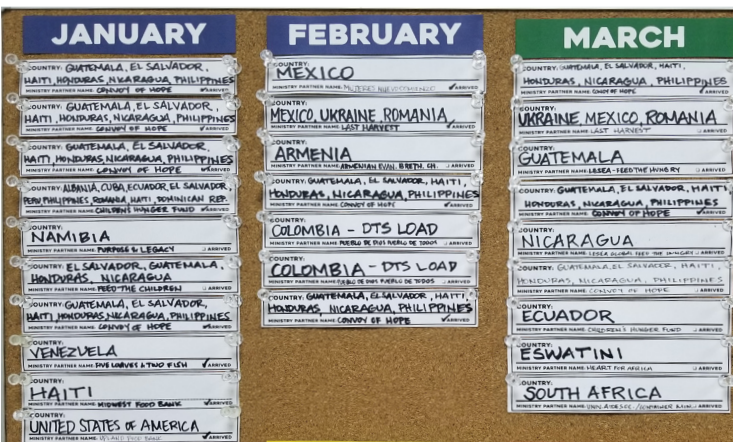


Meier's Memoirs

April 2020

I personally (Fritz) like change a lot and don't mind situations where flexibility is needed. The last few weeks have been a little over the top though! The DTS was just heading into the second half of their training and I booked flights for 16 people to Colombia and Peru, when suddenly the threat of COVID19 came on our radar. After most international travel shut down and Colombia cancelled all flights from the U.S., we came to terms with the reality that our outreach would be domestic, if at all. After prayer and phone calls with several ministries, we were still hopeful that we could have the outreach for "such a time as this" and help local relief efforts with Gleanings food. Unfortunately, things got worse and the shelter-in-place order came, which left us no choice but to cancel outreach. Provision was made to graduate the students without outreach and we sent them home to be with family. We wrestled with the decision to cancel weekly teams until June. At the same time, we still have 50 to 60 people at Gleanings and



needed clear guidelines. How do we live at Gleanings with the Coronavirus threat? Even as official information seemed to change daily, the leadership team spent hours deciding our response and guidelines to keep Gleanings safe and healthy. Because we are a food ministry we are an essential service and receive and ship food. We also continue to produce our soup and repackage staple food items with our new automatic packing machine. For the last year we were challenged to justify purchasing such a machine when we have so many volunteers. Now we can continue food production because we don't need 20 or 30 people to get the job done. God is so good! Please pray for us. Many of our partners are asking for support and we also help various ministries here in the U.S. with our food during this crisis.

"Be still and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."
 Ps 46:10

Discipleship Training School (DTS) by Cindy

Rewarding, demanding, teaching, inspiring, praying, epiphanies, loving, training, transformation and... so much more describe a DTS. I enjoyed being "back in the DTS saddle again"; it is one of my passions and delights. I was significantly fulfilled, yet at times overtaxed and exhausted, to once again direct a DTS. A DTS requires huge amounts of planning, preparation, and ongoing oversight. I vaguely remembered how intense it is, but quickly recalled how much work it requires after preparations got underway last fall. DTS began January 6th and unexpectedly ended March 20th due to the coronavirus that has turned the world upside-down. Our 12 students were primed and excited for their long-anticipated outreach to Colombia and Peru. They had practiced dramas, testimonies, gospel presentations, and interceded. In March countries closed their borders one by



one; we realized and grieved the loss of the DTS outreach. The DTS staff team did our best to wrap up on a positive note. Students shared highlights from the three-month lecture phase and the staff prayed for each student. One week of lecture phase remained so we finished assignments and final teachings on-line, as schools across the nation and world are also doing.

I love the DTS experience, seeing what God accomplishes in the students' lives. Here are some remarks which made the school so worthwhile for me. "This is the best thing my husband and I have ever done. We have never been closer." "I forgave during my DTS and I will never be the same." "The speakers every week were amazing, each one built on the other one and were in perfect order." "Thank you for doing this." "I finally realize God's love for me and how valuable I am to Him." "I learned how God loves me, and I am worthy." God achieved much more than I will ever know through the DTS; so thankful I could play a role!

