

G'day Praying Partners,

For the last 18 months, these email updates always feel the same. "G'day, we are in lockdown again." Unfortunately, this one is no different! Since our last update we've been in 2 more lockdowns (I think, it's easy to lose track) and we are in the midst of another one now. It started out as 1 week, then 2, we are now in week number 4 which is suppose to end on Friday, but we don't think that it will. I told someone the other day that the scary part is that it's starting to feel "normal", which is sad. I was listening to the man who heads up our Australian Christian Lobby and he pointed out that, as believers, we are coming to the realisation that the world is forever changed. There is no going back to life "before Covid". It could be an overwhelming realisation except that we take comfort in the fact that God is in control and He wasn't surprised by any of it. In my quiet time the other day it said, "Have you ever thought about the fact that nothing occurs to God?" He already knows it all, beginning to the end, and we don't have to fear. All around us we see hopelessness and fear. Don't shrink back from the great calling of our time – to share the Good News that there is no need to fear when you have Jesus!

We were out of one lockdown long enough to start to plan for our mini show in September, which we have since put on hold. Instead of just cancelling, we're praying that God would allow us to be able to have it by the end of the year. Our mini show 2019 was our last outreach. It brings tears to my eyes just to write that. Please pray with us that somehow, we'd be able to go forward at the end of the year.

We did manage to squeeze in a baptism service earlier in the year as well! What a blessing! The pictures are still up on our blog ernstfamilydownunder.blogspot.com if you want to take a look. In the midst of so much, it was incredibly joyful to see these precious people declare their salvation to all through the waters of baptism.

It has been such a sad time. We have dear friends who have lost loved ones to Covid (as I'm sure all of you could say). The pastor of our sending church is currently in hospital with Covid. I have a dear friend here who is Muslim (I've mentioned her before as she always brings her children to our outreaches) whose family is trapped in Kabul. They helped the Americans and are fearful for their lives. It is heart wrenching for me to hear the utter despair in her voice. I just feel sad all the time with everything that's going on. I'm sure you would echo my words "even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!". But, as long as He tarries and as long as we still walk this soil, we have a job to do. Never forget that. No disease, no lockdown, no terrorism stops the gospel. Instead of fear, praise God for allowing us to be a part of this time and giving us the opportunity to be His hands and feet in a world desperate for hope!

Shining the Light Down Under,

Rob and Jackie