

The Jungle Journey

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Amazon, Peru

The church addition is off to a great start! A team of 21 individuals from and around Demotte, Indiana, came for ten days and completely shocked us. The group has been doing specialized welding trips for over 30 years. They put steel frames and roofs on Christian school through central America and Haiti. Though different individuals rotate or join the team, the core group leads a very organized and highly professional execution of projects.

The team hit the ground, went right to work and kept on working until just a couple of hours before their flight on the last day. They demonstrated incredible heartfelt service, rain on shine, and even lead devotions every morning. I was nervous about the size of the team and how we would be able to keep everyone busy, but I had nothing to worry about. They didn't just come and do everything themselves (which probably would have been easier and faster); they took time to teach several boys how to weld.

One day the city cut power several times, which cost half a day of work. When the day was over, the team went back to the hotel to rest, but the boys said they would stay and work late. Most of them had only just learned to weld that day or the day before, yet they were already teaching others so they could meet their goal of finishing all the trusses!

When the team came the next morning, they were absolutely delighted that so much had gotten done! The boys exceeded



Photo Credit: Joni Ooms

The welding line

their expectations so much that one man said it felt like Christmas morning. They have never had locals work so hard on their own project and were very touched by the boys' work and dedication.

At the farewell supper, we enthusiastically thanked them for their hard work that has propelled us in the vision. There was an open or anyone to thank them or share how they were impacted. Jose Maria, one of our boys, has been studying construction for a couple of years. Although he works hard, there has always been something stagnate in him. I suspect it came from constantly comparing himself to those who have gifts in preaching, teaching, or relational ministry. It's like he saw

himself as less because he doesn't have those gifts and his talents don't appear to be as important.

I was surprised when he took the microphone. He's not one to share voluntarily and is more comfortable in the background. The team's example taught him three things: service, perseverance, and love. He was crying when he shared that a devotional that used construction as an example changed his life and he finally understands the method God will use him for in building His kingdom, actual construction! For the first time in his life he saw his skills as useful and necessary in building the kingdom.

Randy, a man from the team, came forward with his surveyor's tripod in hand. He told Jose Maria that everyone could see that he is a young man with so much potential. He handed him the



Photo Credit: Joni Ooms

Painting steel and the start of the project



Photo Credit: Joni Ooms

Roof going up



Photo Credit: Joni Ooms

View from the top!



Photo Credit: Joni Ooms

Farewell supper

tripod and said, “We believe in you.” Jose Maria’s tears turned to uncontrollable sobbing as he hugged Randy and thanked him. His gratitude had little to do with the precious gift, and more to do with life change. Without a doubt that moment will mark a “before and after” in his life.

Thank you Demotte Work Team for your hard work and dedication to help us get the steel structure up and roof started on the addition! We are happy to report that our team has been working hard all week and the roof will be complete by the time this newsletter reaches you!

What’s the Addition for?

Community is one of the defining marks of Genesis Church. Many people come from broken and chaotic families. “Home” is nothing more than a word that defines the place they sleep or eat. At Genesis, they find love, acceptance, and a place to belong.

If you had a couple hours or more after a Sunday service, you could walk through the facility and find several small groups meeting and growing in relationship and spiritual life. If you went through the restaurant’s dining room

or cafe, you’d see clusters of people gathered around tables sharing a meal. If you lingered long enough, you would hear discussions about the sermon and ideas about how to live it out during the week. Laughter would be mingled with tears, depending on the table, as people shares their daily joys and trials. Outside, you’d find groups of people doing the same thing, only they are standing in circles because there’s no room left at tables or the outside seating. Some of them would be planning outreaches and activities with their cell groups for the upcoming week.

If you glanced around, you’d be sure to spot several serious conversations between leaders or pastors and their disciples. Marriage problems, economic crisis, heartbreak, and betrayal are common issues discussed, but so are spiritual growth and the cost of following Christ. Life experiences are swapped, Scriptures uncovered, encouragement given, rebuke or correction applied, and prayers delivered under a tin roof or open sky. This is where discipleship often happens, not with open notebooks, but open lives.

It’s not uncommon to hear a testimony that includes the statement, “church is the place I feel most at peace, most at home.” Is it any wonder that we actually have to kick people out at the end of a Sunday? We even moved our evening services to 5PM to give more time for fellowship after services!

The new addition will provide much needed space and an element of comfort for community life. The dining and living room feel will facilitate what already comes so naturally. It is one more way to tell people they are seen, wanted, and matter. Not only will the space be used on Sundays, but will be available throughout the week for people to gather. Thank you for praying and giving to this project!



Fellowship at Genesis Church goes long after service is over.

