



“Going Home”

Pastor David Niemela

We recently came back from our “home” area as we drove south for a funeral. As the fall season rolls around, you can be sure we will be at least swinging by Cokato soon before or after Pastor’s Conference, and during Thanksgiving.

I remember during our first months in Greenbush two instances when we answered an inquiring person asking, “Where are you from?” After we answered, “Cokato,” they responded, “Oh, it’s hilly there, isn’t it?” We kind of chuckled, but understood that it was in comparison to Greenbush. What makes it funnier, is when we return to the area now, we think, “It’s hilly here, isn’t it?” Those hills with the

rest of the landscape, the towns, and the culture, I realize, have become pieces of nostalgia for me.

Cokato is no longer home, though, as we sink our roots (and desire to do so) in Greenbush. We have enjoyed the welcome the first two years, and you can pray with us that our roots grow deeper, as God would desire.

Maybe you have experienced having to move away from home, and noticed that the land, town, and area you used to call mundane has transformed into nostalgic.

You could multiply your feeling of connection to your land of origins to describe the Israelite’s connection

Continued on page 3

Church Events

- **Sept. 8th – Confirmation & Youth Group Kick-Off; WMF meeting**
- **Sept. 11th – Men’s Group begins**
- **Sept. 14th – Children’s Sunday school helpers’ meeting**
- **Sept. 19th – Adult & Children’s Sunday school begins; Potluck**
- **Sept. 22nd – See You at the Pole**
- **Oct. 10th – Underground Church**
- **Oct. 13th – WMF meeting**
- **Mid-Oct – Kids’ Club begins**
- **Oct. 17th – Potluck**

SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS SOON

Adult and children’s Sunday school classes will start their new year Sunday, September 19. The adult course will answer the question, “Who is this Jesus?” as participants study the book of Luke. The course will be taught by Dr. Lyle Mattson. The children’s class will gather in the church sanctuary, and will spend the year studying the Old Testament and the Ten Commandments. If you are interested in occasionally leading the children’s lesson, providing snack or craft, or serving as a floater, contact Trish Waage or Joni Wiskow. A helpers’ meeting will take place Sept. 14 at 5 p.m. at United.

WMF News

Angie Truscinski, President

Greetings from WMF!

We continue to study 1 Timothy in our monthly bible study. We would love for you, women of all ages, to join us as we study God's Word.

In September our lesson will be part 2 of "Instructions for the Church." An excerpt from our study reads, "God desires all to be saved and to know Jesus came, died, and rose to save sinners. This is the message the Church proclaims and that we believe. Through

God's Word, He shows us our sin and that He is our Savior."

This lesson will also focus on the fourth commandment, honor your father and your mother, and how it applies to honoring those in authority.

The October study, lesson 10, is titled "Beware of False Teachers' Snares." The study's author, Jeanette Berntson, writes, "Good pastors feed us sound, healthy teaching from the

Bible and warn us of poisonous teaching." Within the study, she will show us how to identify biblical teaching from anything else.

Potlucks

September also brings back the fun of monthly potluck dinners. The Sarah group will host the September potluck, and the Esther group will do the October potluck.

If you are in the months' hostess groups, you should bring a hotdish, help prep, serve and/or cleanup.

If you are not in the hostess group, you can bring salads, sandwiches or dessert/cake of your

choice. Thank you to the group leaders for organizing and taking care of the potluck meals.

New officers needed

Please be praying for our WMF officers and the other ladies in the WMF meetings. We have elections each November and we will be needing some new officers.

The offices up for election are the president and treasurer. If you are interested and want to know more about either position's duties, please contact me.

Thank you for your consideration and prayers in this need.

Blessings.

Youth Group Sneak Peek

With the start of school comes the beginning of youth group – and we are excited for it!

Youth group is open to all high schoolers, and gathers Wednesdays at 6 p.m. for supper, games, and studying God's Word. The topic for the upcoming year has yet to be determined, but multiple topics are typically covered throughout a year. Kick-off night will be September 8.

A couple changes we are looking forward to include the addition of Cole Hamre as a youth leader, as well as monthly fellowship nights open to 7th-12th graders.

