

# Electronic Jolt Treatment



**JOLLY** vt. [*< earlier jot, to jog*] 1. to shake up or jar, as with a bumpy ride 2. to shock or surprise vi. To move along in a bumpy manner n. 1. a sudden jerk, bump, etc. 2. a shock or surprise 3. A stimulating reminder about our ministry in Muslim Southeast Asia. *joltingly adv. jolity*

May 2020

## MOVEMENTS

None!

## PRaise

1. That we all made it back before the lockdown, and for our calm and trusting leaders.
2. For all the people, and financial provisions that made the not-so-tiny house campable, just in time.
3. That Nathan is on track to finish high school.
4. For all of the ways we have been able to contribute our gifts and training to Kingdom causes and Muslim Southeast Asia.

## PRAYER

1. For God's continued provision or our needs (not wants!). We need to pay some unbudgeted bills both (both here and there).
2. For Nathan as he starts to get his feet on the ground here in NZ, when local employment is likely to be scarce.
3. For Michaela as he resumes "normal" life, work, and study.
4. For wisdom as we set realistic goals for re-connecting with sending churches and individual supporters.
5. For our Muslim mates during Ramadan.

A few days ago, we received our first "have you been abducted by aliens" email from a curious supporter. Apologies for dropping the newsletter ball. Today is exactly 2 months since I (Chris) arrived in New Zealand. Why are flights on Friday the 13th so cheap?! I had planned to complete our not-so-tiny house in Otaki over 3 weeks, before returning to Southeast Asia for 2 months, and all relocate in June after Nathan graduates. Just before leaving for NZ, one of my return flights was canceled. I avoided having to self-isolate after arriving in New Zealand, by one day. By the time the first working bee (on March 14) had finished, the government announced that its borders would be closing. To say that I spent all day of March 18 on the phone might be exaggerating, but not by much. Soon after travel agents opened for business, it was clear that quick decisions would have to be made if Sandra and Nathan were going to get home, thereby avoiding a long separation. At 7 o'clock in the morning (Thai time), I rang Sandra informing her that she had exactly 26 hours to pack up the house. Nathan's school had just made the decision to close until 5 May (with no guarantee that it would reopen for the final four weeks). Thankfully, we had begun working on relocation logistics at the end of 2019. Four friends came over at 9 o'clock and worked with Sandra into the evening. We also gave notice to our landlord. At 9 o'clock in the morning on March 19, Sandra and Nathan went to the airport. After some stressful transfers in Singapore and Melbourne, they safely landed in Wellington early afternoon on March 20. They went into self-isolation in Waipukurau where my mother lives. I joined them for the four-week lockdown, a few days later.

We always knew that 2020 would be a year of big transitions. Had no idea of how big "big" would be. We are grateful to God for many things. Really pleased we managed to make wise—and timely—decisions. Incredibly grateful for all of the support we have received from our organisation, friends, and family.

Sandra had her final handover session (via Zoom), a couple of days ago. As Sgt Maj, she has helped Nathan stay on track to complete his final year of high school online. Please note prayer-priorities (a.k.a. prayerorities) mentioning him. The next six months are gonna be particularly difficult. Most of our ideas about entry-level work might no longer exist. Michaela wisely decided to stay in Wellington, in her excellent flat. Like others occasionally limping with anxiety, lockdown has at times been very stressful, as five adults spending four weeks in a house set up for one would have been! Thanks to mum/mother-in-law's for her generosity, and patience!



On the subject of progress with our not-so-tiny house, we are pleased to report the following. Despite the lockdown scuttling the series of working bees we had planned in March, some of the people spending the lockdown on the farm had the skills we needed. They now also have the time and were able to acquire the necessary materials. As such, steady progress had been made before I changed bubbles on April 28. All the inside work was completed on May 7. The small fire we had ordered arrived on May 8. On the morning of May 9, I picked up Sandra and Nathan. We won't have electricity until May 20, but have an extension cord, multi-plug, and box of candles. The things we shipped from Thailand will arrive will before the end of May. Considering all of the curveballs that have been thrown at us, we are incredibly grateful to be in this position. Should predictions about a significant slowdown in the economy following this pandemic eventuate, we are well-placed to set out/work through this financial storm.

Something which we have already written – and which we will continue to reiterate – is that although we plan to be based in New Zealand for the foreseeable future, we are not resigning from OMF. Rather, we plan to continue making strategic contributions to a range of Kingdom causes from our new home base. Our core business will continue to be in Muslim Southeast Asia, but we will also prioritise how we can serve locally. It is unclear about when international travel will be both possible, and affordable. We have already begun work on tweaking parts of our portfolio require requiring Chris to physically be present in Southeast Asia. We are so grateful for all of the open doors before us but need to know which of these open doors to walk through.

We wanna share a short story about one amazing way God has provided for us, over the last few weeks. During the course of a phone conversation with a friend a few weeks ago, I was asked about whether we were planning to buy vehicle, and what we were looking for. Rather flippantly, I said this wasn't a particularly high priority. Indeed, anything other than completing the house was tagged "nonurgent". We'd eventually buy a small diesel, as a local friend of ours has recently begun making biofuel out of the vegetable oil used in local fish and chip shops. To cut a long story short, he mentioned that his family had a 1.4 litre Toyota Corolla diesel which was surplus to requirements. If we were interested, we could have for \$1!

We would be lying to say that all of the (multiple and unexpected) twists and turns since have been like water off a duck's back. Particularly over our first 10 years in South Thailand, we were used to unconventional celebrations of Easter. That said, this was the weirdest one on record. Even the one that included a roast chicken meal. "Behold the Chicken of God who takes away the sins of the world!", didn't sound quite right. Like almost everyone we know, we've had some down days. A few times a week, we remember someone we knew that we didn't get to say something to or do something for. Occasionally, we have taken "mental health days". These will be easier to take once Nathan completes all his assessments (at the end of May), our stuff from Thailand has arrived, squeezed into both our not-so-tiny house, and corners of attics owned by distant relatives.

Both (conventional) mass, and (way-too-cool-for-us) social media have been opining on a number of topics—including vaccinations. We are pleased to have "got it" that faith in God is NOT some sort of vaccine against pain, and suffering. We are self-aware enough to know that in comparison to so many, we are incredibly privileged. It is the elderly, poor, and already unwell, who have suffered the most.

Romans 8: 38-39 says that nothing—absolutely nothing—can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our



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Lord. May you all experience this truth in these strange times.