



# **BushNet**

News from EMMANUEL INTERNATIONAL

PARTNERING WITH CHURCHES IN SERVING THEIR COMMUNITIES

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Paul and Helen Jones visit Brazil



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# Visiting Brazil

*March 2020, Paul and Helen Jones (EI International Director) and Richard and Pam McGowan (EI Canda Director) were heading to Brazil to visit EI's work there, when the world went into lockdown. Fast forward three years, and that trip finally happened for the Jones. Words are inadequate to fully describe the blessing it was to be with our Missão Emanuel do Brasil (MEB) missionaries, Fred and Carla Silva and Tarcísio and Jurema Porto. The Silvas and the Portos are among the very first missionaries with EI and have been with the work in Brazil since its beginning. Our deep gratitude to Fred, Carla, Tarcísio and Jurema for hosting us, for demonstrating their heart of service for Jesus as they shared with us the work of MEB in Brazil. Helen writes about the trip.*

## The Story of Montes Claros, COVID and Informal Recyclers

When we have exhausted our store  
of endurance,  
When our strength has failed  
ere the day is half done,  
When we reach the end of  
our hoarded resources,  
Our Father's full giving has  
only begun.  
He giveth and giveth and  
giveth again.

"He Giveth More Grace", song by  
Don Moen

March 2020, COVID hit the world and the world went into lockdown.

Tarcísio, pastor of the 7<sup>th</sup> Presbyterian Church of Montes Claros, was visiting his son in a town 250 kms from his home. He began to pray, "Lord, how can we help those who are suffering because of this?"

Meanwhile, back in Montes Claros, Patricia, a member of his church, was praying the same thing. Two weeks later when her pastor returned home, Patricia reached out to him with that question.

Foremost in their minds were the people of Montes Claros who made their meager living through collecting recycle materials. Many poor people move to Montes Claros

in search of work, some are single moms with children; all are very poor. They settle anywhere they can, setting up housekeeping on the fringes and within the city. Using bicycles or horse-drawn carts, they move through the city, collecting the recyclable materials that people are throwing away. What they find, they take to the recycle plant in exchange for a very small payment. As many as 600 families were living hand to mouth in this way.



When COVID hit, these families suddenly had no income at all. They were not allowed to move around the city. They had no way to provide for their families. Tarcísio and Patricia had been praying. What can be done? Food parcels for those in need! Tarcísio, a representative of Missão Emanuel do Brasil (MEB), advocated for funds from the EI Family. Patricia had an online business selling household and personal items. She began advertising that her online products could be purchased, not with cash, but with food items. Together with Tarcísio, they designed a 'food package' that people could give in exchange for Patricia's merchandise. People could purchase items from a list of foods needed and bring those in exchange for the merchandise.



## The TROCA DO BEM/Goodwill Exchange was born



**Patricia, centre, continues to visit homes. She is deeply loved.**

Within 10 days, all of Patricia's merchandise had been exchanged for food. Together with Tarcísio, they connected with the social welfare offices responsible for the 'recycle people', getting lists of those in need. Food package distribution began.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Presbyterian congregation became involved, donating their time to contact the families in need and taking part in the distribution of food packages. A journalist in the church sent out appeals through television broadcasts.

Word spread. Doctors began exchanging services for food packages. A check-up would be worth x number of food packages. The doctor contacted the supermarket who then prepared the food packages for 7<sup>th</sup> Presbyterian Church. Restaurants offered meals for the cost of a food package. A very popular hairstylist offered a free hair appointment for 6 food packages. Dentists did dental work for food packages. A popular pizza restaurant, Villa 61, offered a large pizza and small dessert pizza in exchange for 1 food parcel.

As word of the need spread, other companies got involved. Construction companies provided building materials in exchange for food packages. One food

package could purchase 3 bags of cement, for instance.

