

## June 2020

### Mission Africa and Covid-19

In response to the current COVID-19 restrictions, Mission Africa has made the decision to furlough most of its UK staff under the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Staff will remain employed by Mission Africa but will not carry out work for the Mission for the period of their furlough. Mission Africa will review this regularly, in line with Government advice, but for the foreseeable future, the Mission Africa office will run at a limited capacity. The decision to furlough staff has been taken now to give us the best opportunity to sustain our activities and staffing levels in the future. Please note that, as a result of this decision, the Mission will NOT be sending out prayer letters and other updates by post until further notice – all communication will be by email or other electronic means. The Mission Office is not continually staffed, but the answering machine is monitored. Normal service will be resumed as soon as possible, D.V.!

### Points for Prayer

#### Africa

- ❖ In general terms, we should give thanks to God that the Covid-19 crisis does not appear as yet to have struck Africa as hard as it might have done. However, it is too soon to say how things will develop. The low rates of infection and death that are being relayed to the outside world may be as a result of accidental and deliberate under-reporting. As with the UK, the future trajectory that the course of the epidemic will take is entirely impossible to predict. We should continue to pray that God will show mercy to Africa during this time of pandemic. Pray for places, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, where they are also battling outbreaks of infectious diseases, such as Ebola and measles.
- ❖ The security situation in much of Africa remains grim. Affiliates of Islamic State and Al Qaeda continue to wreak havoc in north-eastern Nigeria and neighbouring countries such as Chad, Niger and Mali. Burkina Faso faces an existential threat from numerous jihadi groups operating within its borders. In East Africa, Islamic State is gaining ground in Somalia, Congo and Mozambique and Al Shabaab continues to pose a threat to Kenya. Pray that God would strengthen the efforts – both African and International – to defeat the murderous evil of terrorism.

#### Burkina Faso

- ❖ The **Evangelical Protestant Church** ask for particular prayer for a difficult situation at the town of Loropeni. At least 11 churches have been destroyed following attacks by followers of African traditional religion, objecting to the church's presence in the community. Pray that peace might be restored and the witness of the church be unhindered.
- ❖ **Ana van Brakel** – Ana asks for your prayers as she continues to pursue UK citizenship. Some bureaucracy is hindering her progress – pray that this might be easily overcome. Give thanks for her successfully passing her Life in the UK test. Pray that she can continue to make good use of her recently-acquired TEFL qualification.

- ❖ **Jeremy Nash** – Jeremy is furloughed, but his work in Burkina continues in his absence. He asks that you would please pray for Marc Koussoube, as he has to organise the distribution of materials for the end-of-course awards ceremonies. Marc is contacting committees, finding out the number of schools and children who have completed the course, and then sending out the required quantities of material to each centre. Pray the ceremonies would be well organised and the children pleased to receive recognition of their achievement in completing the course. Pray for wisdom as to what to do for schools who have not had time to complete the 10 lessons, whether they should just stop or if some way can be found to complete the missing lessons without it affecting revision for end of primary school exams.

## Chad

- ❖ **David, Lucy and Sophie Morrison** - The Morrisons ask for prayer for Beth, a lady linked with the Acacia ministry who recently lost her son just a couple of days after he was born. They also ask us to pray that, during a time of break in ministry due to Covid restrictions, the Holy Spirit would increase hunger for Christ in those who are in contact with the Acacia ministry.

## Kenya

- ❖ We are in constant contact with our friends in the **PCEA**. The church has done a great job in distributing funds to the needy during the pandemic, for which we give thanks to God. We are thankful to God that the PCEA Thogoto Home for The Aged has been spared Covid-19 and that things are stable at the home. Pray for Jane as she continues to give exemplary Christian leadership and service at THFA.

