



ANGOLA 2020 - CONTINUING GOD'S MISSION IN COVID-19 TIMES

During the first three months of 2020, with my husband, Leonardo Garcia, we visited the United Methodist Churches of the Florida Conference. In union with the brothers and sisters who support us from the United States, once again, we testify

of God's work in our missionary ministry in East Angola, Africa for 9 years.

While on itineration in Florida, the World Health Organization (WHO) made an official statement recognizing Covid-19 as a Pandemic. Nations closed their borders. However, God allowed us to be one of the last groups of passengers who, by air, returned to Angolan soil. This miraculous act confirmed to us, once again, that it was God's will for us to continue the Mission in Africa.

Today, as we come to the end of 2020, I want to share with you what God has done over the course of this year.

From the very beginning of the pandemia, Angola devoted itself to reporting on Covid- 19. In most rural regions of this nation, such as the Methodist Mission of Quéssua, however, families had not yet become aware of the terrible Covid-19 pandemic because they don't have acces to the news. Many followed their daily routines while a terrible illness was moving in.

Upon returning to Angola in March, we were self-quarantined as instructed by the health authorities of the country. Even from home, God led us to work on Covid 19 prevention by preparing pictorial instructions, necessary because the majority of the rural population is not literate. Also, we wrote a Health Education manual on Covid-19, which was useful for training and guiding volunteer facilitators. Once materials were ready, we put together a local health team, accompanied by local church pastors Rev. Francisco Baltazar and Rev. Rogério Bartolomeu. On the team we had young and old, leaders and members of the Central United Methodist Church of Quéssua, all of them ready to help prevent the spread of Covid 19 in our area.



From 5:00am, in the village of "Terra Nova", the team of volunteer facilitators of the Church of Quéssua does Health Education. One of the local pastors, Rev. Baltazar, conveys the message of Prevention against Covid-19 in Kimbudo, the local language of this region.

At the end our quarantine, my husband and I joined the Health team. In the missionary field adjusting is a must. When we talk about the importance of washing hands frequently, we have to consider that the villagers lack both water and soap. Thus the

need to purchase bars of soaps and buckets adapted with a small faucet for each family. We were able to do that with funds provided by the General Board of Global Ministries .



Distribution of buckets and soaps to 1500 families in the villages around the Quéssua Mission.



With sewing machines donated by Churches in the Florida Conference, we also started to make face masks, 500 of them, for the children. Their families could not afford them at pharmacies. Once they were ready, we went out to the communities to teach the children how to use them properly.



Dr. Cleivy in the village of Mufongo /Quéssua, teaching children how to use a face mask.

Back in May we started moving some of the medical work from the hospital into the field in order to identify the greatest needs. The Methodist Chapels built by teams of volunteers from Florida together with the villagers, in addition to serving as sanctuaries for prayer and preaching as well as classrooms for the literacy program, are now being used as medical clinics to see the sick and deliver appropriate treatments.



In the Mufongo Chapel, where medical Consultations were conducted in the areas of Pediatrics, Internal Medicine and Gynecology. In addition, vaccination in children was updated and antiparasitic campaigns were conducted for the entire population.

Children are being born in Quéssua in the midst of the Pandemic. The Mission's hospital reputation is growing throughout the community, which has contributed to more mothers giving birth at the hospital, thus decreasing the rate of newborn deaths. We have seen the glory of God through this experience! A few years ago, the population preferred extra-hospital delivery. Today, we live a different reality. Donations of clothing for newborns by the Churches of the Florida Conference have stimulated and influenced this achievement of Obstetrics in Quéssua.



Dr. Cleivy dresses a newborn baby at the Quéssua Health Center with clothes donated by Churches in Florida in the form of newborn kits.

As a result of home consultations, many children with protein-caloric malnutrition have been diagnosed. To regain their body weight, we have launched a program for medical pediatric intervention, supported by Churches of the Florida Conference. Every 15 days we see these patients and distribute 8 kg of nutritious food for these children. Currently, 25% of the total systemically controlled children have recovered their normal weight.



Donating food to malnourished children at pediatric consultations.

For the glory of the Lord, among the inhabitants of the villages in Quéssua there have been no positive cases of Covid 19 during 2020. I recognize that our missionary experience is a constant challenge in which God has given us the privilege of safeguarding the lives of the most vulnerable. In particular, I am honored to do this mission among children.



On December 25th we celebrated a very special Christmas day. In collaboration between Florida and East Angola we were able to distribute 800 food baskets for families and 1,041 toys for all children in Quéssua. I praise God for the precious miracle of Jesus coming into our hearts and the hearts of those with whom we serve Him.

Many thanks for your generosity and many blessings in this New Year!

Dr. Cleivy Garcia
Florida Conference Advance # 100130