

the NA CEA Newsletter

COVID-19 AND THE MISSION

Written by Dr. Rajesh Paul, Medical Director

Covid and **Corona** are perhaps the most spoken words of 2020 and 2021. We still don't know how long we will be talking about them. There seems to be no end to the misery that it is causing to the whole humanity.

The word Covid was slowly making rounds in the beginning of 2020. Fear was slowly creeping into the minds of people. It was all about a virus that was created in some lab in China and was moving fast. My memory is still fresh with people staring at anyone who was sneezing or coughing. People were still travelling but with fear in their minds.

I had to go to Chennai as usual and meet with the preachers there. I was trying to remain calm. People were trying to distance from each other. It was as if people were not trusting of each other. The meet concluded and it was time for me to head home. The night train was cancelled so I took the day train the next morning to Vijayawada. The train was literally empty.

The young woman with her father in the same compartment I was travelling in quietly slipped away to a different seat in another compartment. I was like, man, did I have leprosy or something?

At around 11:30 pm, our Prime Minister goes on air and announced that everything will come to a standstill starting midnight that same night. It was a complete lockdown. All means of transportation across the country: planes, trains, buses, trucks, cars, motorcycles were to stop wherever they are. All businesses shut down. Nobody should come out of their houses for the next 15 days. It was the beginning of the horror movie, with us as live characters. There was severe police brutality. People who came out on the street even for emergency were beaten mercilessly like animals which broke into the fields feeding on crops. Nobody could go to work. There was no advance information. There was chaos across the country. People were caught off guard. Most families did not even have food stored to eat. It was a disaster for families who relied on daily wages to support their families. Migratory workers could not pay rent and were asked to vacate houses. It was heartbreaking to see people walking the length and breadth of the country trying to reach homes. The hottest summer sun claimed many lives as they died trying to reach their loved ones. Families still waiting for their loved ones, who, God only knows where they are, and even if, whether dead or alive. No work, no money, no food. What was happening? What was our Government thinking? Were they even thinking at all?

COVID-19 AND THE MISSION (cont.)

After a week of confinement to four walls, (I say four walls, as most houses in India are small without a yard to come out and sit). If someone opened the door to sit on the steps in front of their houses, the police would literally kill you. We were allowed to come out of our houses between 6-9 am to purchase groceries. Everything was rationed. Get back home by 9 am or else be beaten by the police. Any area where a patient was tested positive was zoned off for a radius of one kilometer. None could go in or out for the next 15 days. As days passed by, more zones were being sealed. The news of deaths started to arrive from across the country. The lockdowns were just being extended 15 days at a time. Months rolling by confined to houses.

The churches were all asked to shut. People could no longer worship. Sundays became silent. The preachers struggled to make ends meet. No one had money to give them or even offer a small offering that helped them to support their families. What made the situation even worse was, people were looking at the church to help them. What answer can someone give to a situation such as this?

As doctors, my wife and I were issued passes to go to the hospital. We had to navigate multiple police checkpoints to get to the hospital. My car was full of dents as police would hit your car with their batons even when we had stopped the car. I spent a ton of money to repair and paint my car. The only Government hospital in town was converted into a Covid only facility. The onus on taking care of any other condition was left to the private sector and the peripheral smaller clinics. We were dressed like astronauts holed up inside a zoo. (They called it PPE's and demarcated zones. I still look at it as astronauts in zoo). No two people could sit together. I always grew up with the teaching; United we stand, divided we fall. For the first time we had to teach people; United you die, divided you live. We were literally bathing in sweat inside those PPE's. My wife and I and the staff at the hospital lost a lot of hair. I almost turned bald. As much as I wanted to help people I hated to go to work. Fear was on the faces of all the staff members. I had to motivate others and motivate myself more. I was praying that not one would quit job or fall sick to Covid. That would be a disaster and would force us to shut down. It was nightmare to find nurses now as most were afraid to work. We were working full swing and packed, for free, as patients had no work and no money to pay us but needed the mission hospital badly. The only resource was the mission support to pay for all our needs at the hospital and for the personnel working there. We were consuming sanitizers and other protective equipment like crazy. Thanks to the donations that helped us to purchase the needs. The staff felt a lot safer but not totally free from fear.

