

Hi! We are still here in Peru! And into another strange year. We had another prayer request yesterday for the mom of a gal in José Olaya (our second church), who has Covid. That is nothing strange. Most people have come through it, but others have died, and others struggle. Peru was shut down really fast and hard last year at the end of March. We joined together with the SIM mission here, and were able to distribute very basic food bags for several months starting from 150 bags, going up to as many as 1,100. We would face police and military roadblocks when we went out to pack and distribute food. Although our permits didn't really allow for free food distribution, the authorities were mostly cooperative, and some showed their sincere gratitude for our work.

We still pack, but at a minimal, and basically for people that say they need help. It always went with the something from the Word of God. So why does Peru have such awfully high numbers? Who knows! But it also has to do with the social economics of our country. Right now Covid in Arequipa is in the second wave and climbing not super fast but still steadily.

So we had to find a different way to minister. That has included taped and sometimes live services, Zoom Sunday school, prayer meetings via WhatsApp in smaller groups & larger groups, Bible studies (mostly small Discipleship groups) by telephone, WhatsApp and Zoom, and after last September we started Kids Club via a bag and teaching on YouTube. But this week Kids Club is morphing to an online interactive time together live. There are kids that don't have the internet capability to connect, so will have to maybe continue to some extent with packs.

Another challenge in and for Peru are the upcoming elections on the 6th of June. In this second round, or runoff here, it's a fierce struggle between two groups. The one that is still ahead is far left and has connections to Sendero, our terrorist group from the 80's, and at least rumours to connections to Venezuela, Bolivia and Cuba. Yesterday Sendero, massacred 16 people in the jungle. They claim to be 'cleaning up' Peru, yet themselves have been involved with drug dealing.

On to the future... It's exciting to think of the possibility to open up church and reach out to the community on a different level. The food and Kids Club distributions, as well as Zoom & Whats App activities and meetings, have kept us connected to church people and have given us new connections.