The Youth Leadership Team has been meeting to organize this year's happenings, including the ever-popular Underground Church event. It is scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 10 beginning with supper at 5:30 p.m. The evening will also include a worship service and guest speaker, and of course, the run through town to replicate the lives of persecuted Christians who are actually running for their lives because of their faith in Christ. With the recent events within Afghanistan, we hope this year's event will impact attendees in a deep, new way. Registration forms for Underground Church will be made available soon.

See you youth on the eighth!

Celebrate Church Family Birthdays & Anniversaries



Births and weddings are some of the highest points of a person's life, but that doesn't mean the celebration needs to end as time continues. Help celebrate the lives and unions within our church family by sharing your beloved friends' and family's birthdays and anniversaries. These dates will appear in the corresponding United Voice bimonthly newsletters.

Send the following information to Jenny Niemela:

Birthday: First and last name; birth month and date

Anniversary: Couple's first and last name(s) and marriage year

Let us not grow callous to these amazing gifts of God!





“Going Home” *Continued from the front page*

to their Promise Land. This was the land God promised to their fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Their roots were ripped out of the land as Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, fulfilled God’s will in exiling them for their disobedience around 600 years before Christ. It is here the Psalmist wrote,

*By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down and wept,
When we remembered Zion...
For there our captors demanded of us songs,
And our tormentors mirth, saying,
“Sing us one of the songs of Zion.”
How can we sing the Lord’s song
In a foreign land?
Psalm 137:1, 3-4*

That longing hopefully characterizes us, because Cokato and anywhere else will be disappointing. There is no home here on earth, ever since Adam and Eve were banned from the Garden of Eden, keeping them safe from the tree of life. “So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life” (Genesis 3:24).

Also, the ground is cursed (Genesis 3:17) and groans for renewal (Romans 8:19-22).

Even coming home to Greenbush, we realize we are ultimately temporary residents here.

I hope you realize the same for yourself. It all needs renewal. So, we look forward to the renewed

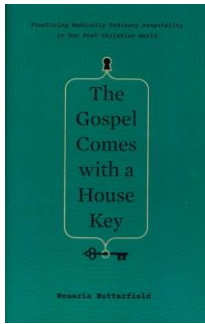
home, as described in Revelation 22:2-3, “On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him.”

We won’t be swinging by this home. We’ll for sure stay there long-term.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

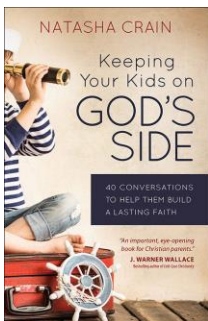
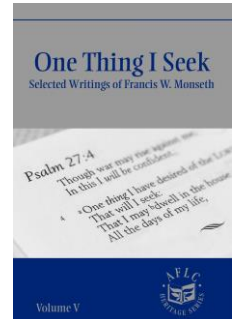
Revelation 21:1-4

New Church Library Books *available October*



The Gospel Comes with a House Key by Rosaria Butterfield The word “hospitality” can often create various levels of anxiety because of the perfect images of fashionably dressed hosts and impeccable homes that media and culture bombard us with. Yet, Rosaria Butterfield, in *The Gospel Comes with a House Key*, casts a far more reassuring and ordinary vision for what hospitality should actually look like. Using engaging stories from her own experiences of being on the receiving end of radically ordinary hospitality, Butterfield shows how one’s simple, but authentic, welcome can become a bridge for the gospel to reach the lost friends and neighbors in your life. This type of hospitality views our homes as God’s tools where authentic love and grace can be seen in action, revealing what true Christian faith looks like.

One Thing I Seek by Dr. Francis W. Monseth Volume V of the AFLC Heritage Series includes selected writings of the late Dr. Francis W. Monseth, longtime dean of the Free Lutheran Seminary. The title *One Thing I Seek* is based on Psalm 27:4, which was Dr. Monseth’s confirmation verse that guided him throughout his life. We give thanks to God for his life of service at the Free Lutheran Bible School and Seminary and are excited to share this collection with the people of the AFLC and beyond.



