

## Couples Date Night



“You guys are going on a date night, with each other?” Incredulous looks. Then smiles. Then rolling eyes and laughter. Even now, five years after we have moved to Marabá, people start laughing when they hear that Deanna and I are going out on a date. Tuesday nights. So this is what I talked about on our first Maraba Church Couple’s Night.

Healthy, long-term, marriage friendships are very rare here. Most of these couple’s have a very broken history but I think everyone dreams of having a loyal, best-friend as a spouse. Judging from the smiles and laughter, this was a fun evening for everyone. We want to start doing this on the first Friday night of each month. For more pictures and stories about this work in the Amazon go to [www.rickbergen.net](http://www.rickbergen.net) and also visit us at [www.xingu.org](http://www.xingu.org) to experience all the other good works going on in the mission. **RGB**

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# Xingu Mission Field Report

Xtreme Mercy  
 Planting Churches and  
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## Zezinho

Zezinho left on the bus a few weeks ago. He moved to Mato Grosso, another state a few thousand kms away. Zezinho has been with us since we met under the mango tree here in Marabá. He gave his heart to Jesus during our first Cristovál event, in February 2009. He was 14 years old. Soon after he started to learn to play the drums, and joined the newly formed Vinha Worship Team, under Annika’s leadership. (Annika was 16). He has

been at it ever since. For his last night in Marabá the worship team got together, set everything up, and played worship songs all evening.

Zezinho writes things on his Facebook like (and I am translating loosely) “Everything was set up for me to go bad, but God found me and changed my story,” and “God must have a lot of patience. He is still working on me. kkkkkk (the “k”s are Facebook laughing, in Portuguese)”.

About four years ago Zezinho’s dad moved out of their home. “Too much violence and drugs.” He moved across the river from us, and still comes over to watch a soccer game here at the church on the occasional Saturday. About three years ago Zezinho’s brother-in-law’s brother started coming to our Pre-Encounter meetings. We were all very happy. Then he got shot, and ended up in intensive care at the hospital. Zezinho’s sister’s husband decided, “I will take



Zezinho and friends



## Zezinho *cont.*

my brother's place and go to this Encounter meeting, since my brother is in the hospital." During the retreat week-end he told me, in all sincerity, "This has been the best week-end of my life. I can rest in the afternoon. I don't have to worry if someone is going to come in my house and kill me." During the Encounter week-end, his brother died in the hospital. A



Zezinho playing drums

few weeks later the killers came after him. He narrowly escaped bullets by jumping over a wall. I remember the brother-in-law's mom was screaming and waving in front of the gunman shooting at her son. She only had two sons, and



Playing worship songs

one was already in the ground. Both boys were in their mid-twenties. Zezinho's sister and brother-in-law left town and have not come back.

In September 2010 Zezinho's mom told me she was going to move into the house right by the front gate of our church. "It will be safer for me and my family. And I love the church." She never got to move. In November she was killed. Five bullets. Zezinho, of course, was in shock. He moved onto our church property. Ivanildo and Monica took him in and cared for him like he was their son. They helped him keep going to high school and they got him a job installing TV satellite dishes.

Zezinho moved to a small town where his sisters live. We hear they have become Christians. May God bless Zezinho with a church that he loves, and with some good friends who will help him along. **RGB**

## Discipleship

Keith Wilson surprised us this week by driving up for a night with Ferreira and a couple of other guys from Pacajá, mostly so he could hang out with them for the day. Pacajá was out of cement. They had some errands in Marabá. But mostly it was just to hang out together and the conversations that go with this. This got me thinking about Jesus' last words to his followers, as recorded in Matthew. "Go and make disciples of all nations..."

How do we make disciples? It is real easy.

1. First we need to be disciples ourselves.
2. Then we hang out with people.

During early morning prayer at our church we meditated on the story where Jesus healed the man's withered hand. Our Portuguese bible says that Jesus was angry because the Pharisees were not even trying to understand.



Making disciples



Discipleship

The next day I overheard one of the young men in our church talking to two of his friends (translated from Portuguese): "...we need to try to understand what God is saying. God gets frustrated with people who..." I walked away and let them keep talking. I still smile as I think about it. This is the mark of a disciple.

We affect those around us. For this reason our families are our greatest disciples. They see us the most. How are you doing with this? Are you making disciples of Jesus?

What about the second part of this command, "...of all nations"? I see it like this. If we make disciples, and they make disciples, these people want to meet together. As families and neighborhoods change for the good, others will want to know how they can get in on the action. So one church plants another, and hopefully another, and a church-planting movement is born. As families, neighborhoods, and cities change, nations change. This is our dream, and goal. **RGB**