The schools were asked to shut down and we went online. We were asked to not collect the little fees we collect to pay the teachers. How were we going to pay the salaries? We could not let them starve; they have worked faithfully all these years. The loans on the buses had to be paid. How was all this going to happen. It was a nightmare that was only getting bigger with each passing day.

Prayer was very vital and I would give all the credit to prayer which helped everyone in the mission. We needed hope and strength to pass through this plague that was spreading across the land and even more in the minds of the people. Fear was robbing the hearts of men and hope was being sucked out of the lives of men and women across religions, caste, color and creed. What we needed was hope. This is only possible with Jesus Christ. And what better way to stay in communion with Him than through prayer.

We at NACEA decided to look to God as a single family. We took support from 2 Chronicles 20:1-30. We saw how Jehoshaphat won the battle How the Lord fought the battle on behalf of Israel. Not a sword raised but a battle won.

Jehoshaphat's prayer was filled with

- 1. Praise,**
- 2. Remembering God for who He is and Renewing themselves in Him,**
- 3. Acknowledging that everything comes from God and that everything is His and**
- 4. Yearning for God and Yielding to His will and direction.**

All the churches and the members, hospital, school and all the constituent institutions of the mission decided to look to God like Jehoshaphat did with his people.

God's word is true yesterday, today and forever. God can change our difficulties into opportunities; our weakness could change into life changing experience for us and to others through us, our little into more. The list could go on. In the hands of God, every one of our shortcomings is blessed beyond measure.

As the days passed,

1. The mission **provided for food** to all the villages we were ministering to. We reached out to newer communities. We were able to **establish three new churches**. All this could not be possible without the generosity of many like you. As churches began to open up, there were more people in the churches. **Many were baptized into Christ**. Not one of our preachers became sick or left ministry because of the difficulties they were facing.
2. **None of the teachers fell sick or quit**, even though we were facing trouble paying them for more than a year.
3. At the hospital, we had a **family prayer at 9 am every day. Every half hour, nurses would take turns to go and pray in the chapel**. Guess what **not one fell sick or quit**.
4. Pressure to keep up with payments was very stressful. Times we would just get holed up and were even afraid to answer a phone call. But **not one succumbed to the pressure**.

Is God not faithful when He says that this battle is not yours but His? Looking back over the last year:

- 1. I see fear that was calmed.**
- 2. I see needs that were met,**
- 3. I see challenges that were overcome,**
- 4. I see emotions, pain, suffering, and many more unexplained feeling but they were all won. A war was won, but I don't know how.**

COVID-19 AND THE MISSION (cont.)

As I speak, the second wave is spreading like tsunami; infecting millions, killing thousands. Fear even greater, people dying in larger numbers, tears and wailing all around me. This looks to be a bigger battle, more dirty and bloodthirsty. Were our rulers unprepared? Did they not learn a lesson from the first wave? These are questions and statements being aired as more lives are lost due to the virus, no beds in hospitals, no oxygen, no medicines. As much as I would want it to end, I don't know when all this would end. I don't have answers

All that we have is Christ, who is the author of our faith. I know that He alone knows the answers to everything. All that we need to do as the body of Christ is to surrender ourselves to God in Unity in Prayer filled with Praise, Remembering God for who He is and Renewing ourselves in Him, Acknowledging that everything comes from God and that everything is His and Yearning for God and Yielding to His will and direction. The battle will be won and I will have a lot more to stand as a witness for.

God is always good and faithful. We will win, if only we let him fight our battles. Let us all pray in unity and praise

Note: My heartfelt thanks to everyone who is supporting this ministry in their own capacity and for your partnership in taking the love of Christ to the people across the world, especially to the people in India. I urge you to continue praying and giving to the mission. God is alive. People see Him alive through our actions. The world needs God more than ever. May God continue to bless you more abundantly.

