now that the shelter-in-place order has been lifted, we're continuing with our virtual prayer meetings until it's safe to gather in groups again.

God has demonstrated His faithfulness to us over and over again, and we know that He will continue to fulfill His purposes in and through our lives.

Trusting Him,

*Rob & Rebecca*

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Praises

- **Praise** God for opening doors for GFA-supported workers to distribute food and supplies!
- **Praise** the Lord for thousands of needy families we have been able to help!
- **Praise** God for giving us success in transitioning everyone to work from home!
- **Praise** the Lord that He has kept us and all the GFA staff safe and healthy from the virus!

Prayers

- **Pray** for continued relief efforts in Asia, that we would be able to serve those who are most in need
- **Pray** that GFA-supported workers would continue to receive favor for reaching out in their communities
- **Pray** that there would not be an upward spike in coronavirus cases as restrictions start to lift
- **Pray** for us to have continued ministry vision as we work our IT tasks and tickets



*Thank you for your prayers*

*“...be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints” (Eph. 6:18)*