



THE SCHLEHLEINS

Missionaries to the Tsongas of South Africa



BLESSINGS OF COVID LOCKDOWNS

God Draws Straight Lines with Crooked Sticks

The great college football coach Lou Holtz once said: "The light at the end of the tunnel might be a train." Yes, some can be foolishly hopeful. I'm sure many on the Titanic were optimistic people.

Still, with all the chaos from the corona virus, I'd like to offer you seven benefits that Covid has given our missionary work over the past half year.

1. Covid has highlighted the importance of church

What if children in single-parent homes thrived emotionally and financially without a dad? We'd conclude fathers aren't that important. What if the sheep thrived spiritually without the regular assembly of Christians? We'd conclude church wasn't that important. Therefore, in some ways it is actually *encouraging* that some church members are struggling spiritually during Lockdown. No church, no truth (1Tm 3:15).

2. Covid has sifted the congregation

A few in our assembly have remained about the same spiritually. But most are either soaring in their thirst for Scripture ("please teach another hour") or tanking in rebellion and sin ("I'm not interested"). Trials either help us grow in obedience (Heb 5:8) or expose our sin (Ps 38:3).

3. Covid has opened up avenues for evangelism

Many churches, mostly prosperity, have been closed for about a half year now. Besides our Sunday worship time, opportunities for mid-week home Bible studies and Sunday informal services at the homes of unbelievers are endless. We've actually begun four, new teaching points *after* Covid lockdowns.

4. Covid has given a platform to show courage

In a church void of fathers and husbands, I hope our people have seen in us something unusual— strength and determination that will not quit, will not fear, will not cower, will not run.

5. Covid has exposed excuses to be laziness

You know those people that couldn't read their Bible, couldn't be consistent at church, and couldn't participate in evangelism because they were so busy with work and school? They've struggled with the same things when work and school were cancelled. The indolent will always find lions in the street (Pr 22:13).

6. Covid has forced parents to educate their kids

Previously, the villagers viewed homeschooling our kids as bizarre. Now that *their* children have lost a whole year of school, they're starting to ask questions. Even though homeschooling would be impossible for most of them, they have begun to see that educating their kids in some way is attainable and essential.

7. Covid has underscored the crucial role of family

Lockdowns are particularly dangerous for first generation Christians. Many do not live in godly homes where the Scriptures are read and honored. Church is their only lifeline. Covid has spotlighted the truth that family matters. Choosing the right spouse matters. Handing down the faith matters. Family worship matters.

There's the summary. I could give much more. I stripped it down to studs. Rejoice with us. Then ask God to use this wild year to bring revival and growth to the Tsongas.

Yours and His,

Paul & Lindy

Audrey, Nate, Law, Owen, Juju, Clara, Luke