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What Did You Do?

A Message from our Founder and CEO

Years from now when we look back at this pandemic, I believe that one of the things that will stand out for me will be the incredible leaders that work alongside Harvesters globally.

Across the world, countries have experienced different phases of Covid for fourteen months; with waves coming and going and with restrictions being lifted only to be reimposed. Most missionaries returned home, and this has added to the burden on indigenous leaders.

In some places people have suffered tremendously. Lockdowns have been particularly difficult for pastors in rural areas where their only income has been cut off as their churches were shut down. At the same time, they have had to minister to the sick and bury the dead. Support from traditional sources has all but dried up. Normal missionary work, evangelism and church planting have in most cases been put on the back burner. Many pastors and other church leaders have become ill themselves and several of our Hub Leaders, pastors and student pastors have died.

Despite the challenges, so many have continued to serve God faithfully. They have seized the opportunities that have come with this terrible pandemic. They have shared the love of Jesus to fearful and desperate people. Because of their efforts, many people have come to salvation in the past year and new churches have been planted. These faithful servants of the King have gone out with the Gospel despite lockdowns, hunger and the danger of infection. They have become the hands and feet of Christ for the poor, the desperate, the needy and the lost. Some have paid a heavy price. They were willing to pay the price because they believed that people need the Lord – even, no especially, in the midst of a pandemic.

Pray with us for these faithful ministers of the Gospel who have chosen to serve in such a time as this. Support where you can. Encourage others to do the same. Years from now when we look back at this pandemic, we will have many stories to tell. There might also be questions. One question we might all have to answer is “What did you do for the Gospel during the pandemic?”

Steven Loots

Steven Loots
CEO





A Shepherd for the Sheep

Pastor Tiago de Oliveira Santos, who is employed by Harvesters Brazil, is passionate about sharing Jesus. Since 2018 he has been involved in the planting of five churches in Minas Gerais, Brazil's second most populous region. The most recently planted church is in the rural municipality of Senador Firmino, which is around 200km from Belo Horizonte. It is a city very close to his heart.

SENADOR FIRMINO

"Senador Firmino is the city of my grandparents," explains Tiago. "Since I converted to the Lord Jesus Christ, I always dreamed that my whole family would come to know and serve him. But during these more than thirty years of walking Christianity, I had never been able to share my faith with this part of my family directly. I always imagined that at some point, magically, they would become interested and become followers of Jesus."

Tiago's truthful testimony holds up a mirror to many of us. Sometimes it can seem easy to share the Gospel in distant lands yet so challenging when it comes to our very own families.

"After learning about the work of Harvesters, my vision of evangelism and discipleship was totally affected," Tiago

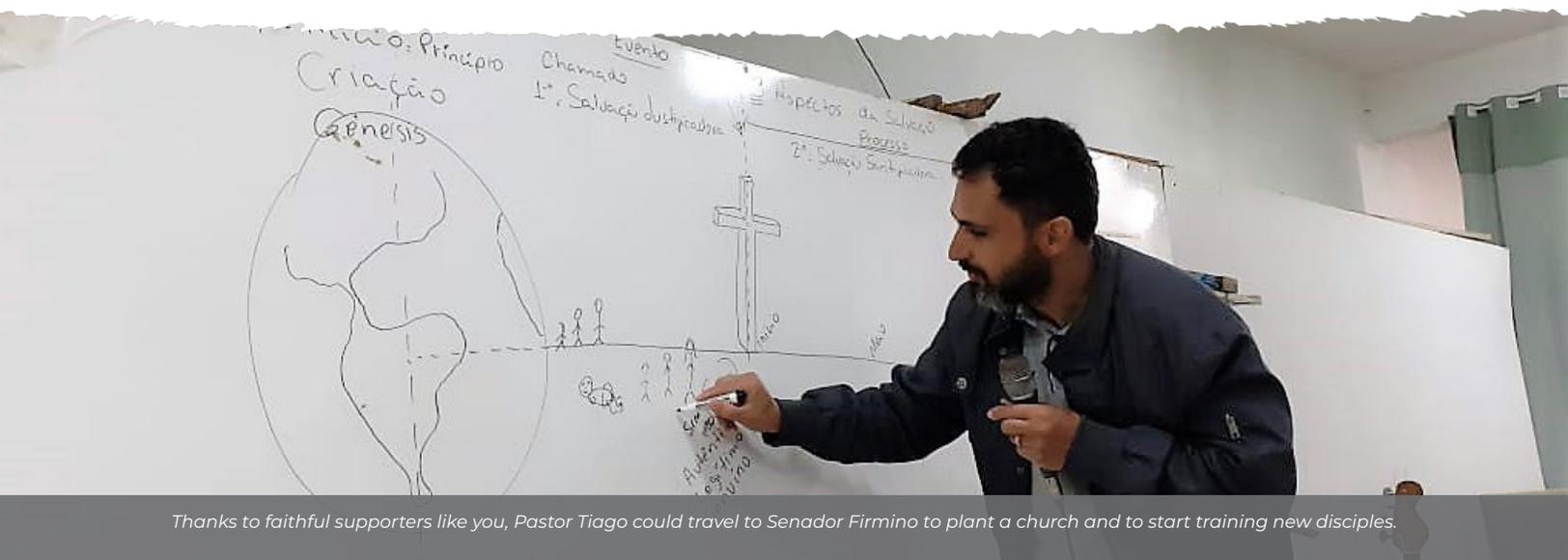
says. "I immediately felt the need to take Christ to my family, and I needed to start putting this into practice."

