

Dave and Carol Sue Mapuera Report

Carol Sue and I spent one of the most rewarding, enlightening and interesting weeks of our lives in the heart of the Amazon forest with our good friends and former students, Sérgio and Márcia Nascimento.



We taught 6 hours each day in 100+ degree heat and high humidity to about 200 Indians on the importance of the Leader's Family. This was the third course in the MICALI (Leadership Training) curriculum, a new ministry outreach of MEVA (Mission for the Evangelization of the Amazon), which is comprised in large part of alumni from Word of Life Seminary.

Unfortunately, the funds we raised came far short of the total we needed to cover our trips to northern Brazil and then 5 hours of flight on a single-engine Cessna plane. If you would like to help cover the \$1500 we lacked for the trip, please see the instructions at the end. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYER, ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT IN THIS AND OTHER OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES GOD HAS GIVEN US!**

REPORT

We were flown into the Wai-Wai Indian village of Mapuera, on the Mapuera River in southwest Pará state by a Missionary Aviation Fellowship pilot (also an alum). The 2 ½ trip was over hundreds of miles of uninterrupted Amazon jungle. Amazing to think about the vast expanse below which supplies so much of the world's air...the unexplored forest, the wildlife, the danger below. Around noon on Monday, Sept 26, we came in sight of a large, wide river (the Mapuera) and a HUGE Indian village before us, wood-panel houses on stilts, thatch-roofed *malocas*, long dugout canoes on the bank, an expansive school building and, in the center of it all, a large church (seats 1000)...all very surreal. Hundreds of Indians, boys and girls and adults came out to the plane to watch our arrival. The kids sat under the wings of the plane to shield themselves from the intense heat. All curious to see the new arrivals.



The village is a city by jungle standards, with over 1300 Indians, a fully functioning school, health clinic, and electric generator that operates from 6-9:30 p.m. each night (when there is fuel!) Missionaries have lived and worked with this tribe for decades, which was the first of over 200 tribes in Brazil to receive the entire Bible in its own language in 2001 (exactly 10 years ago).

The difference the Gospel has made in this community is enormous! Nearly 20% of the village stopped all normal activities to attend the 28 hours of Bible teaching on the family. Even more amazing...at 4 a.m. most days the village is awakened to a local daily "broadcast" which is heard LOUDLY throughout the entire community...The program, led by the chief's wife who is a STRONG believer, begins with a long prayer, followed by a cappella hymns and choruses and then the rest of the hour, a recorded Scripture reading done in the Wai-Wai language. It's the first we'd ever experienced mandatory, community-wide "quiet time"!

Our schedule was basically the same all week...wake (or be awakened!) EARLY...clean up in the river, lug pails of water up the embankment to the house (for non-drinking purposes), breakfast, then teach all morning...into the river again before lunch, eat a good meal that Márcia had prepared beforehand, rest a few minutes, then teach from 2 – 4 p.m. We

would usually make a few visits to sick villagers, which always meant a crowd would accompany us as the church pastors prayed, sang and quoted Scripture. (One day we “rescued” a young father who had disobeyed the chief’s orders to not work this week; he went upriver to fish, was looking for bait when he was bitten by a dangerous jararaca snake around the knee. He had refused to go to the health clinic, but we carried him there in a hammock strung to a pole and he was flown out to a hospital the next day.) Then we headed to the river again to wash our clothes from the day, swim a bit (not very far out, as the villagers fear the large electric eels in the river) and “shower” as dusk fell. Then, dinner, a chance to relax and talk or, some days, speak in another church service.



One day we were able to visit a typical manioc farm cleared in the jungle, heading downstream on the dugout canoe with its outboard motor to then plunge into the forest and help haul back sugar cane.



At times it seemed like we were caught in a time warp or else living between the 1st and 4th worlds...from advanced to highly primitive. There are satellite dishes and TV hookup, public pay phones in the middle of the jungle, HUNDREDS of miles from the nearest “civilization”, in a context of jungle subsistence farming, thatch-roofed huts with cooking fires inside; electric guitars and drum sets, bicycles, and outdoor motors alongside dugout canoes and hand-held fishing lines. The

amazing thing is that EVERYTHING that makes it in to the village needs to be hauled in 3 or 4 days by canoe or in the belly of small planes...including soccer goals, water boxes, bleachers, sacks and sacks of cement for the floor of their public buildings (school, church, etc.).

The response to the teaching was overwhelming. Even more so was the realization that so much of Christianity is totally new to them, but they have embraced God’s Word with everything they have. For a Bible teacher, nothing could be more enjoyable than to have 200 students in total silence and rapt attention for 4 hours at a time in spite of the oppressive heat, hard wooden benches, long delays for translation, all to understand and apply God’s living Word!



Lessons Learned . Following is a summary of some of the things God taught us or reminded us during the week.

1. The Gospel transforms lives, families and cultures! With the Gospel at the core, it is possible to be content in any circumstances – to be abased and to abound.
2. Some plant, others water, but God gives the increase. 50+ years of hard labor by frontier missionaries among dangerous tribes are today generating the fruit that many who went before longed to see.
3. The simplicity of the Gospel can easily be lost in the “sophistication” of a post-modern, technological world. We need to get back to the basics of Bible study, prayer, Scripture memorization, worship, evangelism and fellowship with one another.
4. People are the same wherever you go. The destruction caused by sin, conflict, pride, greed, immorality is everywhere. Only the Gospel can solve these problems.

For those who read to the end, THANK YOU!

Dave and Carol Sue

P.S. As mentioned above, we wound up \$1500 short in funds for this trip, which was covered by our Brazilian missionary friends (the cost of the flight into and out of the jungle). For those who would like to help cover the expense of this trip, you can send a check with a memo "Merkh Missions Trip" to:

Fellowship Baptist Church
1520 Hainesport Rd.
Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054



If you could send us an e-mail letting us know of your contribution, that would also be helpful. Any additional funds raised beyond the needs for the last trip will be applied to future trips of this nature. Thank you!