

November 27, 2008

Brazil Update

Baptisms



One of the most rewarding things in this ministry is to see young people make a decision for Christ and then identify with Him through Baptism. Recently we had the pleasure of Baptizing three members of one family: Alessandro, Carlinhos, and Alan (those of you who have been here before would remember Alan as the special needs man who is always present at church). A.M.O. Seminary student, Daniel (soon to be ordained as deacon), spent weeks teaching the chronological studies to this family. Also baptized was Robson, a teenager who



was one of the first kids to ever start coming to our church years ago.

Just this week four more people have made professions of faith and have expressed their desire to be Baptized in the coming weeks.



"I just had to come and see why all the kids want to come here. Some of these same kids here tonight were those that gave us a lot of trouble before. We've seen such a change in many of them!"

-Priscilla, local high school director talking about our church in Jarinú

Recently, in this same high school, we were unable to make our regular Thursday evening pickup for church services. One call to the school was all that was needed and the office sent someone from class-to-class advising the students that we wouldn't be there when classes let out! What great exposure!

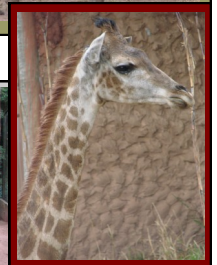
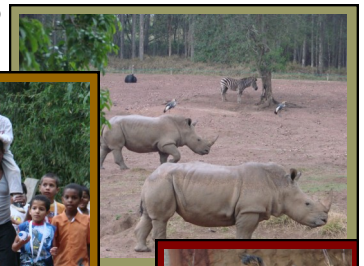
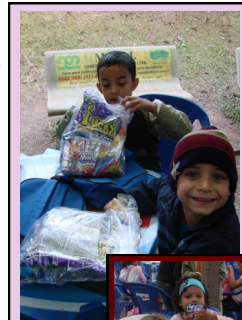
Embrace-a-Child field tripZooParque

Thank You sponsors!
"...it's with great pleasure that we give the gifts and cards to the kids ...Beyond them knowing that it's worth serving God [it's] also a testimony to the parents because, through this, we do visits and start bible studies (in their homes)"
- Anderson, Seminary Student, about the Embrace-a-Child Program

In our last newsletter we talked about how the older kids involved in the Embrace-a-Child Program were taken to a theme park thanks to the contributions of their sponsors. Several weeks later it was the little kids turn. The youngest participants in the program were treated to an all day field trip where they had breakfast at the Mission Property, played for a short while and then wrote thank you notes to their sponsors. Then they spent the day at a beautiful Zoo Park running around and seeing all kinds of animals. Despite some rain and chilly weather they were able to see and enjoy all of the beautiful wildlife . The playful monkeys and otters were the biggest hit!

Each child received a huge goodie bag full of yummy surprises, lunch and treats—their eyes popped out when they saw them! Everyone had a great time. On the bus ride back to the favela where they live they even got to watch a movie!

A huge thanks goes out to the sponsors of these children! They'll never forget you!!



Favela Aldeina– São Paulo



“Please do escolinha [little school] today. Even if you don’t have the juice or cookies please, please do escolinha!”

-little kids in favela Aldeina

Recently we made a visit to favela Aldeina where we used to minister weekly. Most of the wooden shacks have already been bulldozed down but a few still remain amid the **enormous** amount of debris. The few remaining residents are tired and weary not knowing where they’ll go and are frustrated with the city for not keeping up to their promises of relocation. Vital, a strong brother in Christ who still remains in this favela, complained that his toddler had been bitten twice by rats as she slept in her crib at night!

“We don’t know where we’ll go, the rats are invading, and the city doesn’t care, but it’s good to know that there are good people in this world. It gives us hope.”

-resident of favela Aldeina commenting about our mission team’s presence in their community

As we were there some kids came running up to us very excitedly giving hugs and telling us how much they missed us. Then they begged us to hold “escolinha” a little kids class for them! We told them we weren’t prepared and didn’t even have any of our supplies with us but they insisted.

