



Marcio Ciechanovicz and Noemi Celeti

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Location: Brazil



What we do: Connecting with people beyond the reach of traditional church, sharing the gospel in new ways and ministering to people's physical needs.

Dear friends and supporters,

It has been a whirlwind of new discoveries and change in the past three months. As a family we have lived in seven different places in the last six months. God has provided temporary places for us to stay along the way but we were so happy to find a house and finally move into our home on 18 February!

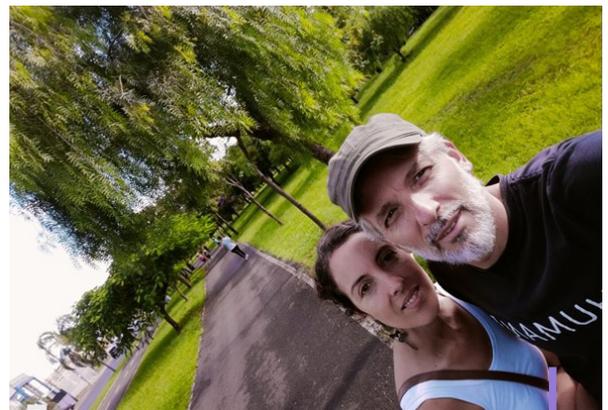
One of our temporary houses was out in the country, a 30-minute drive from the city of Indaiatuba. While we felt like our hands were tied because we were living so far away, Marcio and I decided that whenever we were in Indaiatuba, we would stop at the ecological park. We would do some prayer walking, chat to people and we started asking God for discernment.

An interesting boat-like building caught our attention on one of those walks. It was an orange, boat-shaped structure with round windows and a "prow", built right in the middle of the park. God placed a passage on Marcio's heart: John 21:6, when Jesus meets his disciples after a long night of fishing without results. He then tells his disciples to throw their nets on the other side of the boat. We looked at this structure and began to pray for discernment as to where we should "cast our nets".

As we met local people in various places throughout the city, everyone seemed to know the boat. "Where do you live?" they would ask, north or south of the boat? People began to explain to us that everyone wants to live north of the boat, and that south of the boat is a less privileged area. We began to observe that the park is neater and has a lot of activities and structures to the north, with vast sports areas, a pet playground and is surrounded by posh houses. To the south the opposite is true. There is rubbish on the ground, the playgrounds are not as nice, and the park is more abandoned. Apparently, even last year's Christmas lights were displayed only in the northern part.

We found it so interesting that weeks later God allowed us to find a house to rent just a few blocks from this very boat, just a five-minute walk from the middle of the park! We are in the middle, in the gap between north and south. We have a desire to bless both sides of the park. How can we be God's church in the park that looks at bridging this gap between two different worlds and brings people together?

We are blessed to be part of a wonderful team, and have been investing a lot of time in discerning what God



One of our first trips to the park to do some prayer walking

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**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



wants us to do and how to do it. Some of our first activities involved meeting at the park regularly in order to be a presence there every week. We also did some exercises to help us feel more comfortable in approaching people and starting up conversations.

The first activity we did to reach out to people with a particular theme or objective in mind, took place the Sunday before Easter. We invited people to come for a simple game involving water balloon tossing with the title “Easter means....”. We labelled different buckets with words like “freedom”, “reconciliation”, “forgiveness”, and people had three tries to hit those targets. As people

came and played we had individual conversations about what Easter represented for each of them and it was a great way to break the ice and talk about this subject. Each participant then got a chocolate and a card to join us for more activities.

On Easter Sunday we went to the park and set up a table with lots of food elements that the Jewish people used in their Passover meal. We went out inviting people to come hear the story about what Easter is really about. We were amazed that a good group of people came; lots of children, families and even a big group of young adults who were hanging out at the park. The majority had never heard about the connection between Passover and Easter, and they were so interested to taste the different items we had. They tasted the bitter herbs, the salted water, the unleavened bread, the date and almond paste made to look like mud, etc.... Then the pastor of our team, Altamiro, explained that Easter was for all of us, and that we could all participate in this meal together. We all joined together around the table to eat and share the grape juice and bread and fruit. It was an uplifting moment and so encouraging to see people eager to join, willing to hear the story and pleased to eat together.

Our prayer is that each one of you dear friends, along with our team here, can have the discernment of where to “cast our nets”; that in our work and in our times of simply being somewhere, we may carry God’s presence with us. Sometimes we will just chat or play a game, but other, special times, we may get the opportunity to share about God’s love with those around us.

Please continue to pray for us, we really depend on your spiritual support! We had a few weeks of sickness, so we hope that God will renew our strength and our immune systems. We would appreciate prayer for the children’s safety. There has been an increase in violence in schools across Brazil, due to a social media challenge encouraging teenagers to go into schools to kill a certain number of children with various weapons. And of course, please pray for our team, for discernment as we continue our activities in the park, and for the people of the city, that they will be blessed.

Marcio and Noemi



Photos from top to bottom: The boat structure divides the park socially and economically, between north and south; our first balloon toss activity was not only fun, but encouraged people to think of Easter around the themes of reconciliation, freedom, and forgiveness; an eager group listens to Altamiro tell the story of the Jewish people under the yoke of slavery – many were eager to try the Jewish Passover food items; people joining the Easter table to try the Jewish elements and receive the Eucharist.



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Jesus never gives up. Neither should we. We live in a fractured, hurting world. It can be tempting to give up: on hope, on people, on the idea that things can ever change. Yet, Jesus invites us to follow him on a journey to the edges. Find out more at churchmissionsociety.org/nevergiveup

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