



A P R I L - 2 0 2 0

SERVING THE LORD IN

Latin America

News from Rev Dr Jonathan & Deaconess Cheryl Naumann



Parrot Opens Door for the Gospel!

Pastor Jonathan's hobby of befriending animals is fairly well known in the DR - whether it be rescuing a cat with its head stuck in a peanut butter jar (taken from our garbage), nursing a chicken back to health, or soaking and bandaging a dog's sore paw.

A few days ago, just before the 5 p.m. curfew, Pastor saw the above pictured parrot walking in front of our house, weak and unable to fly. He brought it to our "animal shelter" to feed it and keep it safe from lurking predators.

Thinking that the parrot could be someone's pet, today Pastor donned his face mask and gloves and headed down our street, to speak to the residents of each of the houses. Amazingly, at the first house where he stopped, the family said they had lost their beloved parrot, Sol (which means sun), and had spent all day looking for her before the previous day's curfew. They joyfully followed Pastor to our garden, keeping the proper social distance!

When he came inside, Pastor told me that he sadly had to hand the parrot over to Jesus - and then he added - "Jesus is the name of our neighbor who owns the parrot!"

But the end of this story is still unwritten. We have new friends - who know that we love them and their parrot - and an opportunity to speak more to them about the love of Jesus. Yes, God CAN open doors for witnessing to others, even during a time of pandemic!

“¿Qué es de vuestra fe?”

(Luke 8:22)

Jesus asked His disciples, in a boat in the midst of a storm, "Where is your faith?" (Luke 8:22) This is an appropriate question for Christians today as we weather the 'storm' of a global pandemic.

When people describe this crisis, they like to say, "We're all in the same boat." Perhaps it would be more accurate to say, "We're all in the same storm, but not in the same boat." Why? Because some of us are in the boat with Jesus, as we ride out this storm, and others are not. Others do not yet know there is a boat in which they can safely and successfully navigate through the storms of life, with their Lord Jesus beside them. And this is why we continue to serve as missionaries here in Latin America.

Knowing that we are in the boat with Jesus does not mean that the testing of our faith is easy. Just as it was for Jesus' disciples, the storm around us is frightening. We may question God, and ask, "Don't You care that we are perishing?" (Mark 4:38). Thankfully, God gives us many comforting answers in His Word, and these answers are accessible to us, if we hear or read them; and they are available to others when we share God's Word with them!

We know that God sent His Son into this world to be our Savior. He has already demonstrated that He cares about us. Whatever happens to us now, nothing can separate us from the love of God that is ours in Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:38). As Christians, all of us can offer Good News in the midst of the storm. We can trust in Jesus Christ as our Savior. He offers the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. In this world we can expect storms, but in the midst of such storms, God will strengthen our faith and give us what we need as we sail in the same boat with Jesus.

May God bless your travel with Jesus!

Thank you for your prayers and support!

Pastor Jonathan

Dear friends in Christ,

We are in good health, and sheltering at home in accord with government requirements. We are blessed with a wonderful team of missionaries who work together to take care of us and one another.

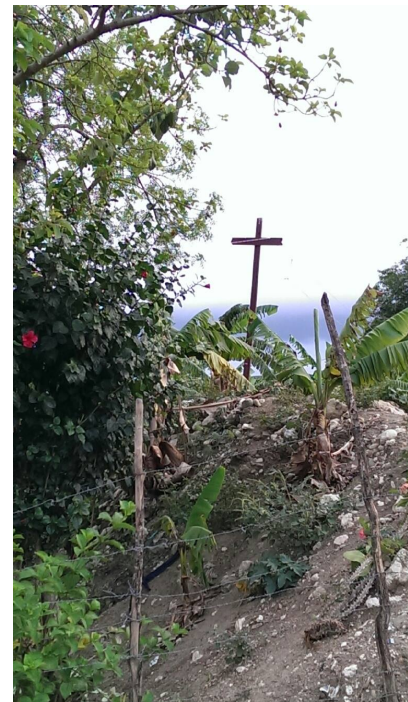
Mission work carries on as possible, sometimes in creative ways that are new to us. Easter day included a triumphant celebration of the resurrection of Christ, via internet live-streaming services from all of our mission congregations. Pastor Jonathan has also been providing video recordings of Sunday and other daily services in English for our missionary families. He also did a special "Service for the Bereaved, During a Time of Pandemic." These services and devotions can be accessed at any time by searching for *Doctor Jonathan Naumann* on YouTube.

The speaker for the annual Mercy Conference (which we had to cancel) was to be Pastor Michael Salamink, Executive Director of Lutherans for Life. Rather than being together for the six-hour seminar - "Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated Voices for Life" - we are using a tool called *Zoom* to Provide the workshop sessions to our missionaries all across the LAC region, at the same time, over a period of six weeks! While Pastor Salemink teaches from his home in the United States, we watch him on our computer screens and can even ask questions of him during the sessions. When this workshop is finished, feedback from missionaries will help us develop a similar course for the Spanish-speaking peoples where they live, since there are many differences in law and practice in relation to abortion, euthanasia, and other life issues in the different LAC countries.

This past week I had the pleasure of reviewing the activities of the Mercy Center during the previous year. Since the Mercy Center is an Institute of the Seminary, I reported to the faculty that the year included 15 educational workshops, with over 800 participants, held in eight countries. We also assisted with provision of a defibrillator unit for a mercy house in Chile, and collected medical packets and food for delivery when needed for disaster assistance. In relation to the pandemic, in my role as director of the VDMA Project, I've also been distributing three articles each week that focus on Spiritual, physical, and emotion assistance in times of great need. Thanks be to God that we have such materials available from LCMS Disaster Response, and that they have now been translated into Spanish for use in our region.

We think of you often and pray that you are finding reassurance and comfort in our Lord's embrace during these difficult days. **Thank you** for your prayers, your messages, and you financial support! love in Christ, *Deaconess Cheryl*

Photos: 1) Barbed wire, cross, and red flowers all together, provide a visual for Holy Week; 2) Pastor Jonathan getting ready to record the Easter service; 3) Pastor Salemink delivering the second Zoom session on "Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated Voices for Life."



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Please include in your prayers

- + That God would give strength and wisdom to our missionaries in Puerto Rico as they deal with more large earthquakes;
- + That God will continue to bless us with good health and keep us safe from every evil; + Thanksgiving for the ability to continue to work in new ways due to the internet; + That God will raise up more indigenous men to serve as pastors in our Lutheran missions and partner church bodies; + That our mission support fund will continue to receive ample gifts to keep us working here in the DR; + That the Holy Spirit will bring more people to faith in Jesus, even in this time of pandemic.

Tax-deductible gifts to support the work of Jonathan & Cheryl Naumann can be given:

- + **Online at www.lcms.org/jonathan.naumann**
- + **By phoning the LCMS donor care line: 888-930-4438**
- + **By mailing checks to The LCMS, PO Box 66861, Saint Louis, MO 63166-6861 with "Jonathan Naumann - Latin America" on the check memo line**