Keeping Your Kids on God’s Side by Natasha Crain Are your children facing criticism of Christianity while they’re at school, with friends, or online? Perhaps they’ve already expressed some doubts about God. Crain responds to 40 challenging questions that kids face today. Learn how to replace their doubts with confidence, encourage open dialogue, and equip them to defend their faith.

Upcoming Events

Association Retreat Center (ARC) ~ Osceola, WI

For more information, visit www.arc-aflc.org

- ❖ Young Adult Retreat ~ Sept. 24-26

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

For more information, visit www.aflc.org

- ❖ Pastors’ Conference ~ Oct. 5-7

NW MN District

More information to appear on church website, Facebook page, and future bulletins

- ❖ District Annual Meeting at Christ the King in East Grand Forks ~ Oct. 17
- ❖ Special Meetings ~ Oct. 24-27 (tentative) hosted by Badger Creek/Oiland

Free Lutheran Bible College & Seminary

~ Plymouth, MN

For more information, visit flbc.edu

- ❖ UpClose for HS Jrs & Srs ~ Oct. 21-22
- ❖ Alumni Tournament ~ Oct. 22-23



September-October Bible Reading Schedule

		Week Day		Additional Two-
		Reading		Year Reading
Wednesday	Season of Pentecost	Sep 1	John 5:1-18	
Thursday		Sep 2	John 5:19-47	
Friday		Sep 3	John 6:1-40	
Saturday		Sep 4		Psalm 36
Sunday		Sep 5		Psalm 37
Monday		Sep 6	John 6:41-71	Zephaniah 1
Tuesday		Sep 7	John 7:1-39	Zephaniah 2
Wednesday		Sep 8	John 7:40—53	Zephaniah 3
Thursday		Sep 9	John 8:1-30	Hosea 1
Friday		Sep 10	John 8:31-59	Hosea 2-3
Saturday		Sep 11		Hosea 4-5
Sunday		Sep 12		Hosea 6-8
Monday		Sep 13	John 9	Hosea 9
Tuesday		Sep 14	John 10:1-21	Hosea 10
Wednesday		Sep 15	John 10:22-42	Hosea 11
Thursday		Sep 16	John 11:1-46	Hosea 12
Friday		Sep 17	John 11:47-57	Hosea 13-14
Saturday		Sep 18		Micah 1-2
Sunday		Sep 19		Micah 3-4
Monday		Sep 20	John 12:1-19	Micah 4
Tuesday		Sep 21	John 12:20-50	Micah 5
Wednesday		Sep 22	John 13:1-20	Micah 6
Thursday		Sep 23	John 13:21-38	Micah 7

September-October Bible Reading Schedule

Friday		Sep 24	John 14	Habakkuk 1
Saturday		Sep 25		Habakkuk 2
Sunday		Sep 26		Habakkuk 3
Monday		Sep 27	John 15	Psalms 38
Tuesday		Sep 28	John 16	Psalms 39
Wednesday		Sep 29	John 17	
Thursday		Sep 30	John 18:1-24	Zechariah 1
Friday		Oct 1	John 18:25-40	Zechariah 2
Saturday		Oct 2		Psalms 40-41
Sunday		Oct 3		Psalms 42-44
Monday		Oct 4	John 19	Psalms 45
Tuesday		Oct 5	John 20	Zechariah 3
Wednesday		Oct 6	John 21	Zechariah 4
Thursday		Oct 7	Daniel 1	Zechariah 5
Friday		Oct 8	Daniel 2:1-24	Zechariah 6
Saturday		Oct 9		Zechariah 7-8
Sunday		Oct 10		Zechariah 9-10
Monday		Oct 11	Daniel 2:25-49	Zechariah 11
Tuesday		Oct 12	Daniel 3	Zechariah 12
Wednesday		Oct 13	Daniel 4:1-18	Zechariah 13
Thursday		Oct 14	Daniel 4:19-37	Zechariah 14
Friday		Oct 15	Daniel 5:1-12	Malachi 1
Saturday		Oct 16		Malachi 2-4
Sunday		Oct 17		Psalms 46-48

