

# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

January 2018

In years past, on New Year's Day during family devotions, dad would ask us our goals for that year. He'd meticulously write them down and keep the list in safe keeping. It made us think where we were headed, what great things we wanted to accomplish and how we wanted to trust God to use us throughout the year. There is a song we used to sing that sums up in a such beautiful way the secret of finding and following God's will to be fulfilled and experience His direction and blessings: "**When we walk with the Lord, in the light of His Word, what a glory He sheds on our way. When we do His good will, He abides with us still and with all those how trust and obey. TRUST and OBEY, for there's no other way, to be happy in Jesus, than to TRUST and OBEY!**" Dad didn't just keep that list tucked away somewhere. During that same devotional time at the beginning of the following year, he would ask each one of us if our goals where met and what we would like to do better. As missionaries, Wilson and I have ministry goals. As we trust God to show us His will and use us, we also know that God intends for us to work together with other Christians to spread the Gospel to all peoples. We strive to be faithful before God and before you, our ministry team. We praise God daily for YOU! Even in the midst of opposition from the enemy and our own shortcomings, we can still see His mighty hand working and direction our steps and using us to reach the unreached for Christ.

There are still large areas here that are closed to the Gospel, areas we are not allowed to enter to reach people for Christ. Sponsored by a group of men from In Touch Ministries, Renew and other Christian organizations, a select group of mature Christian Indians, who also speak Portuguese, from several different nations were chosen to participate in evangelistic training seminars given at our

house for several days. Wilson flew in a few of them from one of the more remote Indian tribes. During the conference, they began the process of learning how to use projectors and set up a sound system and movie screen to evangelize their own tribes in their own languages. **ALL this equipment fits in a backpack that can easily be carried through**



**the jungle into indigenous areas!** They will be able to show preaching and teaching seminars, the Jesus film and other Gospel movies. A

group of Indians stayed in our home for around three weeks and where mentored by Andrew after the conference. They all had the unique opportunity to celebrate Thanksgiving together for the very first time and most everything they ate was a first! ☺ More training will be given in January.



One afternoon, a group of Indians, together with mission staff, had a powerful time of prayer at the hangar over a map of the Amazon, seeking God's direction for future ministries and asking the Lord to break the strong bonds Satan has in so many areas in this region. One of those areas is Grajári, a small rural village located 11 kilometers from where we live and is accessible by land. This is the village I have mentioned before, where it took us more than two years to build a church. Every time we tried to go in, it would rain, making the muddy roads impassable, or the motorcycle/truck would break down, etc. A very large statue of Mary stands at the entrance to the road going out to Grajári and the spiritual oppression in that village is very evident.



Andrew, the single missionary living with us, was led by God to spend time in Grajári mentoring and ministering together with the young couple we helped prepare to pastor the church. He has preached on several occasions and gone house to house evangelizing and praying with families. Recently, Andrew was invited to pray in the school. As soon as he began to pray, children all around the room began falling, twisting, and turning, possessed by demons. Andrew had never seen anything like it and didn't know quite what to do. He prayed in the name of Jesus and eventually things began to calm down. They soon learned that one of the teachers was teaching the children how to invoke the spirits. Through much prayer and fasting, Andrew continued to evangelize house to house and minister together with Amarildo, the pastor, and his wife. **That same week, a lightning bolt struck the statue of Mary with such force, it ripped off her head, arm and feet and cracked it from top to bottom! We believe God has finally broken the strong foothold Satan has had in this area for so many years. The end of that week they celebrated the 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the church and even the teacher was present. We praise God that people in this village are beginning to respond to the Gospel!**



I mentioned in our last letter that Wilson and I went to Manaus to participate in a pastor's convention and the 100-year celebration of the church there. We were in charge of accompanying Pr. John King (picture on left) and Mission leader, Ken Palmer from Riverside Church in Peoria, IL and also Pr. Paul Randerson and his wife Mary from England (picture on right) throughout the convention. For one week, we were blessed with inspiring and encouraging messages, awesome praise times and fellowship with other pastors and leaders from Manaus and the interior of the Amazon. Around 1000 new pastors were ordained, many of whom had just graduated from their university, and were given fields of service in churches throughout the Amazon. A baptism, including believers from churches all over Manaus, was held the second to the last day. We can't even begin to describe the powerful presence of God we experienced as we witnessed over 5000 people being baptized in the river at the Ponta Negra...



*On the last day of the convention, over 200,000 people from various evangelical denominations throughout Manaus gathered together for the final celebration at a large stadium in town. What a beautiful day and tremendous blessing that was, raising our voices as one in praise to the Lord and preparing to once again "GO and preach the Gospel to all nations"! After a time of consideration and evaluation, the church gave special recognition to over 1800 pastors and their wives for their service in the name of Christ, awarding them credentials as leaders. I was blessed to be among them.*

(Right: Here the stadium is just beginning to fill up.)



(Left: The choir behind us.)



*them sharing the love of God through the Gospel message to these communities! See for yourself...*

**Time of celebration in Santa Luiza. Each program ended with a time of fellowship, fruit cake and chocolate milk!** ☺



**Our visit to Buen Sucesso started off with a banquet of alligator and manioc. Lucas only wanted to feast on alligator!**



It was so awesome to see the church packed and worshipping the Lord during the Christmas play “From Creation to Christ”. The team built a simple stable at each church. Here the shepherds are praising God for the birth of JESUS... God’s greatest gift of all!



The following night we celebrated with Santa Teresa and Japón (left). This church was beautifully decorated for the occasion with balloons and toilet paper! Two presentations were performed in Islândia, Peru. (right)



*The church was literally packed both inside and out for the last performance in Islândia. God moved in such a way that several people gave their lives to Christ and almost everyone else went forward to rededicate their lives to the Lord! We praise God for the many lives that were touched through these presentations.*

To top off the holiday season, we had the special privilege of celebrating Christmas with family (For the first time in around 10 years.) We enjoyed a lovely breakfast at the Spicer's and on Christmas day, we had dinner at noon at our house. It was a lot of fun watching Lucas open presents; plastic cars, trucks, airplane and motorcycle (gifts that were lovingly donated for missionary kids in our area).

We wanted to send a special update on Brandon and Julie. The 9<sup>th</sup> of December Brandon graduated from nursing with honors. He will take the state





boards the 4<sup>th</sup> of January and we know they would really appreciate your prayers. This means it may be possible for him to start his new job as early as the end of February. We are so grateful to the Lord for this victory in his life and for the amazing job God provided for him in cardiac ICU! We are so proud of you Brandon. Great job! Julie is doing much better although her heart rate is still quite high. She has been having interviews for a new job (some were filled "in-house" with employees wanting to change shifts) and is trusting God to know what is best. Joshua and Leighann and two of their friends will be heading to south Brazil in March for a short visit with extended family and with us during our short time of furlough.

*What's next? Through your prayers and partnership, Wilson and I look forward to seeing where God is going to lead us and what He is going to accomplish through us in 2018!*

*All our love and hugs, Wilson and Lori*

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