



Christian Light Foundation Costa Rica

EVANGELISM and DISCIPLESHIP

in the hard places of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Venezuela

December, 2024

259th consecutive monthly newsletter

FUN FACT
More than 1,200 bags of groceries have been given this year to families in desperate need to help feed their family for about a week.

HANDS & FEET Compassion Ministries

Being the hands and feet of Jesus offers an open door to share the love of Jesus.

This was the theme of the week-long East White Oak Bible Church missions conference we were invited to participate in last month. It was a wonderful week of sharing what God is doing in the ministry, meeting other missionaries and being encouraged and challenged by their stories, and catching up with old friends and making new ones. We were reminded about something that we have written about before, *taking Jesus out from between the parenthesis*.

There is nothing more important for a child (besides learning about Jesus) than...

There is nothing more important for a church (besides preaching about Jesus) than...

There is nothing more important for the missionaries (besides teaching about Jesus) than...

One can finish the sentences above in a lot of different ways. The statement may be true no matter what follows the parenthesis since, indirectly, Jesus is put above whatever follows. The priorities become unclear, however, when what follows the parenthesis goes on for several paragraphs or even several pages without mentioning Jesus again.

As missionaries working for over 22 years in some of the poorest and most dangerous areas of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Venezuela, we know the many needs. God speaks to our hearts from texts like Matthew 25, James 2, and others, and we often ask Him what we can do to help.

“There is nothing more important for you to do (besides teaching about Jesus) than providing food for the hundreds of children at the feeding center or providing school uniforms to put hundreds of kids into school or providing jobs or providing shelter or loving those that are unloved or tutoring or protecting kids from violence and abuse”...the list goes on. It is not unusual for us to receive correspondence like this as people want to help in one of those areas. Make no mistake, the help is needed! The need is great! But what is the priority? What is the most important thing? Take Jesus out from between the parenthesis!

We pray for the resources needed for the feeding center. Still, the top prayer request is that every child who walks through those doors have a personal relationship with Jesus. We pray for the children's education, but first and foremost, we pray that they would come to know Jesus as their personal Savior. And so it is in *everything* that is done in the ministry. Knowing Jesus, learning about

Jesus, obeying Jesus, following Jesus, and sharing Jesus is priority number one..

Compassion is not just pity or sympathy. It is more than being moved to tears or stirred up emotionally. It is more than just speaking out against injustice. Compassion combines pity and mercy with the desire to help. It's not just a feeling; it is an action. Sympathy is about feeling. Compassion is about doing! Genuine compassion should move us to do something, but the lack of compassion is often very easy to justify. As we “do something,” may we focus on Jesus with our words and actions!

Jesus is the rightful owner of first place in our lives and ministry. He alone is worthy of all praise and worship. He is more important than food, shelter, and education. Only He can change a life for eternity. How do we balance that with the biblical commands to care for the poor, downtrodden, and oppressed? We don't. In attempting to obey those commands to the best of our ability and resources, we still want to see Jesus first and foremost.

Please pray this month that God will allow us to live out in a real way our desire to take Him out from between the parenthesis of our lives and ministry. Nothing is more important than learning about Jesus, preaching about Jesus, teaching about Jesus, and following Jesus. No parenthesis.

It appears that the ministry will end this year with the lowest amount of giving in the last 15 years. Please join us in prayer about this. Please get in touch with us if you would like to learn more about what is being done to compassionately meet needs while focusing on evangelism and discipleship. We thank God for His protection, provision, and guidance.



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