

If you are like me, you want to find some kind of silver lining in the COVID-19 Crisis. *

April 2020

I always try to find the positive so that I practice 1 Thessalonians 5:18, "In everything give thanks, for this is God's will." When I do so, I find I am much more content and joyful.

This is not the same as pretending there is no problem but changing my focus to get beyond the tragic and back onto the hopeful. If you like the sound of that, then read on. If you prefer to be gloomy, turn on your TV!

Ways the COVID-19 crisis can help us:

1. The COVID-19 crisis can help us realize how much we need Jesus for eternal salvation.

In the midst of everyday sameness, it is easy to forget that we are ALL going to die one day. The COVID-19 crisis might hasten our death, but it doesn't change the fact of death. As I understand it, most people will get the virus at some point. And for most people it will be no more than an annoyance, like a common flu. But, the enhanced risk for the vulnerable is causing all of us to contemplate our eventual death and eternity.

For the Christian, the worst that can happen—death, is actually the best that can happen. We don't have a death wish. We simply agree with the Apostle Paul who wrote, "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21)

2. The COVID-19 crisis can help us focus on family

While all of us are to some degree "quarantined," or practicing "social distancing" it's a great opportunity to focus more on our families. Let's take advantage! Yesterday evening at the Williams residence, we played a table game, which is something that doesn't happen usually on a weekday evening. It happened because of the virus. Too bad it sometimes takes a crisis like this to prompt more family times.

3. The COVID-19 crisis can help us get better prepared.

Most safety devices are usually created after a tragedy occurs. I wish it were not so, but it is.

- We wear seatbelts because of all those killed when they were thrown out of cars.
- We have smoke and CO2 detectors because people have died.
- We put fences around pools because children have drowned.

There is no doubt that we will learn from this tragedy. If we are smart, we'll implement safety measures that will make us better prepared for both the next crisis.

4. The COVID-19 crisis can help us trust the Lord.

After my last point, you might think I'm simply going to be prepared with worldly preparations. **However, I actually believe the most important preparation is spiritual fortification.** "Some nations boast of their chariots and horses, but we boast in the name of the LORD our God." (Psalm 20:7 NLT)

5. The COVID-19 crisis can help us get unfinished projects done!

Since we're not going out as much, we have opportunities to do things we normally (think) we don't have time for. Instead of staying glued to the TV, **let's do some something constructive! A great one is discipleship!**

As I write, our son Gabe is home from work. So later today we're planning to do another DJJ discipleship journey together. You can do the same—they are all available without charge online.

**This article is abbreviated from a recent blog post. The full Blog posting can be found at markalanwilliams.net or through this link: <http://bit.ly/COVIDblog>*

Dr. Mark Alan Williams
President and Founder

2020 Has Already Been Quite a Year of Ministry!

God has been so gracious to the DJJ ministry already in 2020. At this time of writing, flights are nearly shut down due to the COVID19 crisis. But, we were able to complete major projects requiring international travel in January and February, before the full impact of the crisis hit!

January

I (Mark) traveled to three countries in Africa for the purpose of developing partnerships: Liberia, Uganda and Kenya. In each country we organized a one-day Partnership Training Event. I introduced key ministry leaders to DJJ and no doubt, **there will be hundreds and thousands** disciples due to these events and the leaders.



Top left: Liberia
Top right: Western Uganda
Bottom left: Eastern Uganda
Bottom right: Kenya

But more importantly, the Lord provided Regional Coordinators in each of the countries:

- ◆ **Liberia: Pastor David Gbalee**
- ◆ **Uganda: Pastor Godfrey Kakembo**
- ◆ **Kenya: Pastor Kennedy Karanja**



Left: Liberia Mark being "kinged"
Right: Mark handing out Partnership Event Training Certificates

February

2020 Has Already Been Quite a Year of Ministry!

Eleven days after returning from Africa, I (Mark) led a group of 49 on our first DJJ Holy Land Pilgrimage to Israel. It was a fantastic time of discipleship and fellowship with new and old friends. Carolyn was able to go and also our son, Ben. Other DJJ staff also went including Jason Resende, from Brazil, and Patty Hansen, along with her son, Matthew.



Left: Group photo at the Synagogue in Capernaum, Northern Israel

Right: Materials Dept. working after sightseeing, Jason Resende and Patty Hansen (not pictured)

After the rest of the pilgrimage group left Israel, I stayed to record videos for the upcoming DJJ Journeys in the Old Testament. The video team and I traveled to Egypt and around Israel to record 61 videos. These videos are now in post-production.

March

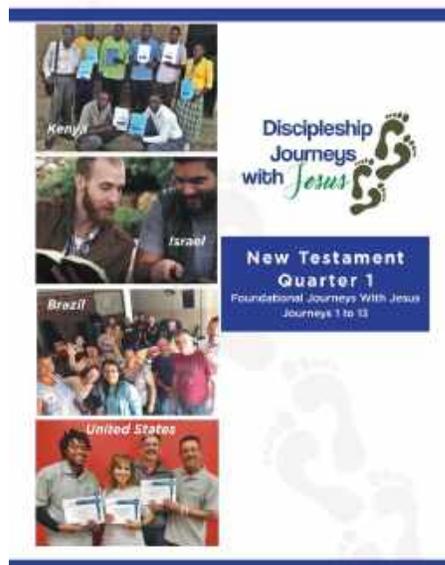
Soon after I (Mark) came home, travel was shut down in Israel and other locations around the world. God was so good to allow us to complete these projects beforehand!

Two other things happened in March. 1) The release of our final version of English Quarter 1. If you haven't updated to the new version, download it from the website now. This also means that we can start having translations start up again.