UNEXPECTED OPPORTUNITIES

The pandemic closed the doors of church buildings around the world, and services migrated online providing people the opportunity to see what church is all about from the comfort of their own homes. Tiago's Aunt Sandra*, who lives in Senador Firmino, was one of them. "At the end of the service she gave her life to the Lord!" rejoiced Tiago.

In the days that followed she was already exercising her faith by praying for her brother, Jorge, who had been struck with severe abdominal pain and was close to death. Tiago went to visit his uncle in hospital and shared the Gospel with him. Jorge accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior that day and heaven rejoiced. He had some successful surgeries and is now recovering well. His faith is also growing.

The newly converted pair, plus some others, began to meet regularly. One of Tiago's aunts asked him, "Is it possible for Harvesters to come here and to teach us how to be a church?"



Thanks to faithful supporters like you, Pastor Tiago could travel to Senador Firmino to plant a church and to start training new disciples.



SCATTERED SHEEP

As Tiago's family were finding faith, a local church in the area had been left to fend for itself when their pastor moved away. The sheep scattered. Some of the lost members began to connect with this small gathering that was forming in Senador Firmino. God was bringing them together.

Although many of them have been Christians for an average of 10 years, "they don't know about Christ, don't know about the salvation plan of God, they don't know what God expects from them," Tiago explains. "They think they are customers that went to a shop to buy blessings from God. It's sad to say that but the quality of Christianity in the rural areas here in Brazil, is very poor."

Tiago saw that the people of Senador Firmino, including his newly converted family members, "had no pastor to care for them. Who will take care of these people?" It was time to plant a church.

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS

Tiago makes regular visits to the city. "There, the work is starting from scratch," says Tiago. "It is a case of practical application of the disciplines. We need to restart the process of evangelizing, restart the process of discipling." During his most recent trip at the end of June, Tiago taught about the assurance of salvation to members who gathered in person and online. The church plant presently has around 16 congregants and is growing. Tiago intends to contact the remaining lost sheep from the abandoned church too, and let them know, "we are alive, and we are going to continue."

"I'm excited," Tiago says, "it will be my fifth church planted here in Brazil. I am investing time with this group of people here and praying to God to make it work."

*Sandra passed away on 25 July. We rejoice that she is now in the presence of our Heavenly Father. 🙏



You helped this church group in Senador Firmino to start with discipleship training. Pray that these new disciples will continue to grow in their faith and that they will spread the light of Christ in a world that desperately needs salvation.

Cathedral Builders

After the Great Fire of 1666 that leveled London, the great architect Christopher Wren was commissioned to rebuild St Paul's Cathedral. As the project was underway, Wren observed three bricklayers hard at work. To each in turn he asked, "What are you doing?"

The first answered, "I'm laying bricks."

The second answered, "I'm building a wall."

The third answered enthusiastically, "I'm building a great cathedral!"

Each bricklayer had a different perspective on the work they were doing. The third saw that his role was an essential part of rebuilding St Paul's Cathedral!

We pray that all our Harvesters partners see their role in growing the Kingdom of God as vitally important – whether training pastors in the field or generously partnering financially. You can become a monthly giver to Harvesters Ministries today. Sign up to donate \$10 monthly, which will provide a pastor with three years of ministry training and a Bible their own language, and plant three churches. Together we can expand the Kingdom. Thank you. ✉



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Get in touch with Harvesters Ministries if you would like us to come and present the free Disciple Makers Course at your church.

Opening the Way