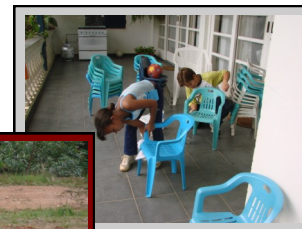


One family that we talked to there had us cram into their little wooden hut to show us the new baby. There was a beautiful 8-day old girl in the arms of the family’s oldest daughter. After a few minutes it was obvious that **she** was the mother. In a family of six kids she is the oldest, a whole **thirteen** years old, and now she herself is a mother. Unbelievable, but common here. The father of this girl was so impressed by the TN missions team we brought with us and the love that they showed to his whole family! He even took the time to teach the youngest member of our team, 7-year old Hayden, how to play marbles.

Work Day!

Last month we had a great group of youth come out to help dig holes and do foundation work for our soon-to-be garage for the ministry bus. Holes were dug, bases prepared for cement pouring, rebar made into frames, etc. In addition, several younger kids showed up to give a hand in the cleanup and maintenance of the mission property! Everyone worked hard raking, sweeping, scrubbing chairs and floors.

Again today another group of kids is planning to come to help where needed, participate in a bible study and then spend the night! *“Serve the Lord with gladness:.....” Psalm 100:2*



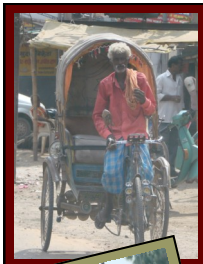
FBC Smyrna Mission Team

We had a great group join us from FBC Smyrna just a week and a half ago and we’re already missing them! They came super prepared, as usual, for children’s ministry in the favelas directly from the airport. Little Hayden, 7 years old, was a hit with his help in the “Jonah-the-fish-swimming-around” part of the skit. The kids loved it. They especially liked when the fish “burped” Jonah out onto the ground (done with the help of a Ken like Barbie doll!). This team was the first that we’ve taken into the two new favelas where we are working. The communities are rough ones but we had no problems at all and were very well accepted. **A big, huge thanks** to all of them for doing such a great job preparing for the whole week with lessons, crafts, activities, skits, costumes, etc and for helping install light fixtures, etc. Allen stayed on for another week after the group left to help in the ministry work and brainstorm with our Brazilian team about upcoming 2009 mission trips. It was great having you Allen!



Left: Gary, Sarah, Gina, Allen, Bret, Susie, Anita, Hayden

India



As young church [Brazil] we are looking for global partnerships with those who serve the very poor. We believe we can better serve our partnering churches knowing first hand of their global involvement in missions. In October Pete and I had the incredible opportunity to travel to India for a week with a partnering church group. The objective for going was to visit and see first hand the work they are doing with the poor in the state of Bihar.



Bihar is a hard place to live, there are very few other Westerners or "whites", and is predominantly and religiously Hindu. The language, Hindi, is very difficult to learn and the culture looks down on helping the poor. Their belief is that if someone is born poor then that's their destiny, why would you want to help them? A very strange concept for us to grasp. But, the more we traveled and visited, it was obvious that helping the poorest of the poor, the "untouchables" was not a popular idea.

The Christians are now saying that, "Bihar used to be known as the graveyard of missions, but is now known as a vineyard!". This is due to the great harvest that has been happening in recent years, despite the opposition and sacrifices of those who become Christ followers. The people that we met who converted to Christianity were very zealous in their faith and in their desire to spread the news to others. For some of them it was at great cost. They've been shun from their families for their religious beliefs. We learned that in India there's a caste system. Depending on the level of the caste that you are in you have certain rights. When a person converts to Christianity they must turn in their caste privileges and literally be "without caste" or, in other words, have no rights at all. This all seemed so bizarre and made us thankful that we live in a country where religious freedom is a choice.