September-October Bible Reading Schedule

Monday		Oct 18	Daniel 5:13-31	Psalm 49
Tuesday		Oct 19	Daniel 6	Psalm 50
Wednesday		Oct 20	Psalm 51	Psalm 52-53
Thursday		Oct 21	Genesis 1	Psalm 54
Friday		Oct 22	Genesis 2	Psalm 55
Saturday		Oct 23		Psalm 56-58
Sunday		Oct 24		Psalm 59-61
Monday		Oct 25	Genesis 3	Psalm 62-63
Tuesday		Oct 26	Genesis 4	Genesis 5
Wednesday		Oct 27	Genesis 6	Psalm 64
Thursday		Oct 28	Genesis 7	Psalm 65
Friday		Oct 29	Genesis 8	Psalm 66
Saturday		Oct 30		Psalm 67-68
Sunday		Oct 31		Psalm 69-70
Monday		Nov 1	Genesis 9	Psalm 71
Tuesday		Nov 2	Genesis 10	Psalm 72
Wednesday		Nov 3	Genesis 11	Psalm 73
Thursday		Nov 4	Genesis 12	Psalm 74
Friday		Nov 5	Genesis 13	Psalm 75
Saturday		Nov 6		Psalm 76-77
Sunday		Nov 7		Psalm 78

Miriam Children's Home

Changing the Future of Brazil

Jonni Sliver September 2021



Like a Bird!

Greetings from the Miriam Home! I'm sorry if it seems like a long time since you've heard from us - it has been! I got so carried away in July that you never received the August letter! But even though the time flew like a bird, you prayed and God blessed – THANK YOU!

We have a lot of stories to tell and new kiddos for you to meet. Let's start with our littlest resident, **Ana Julia (4 months now)**, who arrived the beginning of July, underweight and covered in scabies. Her mother has a terrible problem with drugs and regularly forgot that she had a baby. I less than two months this sweet little girl has grown, become healthy and happy!



After Ana we were joined by three sets of siblings! **Antonio (5) and Luiz (1)** were the first to arrive. They came to us because they were found alone in their home, dirty and hungry. According to their neighbors this was a common occurrence. Luiz was a very frightened little guy and it took days for his first smile to appear. Their first night the house moms pretty much gave up on sleeping because Luiz sobbed most of the night. He would settle down and



doze off if one of the ladies stayed beside his crib, but within minutes of their leaving he would wake up in a panic. Finally, early in the morning he fell asleep for real, but it was only a few hours later that the house moms knew why! They went to get the children showered and dressed and found Antonio wasn't in his bed. He

had climbed into Luiz's crib, and cuddled next to his brother, Luiz and slept the rest of the night. The second night Antonio asked if Luis could sleep in his bed - it was the only way the baby felt safe.

And so for six weeks the brothers slept together. Just over a week ago Luiz went back to his crib, without tears. Both of these precious little guys have grown in confidence and joy. Luiz turned 1 year old and has been clapping ever since. Antonio started school and was SO excited, he wanted to sleep in his uniform the night before!

The next to arrive were two sisters; **Sarah (3) and Marcella (18 months)**. These little ladies barely know each other, because they were each living with a different family not related to them. Their mother had given each child to a family shortly after they were born, calling them "babysitters" but never bringing either baby home. These informal adoptions are common, but illegal, and the situation is so painful for the girls and their



substitute families. Sarah still cries and wants her mom, but she means the only mom she knows! It is a tangled situation, and we still have no idea

how it will work out, but we are doing all we can to make the girls feel safe and loved in the mean time!

The last set is **Diego (11) and Debora (3)**. They came to us late Sunday night, because they were found literally in the middle of the street, with their mom, who was stumbling down the street, so drunk that she was incoherent.

The children are well behaved, and Debora has settled in very well. The sad thing is she hasn't cried or asked for her mom or dad even once, because her confidence is in her big brother who is the only one who has cared for her!



Hello, Good-bye

Along with these precious new Miriam Home treasures we also had some children leave us and others who came for a short time.

Among those who came briefly were Thiago (8 months), who came from his parents and went to the care of his grandmother. We also were looking forward to receiving baby Moises! He was born prematurely and abandoned at the hospital by his mother. We had a special corner all set for him because he would have special needs as a preemie, but this little treasure did not make it to us. It was hard to know that we mourned Moises more than his mother did, but praise the Lord that this little boy is safe in God's hands!