Rest or Laziness?

We have been seeing so many victories in the physical realm, with funds for The Next Chapter Campaign still trickling in! Projects are moving ahead on schedule, the new addition being one of the most visible advances. It has been demanding, requiring much manual labor and physical energy, leaving us a little more tired than usual. It has also been rewarding to see physical progress that can be evaluated, unlike spiritual work, where the results are often unmeasurable.

At a recent pastoral leadership meeting, we all identified with being tempted to “rest.” Yet, we all honestly admitted it doesn’t feel like the “laying down in green pastures” sort of rest. It’s more like a season that brings the danger of unmotivated laziness or falling into an attitude of “we’ve arrived.”

It’s easy to justify sleeping in a little later or going home a little earlier because we have already done so much. We can’t help but think of Christ rebuking his disciples in the garden of Gethsemane when he told them to watch and pray, yet they fell into temptation and slept! We don’t want to be found sleeping when we should be attentively on guard. On the other hand, we don’t want to resist rest and run in our own strength, which is just as tempting and destructive. Will you pray for us? We desperately desire to run with perseverance, the race marked out for us! Yet, we live in the flesh and this battle is real.

“Let There Be Light” Update

We are so happy to report that the financial need for solar panels has been filled! The panels are already installed and I’m actually sitting in front of a fan as I write this newsletter. We are so grateful for and humbled by how quickly God moved hearts to respond to this need. Thank you for praying and/or giving to “let there be light” at camp and home again.

Looking Forward

Marcus, Iowa Team

A team of 16 is coming for a week at the end of February (19-26) to continue working on the camp kitchen and chapel for encounters. A handful of the members are coming back for the second time, and many are first timers. Pray for safety, spiritual breakthrough, and great relationships to be formed.

GoServ Global Team

A team from Goserv Global will serve from February 27- March 5th. They will carry on projects from the two previous teams, either at church or camp. Pray for spiritual breakthrough, great advancement in projects, and unity, as the team is made up of several people from different places.

Global Leadership Summit

A local ministry has worked for years to bring the Global Leadership Summit to Iquitos. Last year, they held a pilot conference, which was a success. This year it launches for the public. Genesis was invited to host and promote the Summit. The ministry proposed shooting for 300 people. Nelton came back with a challenge of 1,000 people! We are working hard to connect with universities, businesses, and professionals to include them in the Summit. We have already seen doors open into arenas we haven’t had the opportunity to enter. Pray that this Summit will be a platform for the gospel and church growth. It will be February 23-24.

The Birth of Joy!

I am in the third trimester of pregnancy and it has been such a joy to carry life again! Our baby girl (Joy) is projected to make her arrival at the end of April. We are planning on another home birth, but checkups will confirm the possibility of that desire. In the event of an unexpected complication, we would deliver in town at the local clinic. Please pray for all the details involved.

To God be the Glory,

*Nelton, Bethany J., Kylviana,
Briel, and Jayden*

PRAISE POINTS

- The new church addition is going up!
- New solar panels have been provided for!
- God’s grace is for all of us!

PRAYER POINTS

- For the Spiritual building that will happen inside the physical one!
- For wisdom to rest while fighting against laziness.
- Upcoming teams and the Global Leadership Summit.

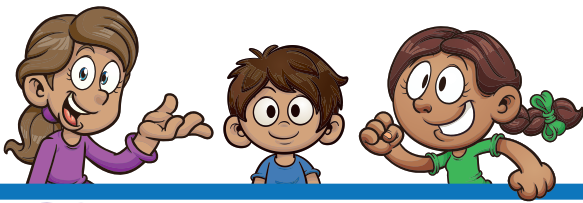
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INTERNATIONAL
MESSENGERS



KYLIANAS'

ORNER

Kyliana was up and to the work site with her dad every morning around six. She put in a full day's work with everyone else, taking breaks only when others did. When asked, she admitted she got bored with painting steel for hours a day, but never complained. It was very impressive to see her hard work ethic and discipline!



BRIEL'S BREEZE

Briel continues to grow in her love of arts and crafts. In her free time, she can be found in the craft room, listening to *Adventures in Odyssey* and making jewelry. Several entrepreneurs in our church started a group that puts on craft fairs for teams to promote their small businesses. Recognizing Briel's talent,

they included her in the group as the youngest entrepreneur. I'm grateful for the inspiration to grow and the outlet that motivates her to continue.

JUST JAYDEN

The unusual amount

of vehicles and people outside of the cemetery prompted Jayden to ask what that place was. I told him, then asked, "Do you know what a cemetery is?"

"Yes," came his confident and immediate response, "it's where they sell cement."