**Send your Gifts to: NACEA, P.O. Box 2309
Washington, IN 47501**

You can also give on-line at <http://naceamission.org/>

Overview of NACEA Mission

Planting Churches - 54 Churches with 36 buildings (plus 2 under construction & land for 4 others acquired)

Healing the Sick – 12 bed Christian Medical Center (includes outpatient, dental clinic & Diabetes Clinic) & 2 Village Medical Clinics plus rotating clinics in the other villages

Equipping Nationals – 60 trained preachers - 40 currently serving in NACEA Churches

Rescuing Children – 45 children currently in the Christian Children's Home + 5 others fully supported in their homes

Educating Children – during 2019/20 school year 600 children attended Oberst Christian Academy (NACEA High School) – 120 of these attended tuition free

Caring for Widows – 10 supported widows help with the Children's Home plus 150 more widows are helped through the local Churches (PRANAM Program)

Training in Life – tailoring and candle making classes are held in the villages – Computer classes are taught at the Computer Institute and Nurses are trained at the CMC

Disaster Relief – typhoon, flood, fire & virus assistance provided

Short Term Mission Trips – a trip in February 2022 is in the early planning stage



Winners of essay writing and drawing competitions on CULTURE & HISTORY OF INDIA

Oberst Christian Academy Happenings

Rakesh Paul – School Principle

In March 2020 the government announced closure of schools due to Covid. We were shocked as the academic year was going to end in April 2020. Due to lockdown many people could not go out for work and all our parents were daily wage workers. Schools were ordered not to ask school fees from parents. We were also ordered to pay salaries to school staff. It was a very difficult situation to handle as there was no source of incoming fees. Government officials are checking salary registers every month even to date. Many schools shut down unable to bear this pressure. Many have lost their jobs. We praise and thank God for enabling the school to withstand these times. We thank God for enabling the staff with understanding. It was a tough time for me as staff keep calling and asking for salaries. I only could cry out to God.

We were conducting online classes for grade 1 to grade 10 students. It was hard for many students as all of their parents did not have smart phones. But we continued for the students who could have not more than 5 students in every class. As the number of cases was reducing we started opening school in phase manner I.e. December 2020 for 10th grade and by February 2021 we opened for all the classes. It was the parents' choice to send. We had to buy masks sanitizers and thermal scanners. We had to sanitize each room everyday with fog machines. We have to follow the government's standard operating procedures. By God's grace 250 students started coming to school. We praise and thank God none of the students and staff faced any problems.

Unfortunately due to the sudden rise in Covid cases we had to shut down the school once again from 20 April 2021. The situation is not so good as many known people are getting affected and dying. We continue to keep in prayers. We thank God for enabling the board to take every effort to help the ministry. We remain thankful to everyone for your love and support. We love you all and continue to pray for you all. God bless you all.

The government has ordered that schools remain shut until 30th of June. However we will be starting online classes from June 12 onwards for grades 1 to 10. Thank you for your love and support. I'll keep you updated with the school activities.



NACEA Teachers on Women's Day

School Needs

The following are needed:

Library Books – any amount

School Desks - \$150 each

Fire prevention equip - \$7,000

Teacher Salaries – any amount

Designate your check as follows:

School Library

School Desks

Fire Prevention

Teacher Salaries



New School Playground

Mission Needs

Bibles - \$6 each

Preacher Training - \$750 per preacher per 6 month school term

Children's Home - \$40 per child per month

School Fire Prevention Equipment - \$7,000

Supplemental Hospital Operating Expenses - \$3000 per month

New Church buildings - \$10,000 each + land costs between \$5,000 & \$7,000 per lot.

Nurses Training - \$50 per student per month

School desks (each will seat 2 or 3 children) - \$125 each - 50 needed

PRANAM (food for elderly, widows, & neglected) - \$10 per person per month

School Sponsorship - \$20 per student per month

Hospital 2nd Floor - \$350,000 or any amount – NACEA is teaming with FAME & on this project

School Auditorium - \$75,000 or any amount

If you would like to contribute to all of the NACEA ministries, you may give to the General Fund and the NACEA Board will use your funds where most needed. If you would like to contribute to a specific ministry, please designate as such on your donation. For details of ministry needs, please contact Mike Harker at mikeharker@frontier.com or 812-247-3143 or 812-709-9621

Send your gifts to: NACEA, P.O. Box 2309, Washington, IN 47501

You can also give on-line at <http://naceamission.org/>

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School Auditorium Construction



IDES Food Distribution

**For more information, visit us online at:
<http://naceamission.org/> and Facebook: nacea**

NACEA

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