Now, in March 2023, TROCA DO BEM continues to grow. There are over 600 families who have received help since the first of COVID. Over 30,000 food baskets have been distributed. There are 29 volunteers who continue to move around, visiting people in need, circulating word of needs and helping to find items being requested. Another 90 volunteers are providing assistance in whatever ways are needed. Toys are being collected, refurbished and distributed. School supplies are being provided when the school year begins. Special treats for the children are provided at holiday times like Christmas and Easter.

7<sup>th</sup> Presbyterian Church is now praying for God's guidance as to 'What next?' What more can be done to help these 600 families and others to be able to access a better means of livelihoods? How can they help people source educational opportunities to learn new skills? The Brazilian government does have these types of programs but the challenge is how to help people access these resources that are there for them.

The church is already embarking on providing classes at the church: culinary skills, literacy, learning English, and more...



**This grandmother, who cares for her 2 deaf grandsons, praised God by praying for us.**

## Sementes do Vale, The Valley of Seeds



Deep in the heart of Ninheira is a thriving Community Centre: Sementes do Vale, the Valley of Seeds. Established to assist a struggling community, MEB has been contributing to the outreach of this community center for over 6 years.

The staff and volunteers offer a variety of programs for children and adults. The weekly schedule demonstrates a full program catering to different age groups, which includes computer training, literacy, art classes, robotics classes, music training and guitar lessons. A women's crochet class took place while we were visiting. There are sports programs such as indoor football (soccer). A small library is available for those who enjoy reading. The kitchen staff provides meals for the children. They also have a much-enjoyed circus training program: acrobatics, human pyramids, juggling, stilts, and more.

Our hosts for our visit were Gabriel and Isabella and their son, Gael. This young couple are serving at Sementes do Vale as missionaries from the 7<sup>th</sup> Presbyterian, Tarcísio's church in Montes Claros. They joyfully serve, pouring love into the children they are teaching. Their smiles speak volumes and are a testimony of their love

for Jesus, a love they are happy to share with others.

Isabella was teaching very young children the starting point of art... the dot. Gabriel is responsible for the indoor soccer program for a 100 children as well as much of the administration of the center.

What a blessing to see the joy and hear the testimonies of the staff and volunteers. Ana loves teaching music and sometimes writes her own songs for the children. Marco Túlio went to Sementes do Vale as a youngster and is now volunteering his time at the center. He recently finished high school and is hoping to one day enter medical training. Another young lady named Valerie, who teaches in the circus, shared that she also is a product of this community center. Her desire is one day to be a missionary, sharing Jesus' love in other places.

Ana and Marco Túlio





## Visiting Quilombola communities

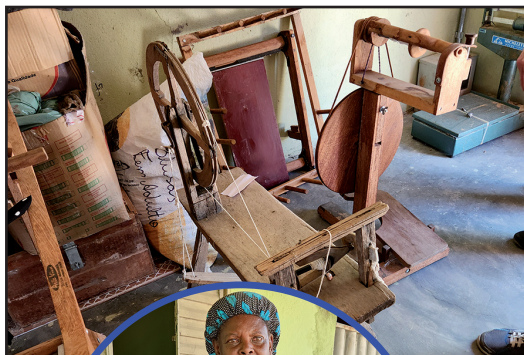
Tucked away in a corner of Minas Gerais state, Brazil, is an area where about 7000 Quilombolas live in small communities. The Quilombolas are descendants of slaves brought from Africa to Brazil since the 1500s. Some came to this area as run-aways and others moved there over the years.

MEB has a connection with the Quilombolas and are seeking God's direction for future work in this area. That Quilombola area is an arid place. Most of the land surrounding it is occupied by cattle farmers. Some of the Quilombolas are able to find work on these ranches, but the majority rely on farming, what little they can eke out of the land. At one time they had good harvests of cassava and were able to run a cassava mill.



They also produce cotton which they spin for weaving. These enterprises are small and provide a meager income for those involved.

Though poor, the Quilombolas are fiercely proud of their land and are strong advocates for their rights. There is one church that they have allowed to be built on their land, headed by Pastor Gilmar, himself an outsider who has for some years provided consistent and kind care for members of this community. It is this partnership that MEB is developing with the hope of one day introducing wholistic ministry for the Quilombolas.