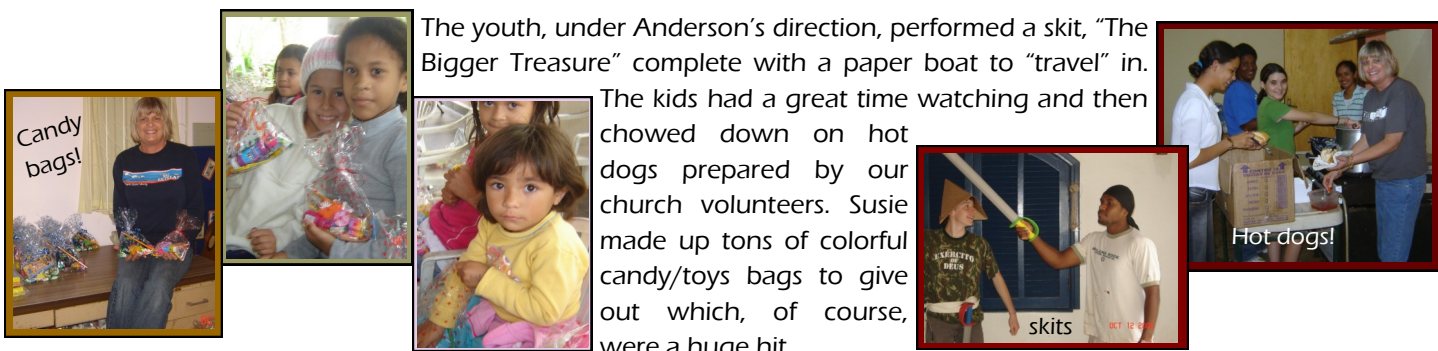
When talking about India the subject of traffic inevitably pops in the conversation. Let me tell you, it's wild!! Never have we ever seen such crazy driving: horns honking constantly (they actually want you to honk!), cows in the middle of the road, bicycle driven rickshaws as well as motorized ones, bicycles, etc It was amazing that we didn't see even one accident. We'll think twice about complaining about driving in Brazil from now on! Even their passenger commuter train was spilling over with people, literally! India is truly a fascinating country!

We want to thank FBC Smyrna for helping to make this trip possible and we are excited about working together with their global partners to further His Kingdom!



Children's Day

October 12th is Children's Day in Brazil and it's celebrated all over, even in the favelas. Parties, cakes, toys, and goodies are all synonymous with this event. Kids really look forward to this day. Our team didn't disappoint them either!



The youth, under Anderson's direction, performed a skit, "The Bigger Treasure" complete with a paper boat to "travel" in. The kids had a great time watching and then chowed down on hot dogs prepared by our church volunteers. Susie made up tons of colorful candy/toys bags to give out which, of course, were a huge hit.

Coincidence?? Nahhhh....



An incident happened recently that we thought very interesting: on a routine visit to the doctor (nothing serious!) we were attended by a young doctor. As he proceeded to ask questions of why we were there he noticed on the patient form the word "missionary". Then he asked what type of church we were from– not wanting to specify a specific religion we just said "non-denominational". He then looked at us with a grin and said "come on.....???" so we proceeded to tell him we were Baptists and briefly explained the work we do with the poor. Well, it was like a huge light bulb went off in his head! He wanted to know more and more and how he and his wife could be involved! He then explained that he was head of staff in various departments of the hospital but "climbing the ladder" was leaving him "empty". He is a Christian and has participated extensively in mission work within Brazil. He made us promise to get in touch with him a.s.a.p. and get together to talk about how he could get to know our ministry and help in any way to start the Medical Clinics in the favelas! It was such an exhilarating appointment! We exchanged information and proceeded to leave. Before actually getting out to the parking lot we ran into him and his co-worker again and he stopped us to let us know that he had already called his wife and she was excited about meeting us too. Please continue to pray for us to get the permission needed by the government to start these clinics in the favelas. This meeting wasn't a mere coincidence!!!!!!!!!!

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Shining the light of Jesus Christ in the favelas of Brazil.

Praises/ Prayer Requests

- Praises to FBC St Pete, UBC, & FBC Smyrna for your continual and faithful support of our ministry! Praises to our faithful individual supporters! It because of you that we can continue this ministry!
- Praises! Our computer that was zapped by a lightning strike is now up and running! We were able to send it back to the U.S. with someone traveling that way, get it fixed for free, and have another mission team that came a few weeks ago bring it back! Our total cost for everything was a whopping \$28 ! Now we're back to business as usual.
- Please continue to pray that we can get the needed permission to start the medical mission clinics as soon as possible.
- Our new co-workers, Bret & Susie, have been studying their Portuguese and they are doing great! Please pray that they'll continue to pick up more and more of the language every day. Also, please pray for all their official documents to come through with no more delays!
- Pray for Anderson, Daniel, Arildo, and Rita, some of A.M.O.'s Seminary Students as they carry the majority of the load in our church ministries here.
- Pray for the very large groups of non-believing youth that show up for church on Sunday mornings here at the Mission. These are people from very tough backgrounds and many of them use and/or sell drugs. The past three weekends we've had an average of 120 each Sunday morning. Thank you UBC for the bus!

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