## Nigeria

- ❖ **The Gaiyas** - Pamela remarks that as a follow on from the ACTS Strategic Planning held in March earlier this year, the need for a comprehensive ACTS catalogue has come to the fore again. Give thanks that Pamela and Sid have been working on this during days of lockdown. The need for the catalogue has greatly increased as extreme economic challenges are faced. Continue to pray for the ministry of ACTS: remember the leadership under Rev Luka Vandi, the Management and all Staff. Pray for the Lord's provision during these difficult days.
- Pamela and Musa are careful when out restocking in the market; mixed areas means Covid-19 is spreading among communities. Lockdown in Plateau continues each Monday to Wednesday, with Thursday to Sunday being free movement days. Give thanks that Gracie has completed Grade 4 and is now on Summer break!
- ❖ **Sid Garland** – Sid is praising God that books are on the move, in spite of various lockdown measures, with a container recently released from Lagos port and another due for shipping in June. Sid is also asking for prayer for ACTS in Nigeria and Kenya to be able to keep going, in spite of several months with virtually no sales income. Also, please pray that ACTS would be able to make more use of the internet, including social media and Zoom.
- ❖ **The Ibias** - Samantha thanks God for the success of the online Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS) conference that held at the end of last month. Pray that God would help FCS find new ways like this to reach the students at this time. Samantha also thanks God for the good health of her family. Pray for God's continued protection on them.
- ❖ **Katie Morrison** - Katie asks for prayer for the staff at Holley Memorial Hospital, for good health as they carry out their day to day activities. Pray also for the management team that their decisions will be to the benefit of the patients and staff and will result in the growth of the Hospital to the Glory of God. Katie asks us to join with her in

prayer for those patients who have undergone surgery this month during the visit of the orthopaedic surgeon. Many are presently recovering. Please pray that they would be protected from infection as they recover.

Katie asks you to remember those on the Mission Africa Child sponsorship programme. Food prices have risen during the Covid-19 crisis and, naturally, many families will feel the burden.

- ❖ **Sarah Morrison** – Sarah has returned to her nursing career here; we give thanks to God for her excellent service in Nigeria. Pray that she will stay well as she serves the Lord in the NHS. Pray also that God would guide her as she considers her future.
- ❖ **The Ekanems** - Praise God for watching over the Ekanems and keeping them safe in the midst of the Coronavirus epidemic. Pray for Gail as she does homeschooling with Angel and her two cousins. Pray also for God's comfort for Gail, as she has also recently suffered a family bereavement in Ireland.

Pray for Godwin as he conducts a funeral service on 6th June. May he bring a word of comfort and hope to those who mourn. Pray also for his sister-in-law, Uduak, and her children; pray especially for the twin girls, who continue to struggle with boils on their skin.

- ❖ **The Ogbonas**- although Iris is retired from Mission Africa, the Mission keeps in close contact with her. Pray that she and Rufus are granted good health and God's protection. Pray for William Wheatley College as they make plans to allow Iris to retire finally from the work of the College. Pray also that Iris may soon realise her desire to visit Scotland to celebrate her 40 years in Nigeria.

## Mission Africa

- ❖ Give thanks to God that we have been able to send something approaching £20,000 to our various partners in Africa for the relief of poverty during the Covid-19 pandemic. The emergency appeal for funds remains open.
- ❖ Please pray that God will continue to provide the resources needed to continue the work of the Mission.
- ❖ Pray that God will continue to send fresh applicants to join the Mission. Give thanks to God for some recent applications and indications of interest in serving.
- ❖ Pray for Council as they seek the will of God for Mission Africa in these troubled days. Pray that God will bless them with the special wisdom that he promises in His word.
- ❖ Pray for the Chief Executive as he learns to take on many unfamiliar tasks! Pray that his health remains good.
- ❖ Pray for all the staff; especially pray for those who are furloughed, that they might not become discouraged or despondent.
- ❖ Pray for the success of the Mission Africa Conference on June 13<sup>th</sup>. Missionary presentations will all be done through video. This has not been attempted before – please pray that it goes ahead in a God-honouring fashion. Further details of the June Conference will be emailed to those who subscribe to this Prayer Monthly bulletin.

Please be assured that we keep all our faithful supporters in our constant prayers. May God bless you and keep you, now and always.

Dr Paul Baillie

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