

---

# Paraguay Spring 2021

---

I had hesitations before I decided to make the trip to visit my brothers and sisters in Paraguay. Project Paraguay Foundation has not had a team in Paraguay since July/August 2019, due to the worldwide pandemic. Currently, Paraguay is about 8 months behind the US and is experiencing a high rate of infections. So far only 300,000 doses of COVID vaccines have been distributed, a small amount, for a country with a population of 8 million. I was told that many wealthy Paraguayan's are now traveling to Miami to get vaccinated. The country is on lockdown with an eight o'clock curfew enforced, but due to a recent decrease in the infection rate, this curfew will be lifted until eleven pm within the next week or so.



Restaurants for the most part take "curbside" orders. Supermarkets are open for business with mandatory mask-wearing

enforced. Special handwashing stations have been installed and before entering a store each customer's temperature is checked and their hands are sprayed with an alcohol solution.

Getting to Paraguay was a challenge by itself. I learned that I had to pay a test provider \$249 to meet the timeline for the required 72 hours mandatory COVID-19-RT-PCR test, the free test initially provided did not meet the deadline. In addition to this, Paraguay requires proof of International Health insurance that will cover COVID treatment. Twenty-four hours before my flight I also had to fill out a form (Travelers Health

Information) where I uploaded in JPEG format my vaccination records including the latest Moderna COVID vaccine. I suggest you print the form out just before hitting the "save" form button. After you do, you receive a printed code and a code number only. I suggest also bringing the original COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card. The airlines require this information before being allowed on the aircraft. Mandatory mask requirements are in effect throughout the whole trip; in the airports as well as on the aircraft. Returning from Paraguay requires 72 hours of COVID testing before boarding, I paid \$85



so I was assured I received my test results in a timely fashion. The US also requires that you fill out a Passenger Disclosure and Attestation to the United States

of America form, and sign it. I had already downloaded this and filled it out, but Copa wanted me to fill out a similar form in Spanish which I thought was redundant.

It was with great anticipation and joy I finally reunited with my brothers and sisters in Paraguay. Many of them recovering from or currently are experiencing the virus. I just learned, that the Pastor of Pura Vida Church, Hugo Ovando is home recovering from COVID. I met over lunch with several people representing the churches. I visited the home of Pastor Maureira. Angela, his wife made a delightful pot-roast followed by homemade pie. Pastor Maureira's wife Angela is doing so much better after her difficult recovery from the recent thyroid surgery. I was introduced to the future pastor,



of our latest church affiliate Ebenezer, William Busto, his wife Rosana Espinola Busto, and their son David. The church has 49

members and is meeting in a facility that was donated

to them. Like all the other churches this church had been closed for the last six weeks. William Busto is scheduled to be ordained sometime in the fall. The



leadership of this church is William Busto, elders Marcelo Mino, Felipe Rodriguez, and interim pastor Victorio Recalde. I had no opportunity to meet the rest of the church members since the church first reopened on May 16<sup>th</sup> and I was scheduled to participate in the service a Barrio Parque. I also had the opportunity to

participate in the Session meeting May 8<sup>th</sup> at El Renuevo where I met with Pastor Maureire, Pastor Fredi Sosa, Pastor Hugo Ovando, Pastor Miguel Diaz, Interim Pastor of Ebenezer Victorio Recalde, Future pastor of Ebenezer Willian Busto, Ignacio Espinola, School Administrator Narciso Britez and Cesar Franco.

Before this meeting, I had lunch with Narciso, his wife Elena Marie, and his son Andre.

As mentioned earlier I met, spoke, and prayed with many brothers and sisters from our churches and had a busy schedule throughout my stay. Some of you know Charlie Mendez and Rachel Creco I had lunch with them and their four children. Charlie has lost so much weight that I initially could not recognize him. This is a praise because he had done this out of health concerns



brought up by his doctor. I spoke with Papla Troche, the grandmother Isadora and daughters Pamela and Leidy. Many of our previous team members have

stayed in their home.

On Wednesday, May 12<sup>th</sup> I had the great blessing to revisit with members of the host family I initially stayed with on my first mission trip to Paraguay in 2010; Teo, her daughters Jessica and Vanessa, her son Elias, the grandmother, and their cousin Magda. Jessica and Magda now have children of their own.

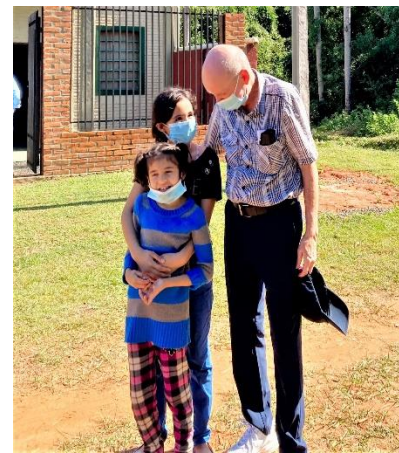
There are many needs. COVID similar to the US has changed people's lives. Unlike the US, people in Paraguay cannot apply for unemployment, they rely on what income the family members can earn.

The school at El Renuevo is in trouble and Narciso is trying to keep it afloat by offering home education where it is possible. A parent of one of the pupils has



died from COVID. Many people are infected, some have to be treated at the local hospital while others can stay at home. For some, the effect is long-term.

The Lord gave me a great opportunity to pray with and help a young couple; the husband has 4 stage lymphomas. They are trying to bring him to Brazil for special treatment. A young deaf girl Debora 8 years old whose life I have followed over the past years might now be able to receive hearing aids that are advanced enough to enable her to hear the world around her; that's a praise!!!



A young couple Cristino and Mirna have financial needs. Cristino lost his job due to Covid and Mirna lost hers because the schools limited the hours, they now are open during the week. She used to make food for the



children at her school. They asked me to pray with them. Pastor Miguel and I brought them groceries. Other people needed help with medicine. Mostly, older individuals who get help from their family members when able to contribute, there is no public help as far as I can

understand.

Before my visit Pastor Miguel informed me that Barrio Parque Church was broken into, some personal items and money had been stolen from Elba and her family who live in the church. This situation was discussed at the Session meeting on May 8<sup>th</sup>. I have donated a security system with 6 cameras to the church to aid in the security not only for Elba and her family but also for the school at the facility that still meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Many of you might remember we bought a similar system for El Renuevo back in 2019.



The Lord gave me occasions to help both physically and spiritually and it was such a privilege and

really blessed me being part of that during my stay and I am looking forward to joining the team in July/August; the first team to return in two years, praise the Lord!!!

In His Joy  
Kean

