

THE

McKendree FAMILY

MISSIONARIES TO THE
Peru, South America



July/August 2019

Dear Pastor and Church Family,

In our last letter we mentioned that the Lord allowed me to take a trip to Brazil with another missionary in March. The goal was to learn more about the need for a ministry to the deaf in that region, since there are no independent Baptist churches, reaching the deaf, in that area. Brother Lemelin put me in contact with other missionaries who are serving in Benjamin Constant, which is on the border of Peru and Brazil. We were able to assist these brothers in Christ by carrying supplies with them from Benjamin Constant further into the interior of Brazil. The trail that we found ourselves on was like no hiking trail in the U.S.! It was a cow path with mud holes all along the way! It was an all day hike, but was worth it to be a blessing to these faithful laborers for the Lord!

On that Sunday, I was able to visit a church in Atalaia do Norte, which is about a 30 minute drive from Benjamin Constant. After church, the song leader took me to the house of one of the church members, where I met a little 4-year-old deaf boy named Isaí. He is the nephew of the church member. Isaí has no communication and is afraid to go to the local school because of being teased. He has no one who signs with him, though his Aunt has expressed an interest to learn signs, and she is actually from Iquitos!

While there, I was able to visit with Jonathan and Stephanie Hernandez. Jon and I were in Bible college together. They are serving in the town of Tabatinga, Brazil, which is across the Amazon River from Benjamin Constant. When we had first arrived at the boat dock, Jon had pointed out a deaf man to me. I tried to sign with him, but it seemed as though he did not know many signs. However, since Brazilian Sign Language is different than Peruvian Sign Language, it could have just been a case of not understanding each other's language.

Jon also introduced me to a Peruvian pastor from Iquitos, who is now serving in Leticia, Columbia, which borders Tabatinga. Pastor Luis knows a man in Leticia who has a grown deaf son. We went looking for this deaf man, but were unable to find him.

God has expanded our vision and set an open door before us: Amazon Deaf Missions - Open Doors on Open Borders. Twelve hours away from us by boat, there is a convergence of three countries - Peru, Brazil, and Columbia. Though I was only made aware of three deaf people in that area, how many more might there be? More importantly, who will reach those three, as well as other deaf in that area, with the Gospel of Christ? To my knowledge, there are currently no deaf works there. We cannot just leave the work God has given us here in Iquitos, but if He allows, we could help train others to reach the deaf of this border region of Peru, Brazil, and Columbia. How could this be accomplished? Jon has asked us to prayerfully consider coming at various times to do blocks of training for their seminary students. This training would focus on how they can best learn their country's Sign Language and deaf culture. More importantly, how they can reach the deaf for Christ in their Jerusalem.

After four years, God has moved us to a different house. It is just around the corner from where we were. The church has continued to meet in our house every Sunday. Earlier this year, Hermana Pilar's dad passed away. Not long after that, Hermana Pilar, who is one of our faithful hearing ladies, expressed to us her desire to use part of their property for a permanent church location. This particular part of the property used to be a bar, but now God is going to allow this same part of the property to be a church! We are currently helping with the construction of the church space, and will be renting this space for the church after completion. We are all eagerly looking forward to the opening day for the building of Iglesia Bautista.

Your Missionaries to the Deaf 1st,
Matt, Sarah, Martha, Ian, & Phebe



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