Another set of siblings who came and left, but continue to need massive amounts of prayer is the family of **Vitoria (now 11), Gilmar (6) and Isaque (4)**. They have been subjects of this newsletter for years. You prayed in 2016, when the oldest 5 children were here and Isaque was almost on the way, while mom and dad were in a program to stop drinking. You prayed two years later when their house burned down in the middle of the night, and the whole family made it out of house unharmed. You prayed last year, when one of the children was killed by a neighbor, and when months later the mom passed away from tuberculosis - and sadness.

And the end of July these three (the youngest of the family), came to the Miriam Home because they were being left at home alone, while their father



Was at work. They were only with us for about a month, while their grandmother made plans to move from Curitiba to Campo Mourao to help the family, but in those weeks we saw the depths of brokenness in these young lives. From mourning for their mother, to lashing out in violent revolt (Isaque, the youngest, has a strong stutter but that didn't keep you from understanding his threat to "stab you in the stomach" when another child took his toy - that is how his brother was killed), to what seems like pleasure in seeing others in pain; all three children have wounds that only the Lord can heal.

The children returned to their family three weeks ago, when grandma arrived, and we haven't had a lot of contact since. In the past the parents were open to the children coming to Sunday School and children's camps, but since the mother passed away, the dad seems much less open., and now much less. We do see the children because they go to the same school our kiddos go to, but we really want to find ways to continue to reach out to the family, and share with them the one true hope for healing and a good future!

A more positive departure was **Perola's!!!** This precious little lady has lived with us for nine months, we watched her learn to talk a blue streak, discover her musical abilities (she carries a tune better than I do!) and showed the joy that only a three year old can. She came to us after witnessing a level of domestic violence that sounds like a script for a movie, but she left to join her new family - a strong, loving environment , Though we already miss our little pearl, we are very happy that she has just the family she needs.



Contact Information

To receive monthly newsletters and prayer requests:

AFLC World Missions Attn: Jonni Sliver
3110 Medicine Lake Blvd
Plymouth, Mn, 55441
sassi.jonni@gmail.com

Address in Brazil:

Jonni Lynn Sliver
CP 641
Campo Mourao, PR Brazil 87300-970



To make a financial contribution: Make checks payable to AFLC World Missions and enclose a note that it is for the



Jonathan and Tamba Abel - Maringa, Brazil

TIME JOURNAL

August 2021

Dear Friends,

We are back in Maringa, Brazil!

Jonathan's class at Seminary is going well. He has 8 Upperclassmen that he teaches Contemporary Theologies. It has been a wild year with some health issues on campus, yet he is enjoying his class!

Our daughter Michelle is heading to FLBC this weekend to begin her Freshman year, after spending almost two months in Brazil visiting friends and family—since she never got to have her official good-byes when she left Brazil in 2019. She got to travel a lot, spending time with all her relatives and with friends everywhere. This last Saturday for youth night, she got to share her testimony while we all roasted marshmallows with all the s'mores ingredients she brought down as a fun, American treat. She shared with teens how she had the opportunity on different occasions to share her faith with people in her everyday circles, such as Uber drivers, a hairdresser, friends' families, etc.



Michelle sharing at the campfire

As it would be expected, having been gone on our short 3-month furlough, we came back to find many things in need of repair around the house. We are still working on some water leak issues and will need to change a bathroom cabinet, change faucet, etc. Then our much-needed work tool (van) that had gotten hit right before our trip to the US, was left to be repaired and fully painted over the 3-month absence yet we have been back for almost a month and it is still not done.



Jonathan with a new lamb at camp

But we still count our blessings! God has protected our travels, our health, and our family. Last Saturday we finally had our first Women's coffee get-together and how special and fun it was! Also had 4 visitors! Looking forward to many more, the Lord willing!

Tuesday, August 24 was our 24-hour Prayer Day (we do this every month on the 24th). People sign up to pray for 1 hour over the 24 hr period. We pray for our country, our churches, friends and families, and special requests. It has been a positive thing for us!