## Missão Emanuel do Brasil Board

It was a delight to meet with the MEB Board. Together with Fred and Tarcísio, we met with the Board chair and three other Board members for an informal dinner. Interestingly, one of the Board members was himself a team member on an EI team with Tarcísio back in the 80s! He produced pictures and even an old EI brochure with their team picture.



# Mato Grosso do Sul State with Pastor Jader

Pastor Jader and wife,  
Arely, live in Anastácio,  
Western Brazil.



Pastor Jader and Arely

This is cattle  
country with large  
ranches. Pastor  
Jader is the chair  
of the UNIEDAS  
church and is also  
responsible for the  
Cades Barneia Bible  
Institute. Fred Silva has

been consistently building a  
very special partnership with Pastor Jader  
and the UNIEDAS church. The week spent  
in the company of these two men, with their  
love for Jesus, was a deep blessing. Our  
ERRI Board chair, Ben Sybring and his wife,  
Mary, joined us for this week in Anastácio,  
another blessing!

Our accommodation was in the guest house  
of the Cades Barneia Bible  
Institute, hosted  
by lovely,  
gracious Nancy.  
She and her  
husband are  
in the midst of  
moving to town  
but this didn't  
hinder her  
warm welcome.



**Nancy showing names  
of some of the tribes  
represented at the Bible  
School**

Cades Barneia  
Bible Institute  
was started by  
missionaries from Germany and the USA in  
the 1980s for the Indigenous people. The  
missionaries left abruptly in 1993, leaving  
the UNIEDAS church in the difficult position  
of running an institution with no financial  
support or administration training. The

leadership of UNIEDAS has persevered.  
The school recently celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup>  
anniversary.

Students come from many different tribes.  
Of the 16 students attending this year 2023,  
there are 6 tribes represented. It costs  
R\$300 (£48) a month for 10 months and the  
course runs for 3 years.

Sarah went to a secondary school  
established just at the edge of an  
Indigenous Tribal area. Sarah came to the  
Bible School because she wants to know  
Jesus better. She hopes to return to her  
community to share Jesus' love. Sarah  
makes beautiful beaded jewelry which she  
sells for her school fees.

Carolina came to the Bible school because  
she wants a closer  
walk with God. She  
also sells beaded  
jewelry to raise  
school fees.

Nivea comes  
from the  
Paraguay border.  
She felt called to  
the mission field in a  
church service in her home area. So, she  
has come to Bible school to prepare.

Revelation  
7:9 "...a great  
multitude that no  
one could count,  
from every nation,  
tribe, people and  
language..."

Being with these students, one gets a small  
taste, a small glimpse of heaven!

Pastor Jader has dreams for the Bible  
School spreading across Brazil. He would  
love to see campuses in 2 other areas.  
He would like to see Cades Barneia Bible  
Institute developed as a place for UNIEDAS  
offices as well as a conference center for  
training youth, deacons, worship leaders,  
children's workers. The plan was presented  
the UNIEDAS Board in January and was  
approved. The churches have committed to  
raise the funds for this.



# UNIEDAS - United Indigenous Church of South America

UNIEDAS started as MIU: Missão Indígena Uniedas. In 2012, they celebrated 100 years of evangelism (more on this below with Bananal Church). As of 2023, they have 43 UNIEDAS church in 41 ethnic groups. Their tagline is:

‘Indígenas Evangelizando Indígenas’  
*‘Indigenous Evangelising Indigenous’*

It is difficult for outsiders, Brazilian or otherwise, to enter tribal areas. UNIEDAS has 15 indigenous missionary couples working with a number of the different tribal groups.

An example of creative outreach over 20 years ago: some Terena families moved to an area close to Baixo Xingu and established a Discipleship House, a school for grades 3-12; the school that Sarah, from the Waura tribe, attended. They started the school as a way to introduce Jesus, providing discipleship for students from tribal areas. To date, they have graduated 183 students; 29 are in university.

