

NEWSLETTER

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*For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as
Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.*
~ 2 Corinthians 4:5
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These last few months have been very full of the Lord's blessing in so many ways. In this letter, I will focus only on one very significant event, which is the launching of a partnership between Canadian First Nations (indigenous) global workers from Multiply and the indigenous peoples of the Amazon. In December, I will write more on our other ministries, such as Camp Brazil, which continues to be very fruitful. Thank you for being an instrument of God, not just in our lives but also in the lives of the many people that we have the privilege of reaching with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Gathering of First Nations in the Amazon

For several years, the MB missionary agency in Brazil has dedicated its efforts to working alongside the River Folk communities of the Amazon. During this time we have had very good conversations with Multiply global workers Derek Parenteau, who has a



similar ministry among First Nations people in Canada. The idea of a partnership between both Brazilian and Canadian indigenous communities took shape and our Amazon brothers and sisters extended a heartfelt invitation to the Canadians to visit their land. One year after this invitation was extended, Multiply global workers John Johnstone, Billy Jo Isaac and Derek Parenteau made their way to Brazil, together with me, Oscar Oliveira and Franz and Doris Wolf.

Our journey involved two flights, an eight-hour bus ride and six hours by boat. Upon reaching Lábrea, we met with Lloyd, our indigenous guide. He wore a radiant smile and said, “You kept your promise. You promised to visit us, and you have fulfilled that promise.”

The next morning, Oscar Oliveira, Director for the Amazon region, steered us through a day-long boat voyage that brought us to Mahaã, a riverside community. Along this journey, Lloyd enlightened us with insights into the social dynamics of his people, revealing striking similarities to the First Nations of Canada. He even remarked, “I didn't know I had family in North America!”



Reaching the river, we were received with warmth and humility. We were invited to a community lunch, and it was here that we bore witness to a living testament of the biblical story of the multiplication of fishes—only this time, it unfolded within the river itself. One of these fish weighed an astonishing 130 kg., while the other tipped the scales at 80 kg.

Amidst conversation, we delved deeper into each other's histories and took time to visit members of the community. The highlight was the celebration of five couples, who, following their conversion and baptism, solidified their marital bonds before God and their community. We also had the privilege of participating in a baptism.



As we dined together during the festival, Ademir, a leader of the Apurinã people, approached John and extended an invitation for us to visit his village. It was an opportunity for us to explore and engage with yet another indigenous group—an invitation that would serve as a passport granting us entry into their tribes, paving the way for future journeys and cross-cultural exchanges.

Post-celebration, we embarked on small boats for the journey to the Crispim community, an upstream settlement inhabited by the Paumari people. We navigated the river overnight, under a magnificent night sky that left us in awe. This journey was not without its share of excitement, as we encountered numerous alligators on the riverbanks. Upon reaching the community, a 15-minute trek led us to our lodgings for the next few days.

Our accommodations included the pastor's residence and the home of a German missionary engaged in translating the Old Testament into the Paumari language. Pictured here is a copy of the scriptures he has been working on to bring the Truth of the Gospel to the Paumari.



The following morning we fellowshiped with the members of the Paumari evangelical church—this church actually constitutes 80% of the Crispim population. Here, our Canadian companions had the opportunity to forge meaningful connections with our Brazilian indigenous brothers and sisters, and profound familial bonds were forged as stories and experiences were shared.



After lunch, we joined at the pastor's residence to meet with the leadership of the Paumari evangelical churches—a gathering that included the paramount chief of the Paumari people. During this meeting, Billy Jo encouraged the leaders' wives to also share their perspectives. Her humble message of encouragement was well received.

Sunday dawned, and we were graciously invited to attend a worship service. During the service, Billy shared the history of her people and rendered one of their traditional songs. John Johnstone took the opportunity to expound on the nature of love that binds us together and draws us closer to Christ. He ingeniously described it as a sacrificial love, contrasting it with superficial love, which he calls a “hamburger kind of love.” The reference to North American fast food was unfamiliar to our hosts in this remote region, but the concept was understood. As the service concluded, the Canadian guests were given honorary Paumari names—John as Junipí, a bird known for its long-distance flights and adept fishing, Billy as Bikiakia, a petite and serene bird, and Derek as Kididi, a clever fishing bird.

On the final day of our visit, Monday, we ventured into the homes of our hosts, listened intently to the stories they wished to share, delved deeper into their cultures, and offered our heartfelt prayers for their well-being. We paid visits to nearly all the tribal elders, gaining invaluable insights into the pivotal role played by missionaries in providing them with essential medical care and in helping to preserve their cultural heritage. Upon our return, Doris arranged a farewell surprise—a dinner gathering with the entire village. The menu featured hamburgers—a tribute to John's wise teaching—improvised from food on hand, given the absence of nearby markets in Crispim. This dinner epitomized the most intimate communion of our entire journey, where laughter, shared meals, prayer, and tears flowed freely.

The relationship that flourished between these Brazilian communities and our Canadian First Nations counterparts was profound and, we trust, will be enduring. Our northern brothers departed feeling inspired, having witnessed indigenous peoples establishing healthy and harmonious relationships with 'white' churches, something which continues to be challenging in Canada. In the foreseeable future, we aspire to bring our Brazilian brothers and sisters to Canada, with the purpose of reciprocating the kindness we received, deepening this partnership and envisioning future ministry together.



Thank you!



Along with Derek, John and Billie Joe, I want to thank all of you who have helped make this inaugural venture possible, opening future doors for future partnership and ministry among the people groups of the Amazon. Our family will be in Canada from December to February 2024, and we hope to meet many of you in person.

In Christ, **Emerson Cardoso**
Regional Team Leader for Latin America

Email: emersonc@multiply.net
Website: multiply.net