Praying for some rain to clear the smoky and dusty air so everyone can breathe better. There were a couple of big frosts in July that damaged especially

the winter corn crop, so farmers have been clearing and burning their fields and harvesting the little corn that is left, getting ready to plant the next crop.

Thank you for your prayers, financial support, and friendship! Together and with God's help, we are touching lives to the Glory of God!

God bless you all,
Jonathan and Tamba

Prayer Request:

- For health and safety for us
- For Jonathan as he begins another year of teaching seminary classes
- For Tamba as she discipless women through coffee get-togethers
- For the families in our Brazil congregations affected by COVID-19
- For our son Thomas who is working in San Francisco.
- For our daughter Michelle who is starting her first year of Bible College at FLBC
- For Ruby Abel, who is living in the Twin Cities with her daughter Lydia.



Gifts can be given online or sent to:

AFLC World Missions
3110 E Medicine Lake Blvd
Plymouth, MN 55441-3008

E-mail: tjabel@terra.com.br



Matthew Abel Family June 2021

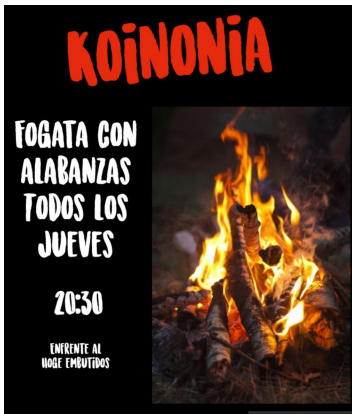
When is the last time you were excited?

I mean really, really excited! I think that as adults we learn to moderate and control emotion to the point that we cannot express and maybe worse, we can't even feel extraordinary bubbling-over joy, excitement, anticipation and such. I have realized that having a very imaginative little girl has helped me rediscover such feelings. I think of the years in which there were no kids at our Christmas and Easter parties --for some reason it was just not the same.

Psalm 100 says; "Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations. --"

One thing that marks 2021 so far for me has been JOY. The expectation of what could become of the seeds we get to plant. The process of envisioning and dreaming about what the future holds and the determined steps we have taken all factor in to this excitement. God is working and we get to participate.

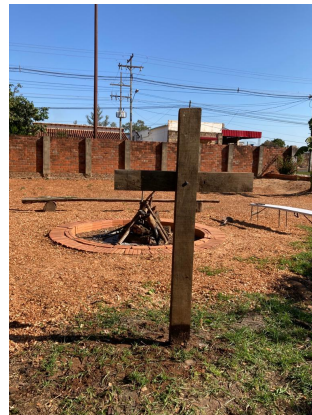
Did you read the Psalm above? Do you believe it? Consider reading it again and let it build up the joy within you.



Weekly Campfire Service



The cross doubles as a music stand and pulpit



A daytime look at our fire ring

What does the ministry look like?

Here is a simple outline of our current mission strategy:

- * Joaju Club -- reaching kids with the Gospel. They are the most open and teachable demographic and the earlier salvation comes the better. Through the Kids we touch the families.
- * Elementary School English -- that is the same idea.
- * College and teen ministry -- We think we are still young enough to be attractive to the teens and young adults and have been working on reaching them with outdoor activities such as our bonfire worship services.
- * One-on-one is still the way of greatest personal impact. Evangelism, bible study and discipleship at the individual level is time-consuming yet priceless.
- * Family/home Bible study -- We believe that studying the bible with people in their homes is indeed a good thing.
- * Cooperation with other believers -- We are striving to develop good relationships with fellow believers from other church denominations so that by our cooperation more people might be led to Christ.

[Print PDF](#)

We are thankful for your partnership in ministry and we need you to continue praying and encouraging and sending and going and giving.

"Great Commission Christians don't care who gets the glory or who is on the front lines. Instead, they are willing to be goers or senders as the Lord leads. If our hearts are in the right place, we will want to be involved in the battle wherever the Commander-in-Chief puts us. We know from Acts 1:8 that it takes the whole Church working together to reach Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth."

~ K.P. Yohannan, Come, Let's Reach the World ~



41 kids last week at Joaju Club



Ednay teaching the Bible to Rachel

Consider helping us pay for the land to build a church -- \$15,000 needs to be raised for the "special project Paraguay"



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