

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” - Jeremiah 29:11-13

29 September 2021

Dear Friends,

I know the above passage is addressed to Israel after they have gone astray but I like these verses because they speak to the heart of the Lord to those whom He has chosen and loves very much. We fit into that category. When events in this world impact us in challenging ways, it is easy to be despondent or even negative. When we cannot control outcomes it stresses us until we look to the Lord and read His words of encouragement. We realize we are living out our story as a child of God when we seek Him with all our heart. Our life path is not random and we are ‘on course’ to spending forever with the God who is in control of the past, present and eternity.

Many of you may know (from a prayer email blast I sent yesterday) that my son David is very sick with Covid-19. We have not seen him in a few weeks due to travel and so we do not think we have been exposed. Yesterday morning he had a high fever for the third day in a row and while taking a shower to cool down, he passed out. His girlfriend Laura also has had symptoms. Since I have a knee replacement surgery scheduled for October 25, he asked Laura to take him to the ER. He spent over 10 hours there while they checked him out. His oxygen levels were within range. They gave him some medication to bring down the fever and an IV to get him rehydrated. They also were able to procure and treat him with monoclonal antibodies. Lastly, they did a CT scan to see if he had any blood clotting in his lungs. That came back negative but found he does have pneumonia. He is back home now resting but he is not out of the woods by a long shot. The hospital will continue to monitor virtually. Therefore, this has been a bit stressful for Elaine and I being unable to spend time with him and feeling a bit helpless. Laura spent the whole day with him though, he was greatly encouraged by her, and we feel blessed that she is a big part of his life. Please pray for David for rapid healing and for peace for our family as we travel this road.

On another front, our ministry is going through some major changes in our structure right now. You might think this is the result of the pandemic but that is actually a coincidence since we have been planning this for over two years. I want to stress that nothing about Campus Crusade (Cru in the US) has changed as far as our calling and mission. The change is in how we will lead and is more structural in nature. We now have seven regions globally and my current director has been named the Vice President for Global Leaders. His primary responsibility is to make sure our new structure works as intended (as in all leadership changes, this is a huge challenge). Our team makeup has changed and we are a much smaller team. Dela has asked Elaine and I to stay on to help lead in strategic leadership. We love Dela and Elizabeth and all of our team members and while I am a bit nervous, I am reminded that when we



Our team and two close friends Greg and Anne

follow God, He always asks us to step out in faith. If we ever get to the point that we don't have to trust Him to do the mission He has called us to, then we need to bow out. That is no place for a child of God to be.

I mentioned this change has been in the works for quite a while and the communication process and involvement of our global leaders has been very strong. I would like to share the five things we would like to characterize our movement with to encourage you. We call these our strategic intent. Please pray for all of us as we strive to make these real in our lives:

1. **Love Jesus, Love People** – This is the most important thing we do.
2. **Focus on our strengths** to Win, Build and Send multiplying disciples
3. **Pioneer into Missional Gaps** – as we go into places unreached with the gospel using whatever means necessary.
4. **Run an effective and Agile Organization** – being willing to adjust the way we do ministry as the situations demand.
5. **Raise sustainable Leadership and Funding** – In every national movement.

Lastly, I would like to ask you to please pray for my upcoming knee replacement surgery. They are replacing my left knee this October 25 and if all goes well, my right knee early next year. I have pretty bad arthritis in both knees and no cartilage remaining in either. I have been riding my bike a lot in the effort to lose weight and get in the best possible shape as possible. I really like riding but that will change for a while once surgeries start. Please pray for a successful outcome.

There is much more going on in our lives than I have time to share right now and I thank you for reading this far. The email blast I sent yesterday asking for prayer for my son was so encouraging for Elaine and I as we had over 50 responses of friends praying for us. You are all very special people to us!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark & Elaine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Update: David is sleeping better (at least 2 to 4 hours at a time). He is more at peace knowing the caregivers know what is going on and caring for him. His company is fully supporting him (they even sent him a fruit basket and balloons 😊) His fever has leveled off in the upper 90's but he still has a feeling of compression on his chest (which is symptomatic). Please continue praying for his recovery and no issues with his compromised immune system.

PS: I realize some of you may not receive our email prayer blasts from time to time. If you would like to, please email Elaine and I at thegriffens@bellsouth.net