Travels to Colombia and Switzerland by Fritz

In October Andy Rotunno, Eliana (Andy's oldest daughter), and myself took a short trip to Colombia. Our desire was to be as close as possible to Venezuela with intent of discovering how we could help with the refugee crisis. Colombia has received over two million Venezuelans and thousands more were coming across the border each day. We spent our first few days in Bogota with YWAM where we met ministry leaders and shared our hope of sending food for the needy. Everyone was very grateful, and we heard many stories of how these ministries serve in the city. One of the highlights was visiting a huge compound with 50 warehouses where all the fresh veggies come into the city; from there they are sold to markets and restaurants. A lot of food is wasted and there is no work in place to use some of this wasted food for feeding people. It was amazing meeting people with a dream to glean the food for ministry and then sharing



how this is happening at Gleanings. After Bogota we traveled to Cucuta, a city bordering Venezuela. The crisis is much more visible in Cucuta as the city grew from 700,000 to 1,300,000 in one year. Thousands of refugees are trying to make a living; they fled the poverty and inflation in their country. We went to a few border crossings, visited ministries, and rented a bus for a day to pick up refugees who walk along the road traveling to different cities. Many of the refugees walk hundreds of miles in the mountains



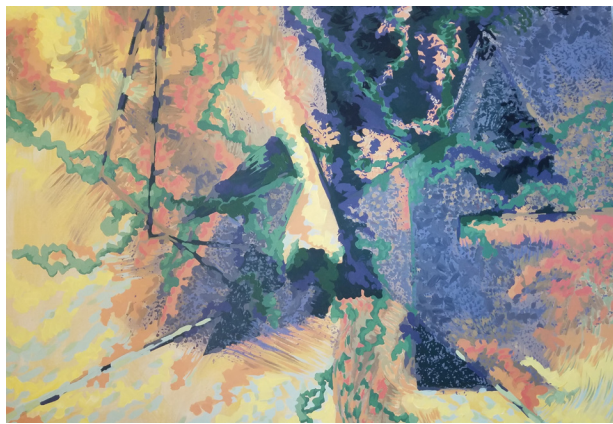
of Colombia to reach a relative or a friend with whom they can live. While there, we committed to sending at least a container of Gleanings food to share among the ministries we met. After figuring out the paperwork and all the requirements we did ship two containers; they arrived the end of March. We also planned to help distribute this food with our DTS, but unfortunately all travel plans had to be canceled because of COVID19. Nevertheless, the food is needed more than ever and I'm grateful we can be part of God's blessing in this crisis!

I also had a chance to visit my Mom in Switzerland. Even though it was very short (one week) I loved being back in my home country and had many visits with family and friends. My yearly January trip to Haiti was canceled because of unrest and instability in the country. We were able to send a container to help several orphanages get through these very difficult times in Haiti.

Family News by Cindy

Amid Coronavirus craziness there are blessings. Our daughter Tiffany is home! In mid-March California State University Long Beach (CSULB) shut down; all her classes went online. Philip's previous bedroom is now Tiffany's art studio. I'm overjoyed to observe the whole process as Tiffany creates her artwork (Below is her latest painting.) and it's just downright wonderful to have her home again. Exciting news is Tiffany's acceptance into the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at CSULB. The competition is fierce; only 12-15 students are chosen each semester.

We are missing other family members during this shelter-in-place order. Our hearts are moved as we realize you may also be separated from loved ones during this time. Cherise, our oldest daughter, cancelled a visit in March due to COVID19, plus I will not visit Cherise and the grandkids in April as planned. Cherise is challenged with homeschooling our grandson; his school is closed the rest of the school year. Her blessing is having her husband home more than usual. Philip still works at Independent Wood Products in Oregon although construction has been shut down, so his work could be affected.



What are your blessings during this challenging time? May God grant us His wisdom, strength, and joy as we ride out this storm. May we draw near to God, trust in Him, and practice being thankful so He will be exalted (lifted high and praised). We pray you and your family are safe and well, and may we have grace and love for one another though this challenging season.

Prayer Requests:

- Health for Gleanings staff and families
- Provision of food for local distribution
- Wisdom and unity in leadership
- Strategies for summer program

Thank you for your support with prayer and finances. AND, we'd enjoy hearing from you.

If you would like to invest in our work to feed the hungry both physically and spiritually, you can write a check to Gleanings For The Hungry, P.O. Box 309, Sultana, CA 93666 with an attached note indicating it's for us, the Meier family, or go to our web site @ www.gleanings.org and click on giving - staff support gallery - Fritz and Cindy Meier. (tax deductible)

Note: Gleanings' staff do not receive a salary and are responsible to raise their individual support.

Fritz and Cindy Meier, P.O. Box 309, Sultana, CA, 93666, (559) 741 5299, fritz_cindy@hotmail.com, www.gleanings.org