



NORTHEASTERN Brazil

Leland, Naomi, Lincoln, and Lauren Johnson

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Over the past several weeks we have seen God open incredible doors of opportunity. A few Sundays ago, we had our largest non-event Sunday, filling all three rooms that we are using to hold services. After filling the rooms, we had to set up a screen outside and have people sitting outside watching the service (picture 1).

We asked for prayer for our VBS and God blessed! The first day we were packed to capacity inside (picture 2). The second day we had to order two tents and hold the last three days outside, and God brought out even more children. We had many children raise their hands during the daily invitation to accept Christ as Savior!

We rolled from VBS directly into our Missions conference the following week and once again we saw God bless. We had great attendance each night and it was wonderful to see many new Christians learning for the first time about missions and our responsibility to reach the world (picture 3). And then, the opposition struck back.

The missionary that we brought in failed to inform us that the day that the conference started was also the day that he began to feel sick. He did not inform us of this until the following Thursday, when he and his wife had both tested positive for COVID. Because of the enormous amount of exposure that our church had with him during the time that he was most contagious, we had to go to a completely virtual service for that Sunday. We ended up with seven people testing positive for COVID and had to do virtual services for just over two weeks.

When the new cases in the church finally stopped, we were able to go back to regular service... just as the cases of COVID in Brazil were spiking. We had our first regular service in two weeks on a Wednesday, and the following Friday the government announced the first complete lockdown since July of 2020. The government announced a nightly curfew for one week and prohibited gatherings of any kind, for any reason, for one weekend. Fortunately, that started on February 24th. Unfortunately, it has been extended every week since. As of now it has been extended through March 15th. Unfortunately, we have only been able to hold one regular service since February 10th.

Over the last year, each of us have experienced the difficulty of trying to stay close to God when we cannot be in His house or with His people. This is especially true of new believers, of which our church is primarily composed. Please pray for us and the work here! Pray that the lockdown will end so that we can return to regular services, but also pray that God will work in the lives of our people that they will stay close to God during this time.



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