2) On March 10th we held a local pastor/ministry leader event to share how to bring discipleship to their churches and ministries using DJJ materials.



We thank you for your faithful prayers and support of this ministry!



Financial Request, Can You Help?

Earlier in this update, we mentioned our Old Testament Video project. In case you are unfamiliar, each of the 52 OT discipleship studies is accompanied by 2 videos recorded on location in the lands of the Bible. (20 different locations were recorded in Feb.)

Now, Mark needs to return to record for the remaining 32 studies. These will be recorded in Israel and either Kurdistan or Jordan. At this time, we are not sure of the timing due to the current virus crisis.

When travel opens up again, we need to be ready. For that we need your help. The total cost for these Old Testament videos is \$50,000.

So far, we have spent \$13,600. The remaining need is estimated to be \$36,000. **Can you help us with this project? Your gift of any size will be appreciated!**



Mark climbing Mt. Sinai, Egypt



Michael, our videographer. Jordan River, near Gilgal.

Thank you in advance for considering this need and thank you to those who support the regular ongoing needs of this ministry.

To earmark donations for this need, use the enclosed giving slip and mark the “Special Gifts” portion or make a note on your online donation.

Prayers:

In March we tried something new! If you don't receive our email communication and would like a copy, please visit our website, under the About Us tab and then Stories from Around the World to download a copy. April is now available, in both English and Portuguese! **Thank you for praying with us!**

MARCH 2020

Please Pray & Thank God for:

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1. Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth and to glorify Jesus Christ.	2. Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth and to glorify Jesus Christ.	3. Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth and to glorify Jesus Christ.	4. Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth and to glorify Jesus Christ.	5. Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth and to glorify Jesus Christ.	6. Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth and to glorify Jesus Christ.	7. Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth and to glorify Jesus Christ.
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29. Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth and to glorify Jesus Christ.	30. Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth and to glorify Jesus Christ.	31. Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth and to glorify Jesus Christ.				

Thank you!



Ways To Donate:

Visit our website:

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Mail a donation to:

DJJ
P.O. Box 2975
Vista, CA 92085-2975



Uganda, Africa

Regional Representative to Uganda, Godfrey Kakembo (pictured to the right with his wife, Esther) reports:

We thank God and give Him the glory for what we are experienced in DJJ! Partnership trainings were held in Central and Western Uganda on January 15th and 17th.

After the Partnership Event, pastors, bishops, and leaders came to me (Godfrey) and requested to organize more partnership trainings in other Districts in Uganda. The need for discipleship is high. **Out of 48 pastors, bishops and leaders, I talked with them and 20 have accepted to be the Ambassadors (trainers) to assist in DJJ partnership trainings. These Prolific Ambassadors come from Different districts in Uganda.**



Mark with Bishop Bob, Pastor Joseph and Godfrey as they traveled to Western Uganda to hold the 2nd Partnership Event in 2 days!

Some pastors, after the Partnership training, started using DJJ Materials in their meetings. For example, Bishop Edward uses them at his church. Here, at Goshen school, we also use the materials every week.

The Partnership event was meaningful in that it brought connection, unity, and teamwork to different ministries in the country.

Prayers:

- ◆ Pray that this group of teachers will grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ through these journeys, as well as take the training to others.
- ◆ Pray for doors to be open for more Partnership Trainings in different parts of Uganda.
- ◆ Pray for new groups to start up using DJJ materials.
- ◆ Pray for the ministry in Uganda to be able to buy its own land.
- ◆ Pray for funding to allow more ministry. Printing can be expensive for many.
- ◆ Godfrey's personal prayer is for his youngest sister, Janet, who is 14 yrs old. He is her guardian. He requests prayer for her to start her "A Level Education" and for God to provide the funds for her education fees.



Becky leading teachers through DJJ materials in Goshen School.

Liberia, Africa

Regional Representative to Pastor David Gbalee, (pictured to the right with his wife, Bendu) reports:

We are very much grateful to the Almighty God for the unique partnership event that brought together twenty nine (29) Pastors and Ministers of Gospel from three (3) Counties in Liberia - namely: Margibi, Bong and Montserrado Counties.

Since the partnership event, the leadership of DJJ Liberia have mobilized and established in seven (7) Districts in Margibi County as well as connecting with pastoral network and other ministers in Bong and Montserrado Counties.

The DJJ Partnership information had been widely disseminated by participants in Bong, Montserrado and Margibi Counties by organizing grouping in communities, teaching them about discipleship and making disciples.

Recruitment is increasing in churches and communities in Margibi and its surrounding Counties. Some participants have started and are ongoing with the Quarter 1 and Quarter 2, while some are using the Teaching Manual for Sunday School, Bible Study and Devotion at homes.



DJJ was able to provide a much needed projector to show the DJJ videos.

Due to the urgent need of the DJJ Training Manual, we have printed twelve (12) Booklets, seven copies of Quarter 2 books and five copies of Quarter 1.

The Partnership event means a lot in our ministries in Liberia, and helping to adequately prepare every minister in disciple making.

The event also brings the understanding of the book of Matthew 28:19-20 which clearly stated that we should go and make disciples in the world. Working along with DJJ, pastors and leaders will be vibrant in disciples making and church planting in Liberia.

Prayers:

- ◆ **Pray for doors to be open all over the country of Liberia for discipleship.**
- ◆ **Pray for funding to allow more ministry. Printing can be expensive.**
- ◆ **Pray that God provide funds for the construction of churches and schools. For funds to buy land.**
- ◆ **Pray for an agriculture project that will bring income to the church.**
- ◆ **Pray for God's grace and His wisdom in order to carry on His work.**
- ◆ **Pray for Pastor David to fully recover from Malaria and for his family.**