

MARK AND AURA PEREIRA

CHURCH PLANTING MISSIONARIES IN

Portugal

Dear Prayer Partners,

April 2020

Like in many places around the world, the churches in Portugal did not gather this year to celebrate Resurrection Sunday. We would have celebrated the Lord's Supper in Castelo Branco on Good Friday, to remember His sacrifice for us. On Sunday morning, we would have met for a joyous celebration. No doubt the church in Castelo Branco would have been full, with several friends and relatives, that are not Christian yet, specially invited to hear about how the Lord defeated death forever and now offers forgiveness and eternal life to all that will repent and believe. We would have had lunch at the church, with the traditional roast lamb and many other delicacies, deserts, laughter and sweet fellowship. In the afternoon, we would have taken the van, loaded it up in Covilhã and gone to have our service in Fundão. Another great time that would have been, remembering once again how we serve a risen Savior and sin has no more power over us.

But that was not to be. And that is a great reminder that we are not in control. But what did happen on Easter Sunday in Portugal? I'm glad you ask. It was not what was anticipated. It was different. But it was exactly what it was supposed to be.

We did not meet in our church buildings. The service was livestreamed via the internet. Because of this, at least 3 times more people watched than the ones that would have been in our buildings. There were people that would not have come to our services, because of family and social pressures that, because of this format, were able to "attend" and hear the gospel message. We are still to see all that the Lord is going to do because the services have gone online for these few weeks. We are to be expectant. We should be praying for the message to continue to go out.

Let me tell you something else that happened. There was a young lady that had been coming to church but had stopped coming because of family pressures (her family is very involved in a cult). I had told her that I was praying for her to understand the Gospel and for God to save her. Saturday before Easter, she sent us a message announcing that our prayers had been heard. She had repented of her sins and trusted that Jesus was the only One that could save her. On Easter Sunday we briefly visited with her and prayed together. Since that day, she has talked to her family and they now accept that she believes differently than they do. She has also started a discipleship relationship with one of the ladies from the church and will soon begin our new members class. We plan to baptize her as soon as possible. Praise the Lord! Will you pray for this young lady?

What can churches and missionaries do during a pandemic? I'm sure we are all learning and I'm sure there are many things we can do differently and better in order to keep sharing the Gospel and ministering to people. But, in a sense, we are to be doing what we have always been encouraged to do – look to Him, follow Him, see where He is working serve Him. God is always at work, in us, around us, and through us. May we be humble, trusting and faithful.

Thank you for your love and support for the ministry in Portugal.

In His Service, Mark and Aura Pereira

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