



Equipping Servants: Disciples Making Disciples

Kep and Debbie Update August 2025

Dear friends,

A few years ago, when Deb and I visited Andrew and Angie in Uruguay, we watched the 2008 movie *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. In one scene, giant Venus flytraps nearly eat two characters, Trevor and Hannah—who barely escape. The next few days, our 5-year-old grandson Zack became *obsessed* with Venus flytraps. He peppered us with questions from morning until bedtime: “Do plants that big really exist? Could they eat children? Where could we see them?” Even after we showed him online that giant ones don’t exist, his curiosity didn’t let up. Finally, Andrew found three small plants for sale in Uruguay so that Zack could see for himself that while Venus flytraps are fascinating, they are too small to harm children.

Real Venus flytraps attract flies with a smell like rotting food. When the fly lands, it sticks to a glue-like resin, the plant snaps shut, and the insect becomes lunch. The fly *thinks* it’s found something good—but it’s walking into a trap.

We will never face giant man-eating plants, but we do have a far greater danger: a spiritual enemy who uses similar tactics. Like the Venus flytrap, Satan lures us with what seems attractive, good, and satisfying—then traps and destroys. That’s why Peter warns in 1 Peter 5:8: “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” His strategy is deception—using the world around us to awaken sinful desires, promising satisfaction but delivering death. No one *plans* to be trapped, so Peter tells us to stay alert, resist him, and remain firm in our faith (v.9).

Our hope is not in self-confidence, but in Jesus. Only in God’s power can we resist temptation and experience deep transformation the gospel brings. This is a life-and-death battle for our spiritual health and witness. The good news? As we depend on Christ, Satan will flee. So—be watchful. Resist in the power of Christ. Jesus is too good, too worthy, and too important to dishonor.

Prayer Points:

- Continue praying for the De Ark Church in Amsterdam that we visited last month as they seek to make Christ known in Holland.
- Pray for the Costa Rican pastors we met in May preparing to attend our upcoming ESI training February 2-6 in San Jose. Pray that the Lord will use our time with them to help pastors and church leaders study the Bible to understand the Bible and to live the Bible so they can faithfully teach and preach the Bible in their local churches.

- Praise for the 4 ESI groups meeting in Italy, 4 groups in London, 5 groups in Paris, one group in Los Angeles, and 3 groups in Virginia and Florida -- as they study of Romans to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus.
- Pray for Jose Gutierrez overseeing the ESI groups in Central America. Pray for each ESI participant to grow in their understanding of the gospel and their love for Jesus, that they will live the gospel, and teach and preach God's Word faithfully in their local churches.
- This morning I spoke with Pastor Sebastian in Colombia. Everywhere he goes he sees evidence of God's grace transforming Colombia as people study the Bible, live it, preach and teach it in their local churches.
- Pray for the 3000 ESI participants in 250 groups in 37 countries, as these men and women grow in their love for God as they study His Scriptures weekly. Pray that they will experience deep gospel transformation in their lives, relationships and local churches.
- Praise for the ILC Church we planted in La Paz, Bolivia, that they will continue to grow as a church in Christ -- in evangelism and discipleship.
- Pray for the ESI groups that La Paz Pastor Edgar Mamani leads in the Tipnis area of the Bolivian jungle helping pastors study the Bible in communities that are traditionally resistant to the gospel.
- Pray for our ESI Africa leader (Paulo Da Silva) working with Isaac Chitibwe (Lusaka, Zambian pastor). Pray that God will help Paulo and Isaac encourage and strengthen ESI leadership teams across Africa. Pray for Paulo's wife (Vania) as she fights thyroid cancer.
- Pray for Kep and Debbie -- upcoming ESI meetings September and October
 - September 14-21 ESI leadership meetings in Brazil; ESI Facilitator Training in Fortaleza
 - September 21-28 ESI Montevideo
 - September 29-Oct 8 – ESI Peru
 - October 9-12 Kep preach ILC Church anniversary La Paz, Bolivia
 - October 13-21 ESI Country-leader retreat southern South America
 - October 20-25 ESI Country-leader retreat northern South America
 - October 26-31 ESI pastors conference Rwanda, Africa

We value your partnership in the gospel with us,



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