MEB demonstrates the beauty of God-directed partnership and the partnership between MEB and UNIEDAS continues to grow. Fred shared the various ways MEB has been able to support the UNIEDAS work of Cades Barneia Bible Institute. Each area of assistance is based on expressed needs by UNIEDAS:

- MEB is sponsoring half the tuition for 5 students each year at Cades Barneia Bible Institute.
- The Bible School has a bright, welcoming library that was sponsored by previous ERRI Board member Brain Seim’s wife, Sally.
- MEB provided funds for solar power at the school, which has been a huge help... one less monthly bill to pay!

- An upcoming program is the provision of seed for growing of crops on the grounds of the Bible School to augment the food supplies for the students. Fred sees the seeds as a part of planting for the future, of promoting sustainability. It is also a part of wholistic mission, a concept that Fred and Pastor Jader are exploring together in relation to the UNEDIAS church.

- Fred is working with Pastor Jader to spread the word throughout the mission world in Brazil the work of UNIEDAS. Their work among the Indigenous in churches across the country is at last being recognized.

## UNIEDAS churches visited



**Olho D’agua** (eye of the spring) with Pastor Ariovaldo. Sue Fallon took a short term team from EIUK to help build this church building in 2007.

**Bananal Church** was established in 1915, the first church among the Terena tribes. The first missionary, a Scotsman, came in 1912. The first Terena convert was Lily. She is known to have said that the first time the Scots minister preached, she didn’t understand a word he said but she wanted what he had. In 1916, the first 4 Terena believers were baptized, Lily at the top of the list. There is a plaque with this history at the entrance to the church. The Scots missionary initially didn’t preach. He



Bananal Church

taught health and sanitation, drilled wells, introduced sewing, music, embroidery, painting, literacy, integrated crops agriculture... Essentially, he led by example.

The first church building was built in 1926; they will soon celebrate 100 years. Pastor Jesudo and his wife, Mary, lead the church. Mary's Dad was pastoring this church; he and his wife died within hours of each other from COVID. Mary is carrying heavy grief. They have a financial burden as the church doesn't bring in enough to pay their pastor and Mary's job is temporary. She asks that we pray for them.

While we were in the Bananal church, an old man, Amario, stumbled in. Blind for many years, Amario is 90 years old and is a deacon in the church. He picked up an accordion and played a song for us. As we talked together, we learned that Lily was his grandmother!

MEB is sponsoring a community worker in the Bananal area. Laucídio, a government health worker, is a man who does a variety of programs in the community. He is hoping to use funds that MEB has raised through EIM (EI in the USA) to have a chicken project with the community. Laucídio has a radio station with only Christian



output. He reads the Bible in Terena on radio, getting out the Word but also keeping alive the Terena language. He had at one time helped with the Terena New Testament translation. They would love to have more of the Bible translated into Terena.

**Limão Verde Church** with Pastor Jonas and wife, Adayir. Limão

Verde is a lovely, open church in a beautiful valley. It is an area where the Indigenous hid during conflicts in Brazil. Over the years, they quietly obtained land that is now legally recognized as their own.



Pastor Jonas has been at this church for 43 years. He came right out of Cades Barneia Bible School, expecting to stay 1 year. In that time he also hiked over the mountain to an area of another tribe who did not want to hear the Gospel. That first meeting, he prayed and when he looked up, everyone had left. But he kept going back and now there is a church there.

In his years at Limão Verde, he has trained 13 pastors. They have 2 baptisms a year. Some years earlier, following his first wife's untimely death, he saw no point in living but God graciously pointed out that his 2 daughters need him. He has since remarried. His wife, Adayir, provided a delicious meal for us. She and a group of 6 women are in the midst of planning a women's conference in a remote area to take place in June. It will take a 2000 km bus ride, followed by 8 hours in canoes to get to the place. They will be sleeping in hammocks at the conference. They are very excited about this upcoming conference.

**Inyapoyakwe**

'Thank you' in Terena