



90 DAYS IN 90 SECONDS

I feel like the first quarter has gone by as quickly as the time it takes to read this report. I normally send a short report monthly, but this one covers from January to March. I won't try to tell of all the great things our Lord has done in this period but here are a few highlights. Thankfully, Aureni, our three boys and I are all in good health.

OUTREACH

Many of the 27 baptized last year at the downtown congregation came into contact with the Gospel through the **SCHOOL OF THE BIBLE**. This ministry offers Bible courses to the public in a school-like setting where they can seek the answers to their questions about God and His will for their lives. Here is a photo of the graduation ceremony where 150 who completed one or more of a dozen courses had an opportunity to be recognized before their family and friends by receiving a certificate.



Courses normally meet once a week for eight weeks long. Here is the class that just ended on the Book of 1 Corinthians. Next week I begin teaching the Book of Revelation at two locations. One at the downtown church and the other at a congregation in the suburbs. This is a popular course here because some think that from it they will be able to decipher when the world will end.



Another popular course is the Bible in English. While Portuguese is the official language of Brazil most would like to learn English. It is a required subject in all elementary schools and private language schools abound for those who really want to speak it. Here is a photo of Matthew, one of our four **Adventure In Missions** apprentices, and his mother Leann, a school teacher from Oklahoma who came to visit for a week, teaching a "Let Start Talking" style of class.



Justin, 19, (our middle son) is working fulltime as an English-as-a-second-language teacher. He teaches at two language schools and has some private students. Last month he started a beginners' English class at the church building which meets two times a week. It's for those who don't know English well enough to take the "Let Start Talking" style of Bible class. Here is the class which has 20 students that are an equal mix of church members and visitors from the community.



Youth camps are another ministry that brings searching hearts to Jesus. Joshua, 21, (our oldest) came for a short visit and while here decided to organize a three-day *Retiro-Teen* (Teen-Retreat). Its theme was on our spiritual battle against temptation and was entitled "Dependence or Death". In spite of only having two weeks to get everything ready it turned out good with 40 young people participating. Besides Bible classes and small group discussions there was a showing of the short movie he made at LCU on this theme



(for more click <http://www.lcu.edu/LCU/Duster/story.htm?ID=1082>).

RESPONSE



The most important family news we have is the decision of our youngest, **Jonathan**, 15, to become a Christian. I can now confess that I was getting a little concerned at his *delay*. I was raised in the Church and baptized when I was 12. His brothers were baptized at 14 and 13 respectively. Aureni and I never pressured him. For some time now we could see a growing faith in his choice of reading material and activities and especially in his conversation and questions. However, there was something holding him back that he finally overcame. We thank God for this moment! [Sorry I do not have any better photos of his baptism but the camera's batteries were low and it takes about an hour for the baptistery to fill to the bare minimum of about a foot and a half.]



A year ago **Valéria** was going through a difficult time. Her family was in financial trouble. Her marriage was on the rocks. Her son was drifting away. She saw an advertisement for a Bible course and starting studying. Later she started attending church. Her son started coming with her and got involved with the young people. After studying the Bible with Matthew, **Daniel**, 17, was baptized into Christ. Shortly thereafter Valéria made the same decision. **Junior**, 45, started attending church with his family and began to study the Bible. Last month he was united with his family in Jesus Christ.



Reinaldo (far left) became a Christian here some 10 years ago. Some time later he allowed his love for the Lord to grow cold and he fell away. But God would have none of that, and continued to work patiently in his life helping him not to find any rest for his soul outside of the safety of the Body of Christ. He has repented and been restored. His wife **Monica** has come with him and after studying the Bible with Regis (right), one of our elders, gave her life to the safe keeping of the One who truly loves her. What a wonderful Savior we have!

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

- Jesus

TRAINING

A big challenge facing churches in this corner of the world is to mature to a leadership with elders. Of the 60 congregations in Northeast Brazil only one has an eldership. However, many see the need and some have taken steps in that direction. I was invited to spend a weekend with the largest congregation in the city of **Fortaleza** (500 miles North) teaching about the process we went through three years ago in appointing elders.



The photo above shows one of the meetings at the downtown (Central) congregation in Fortaleza. It was with 30+ couples who were encouraged to help in this process. The photo on the right shows **David Ingram** (center top), the only missionary still there, presenting to the church the 13 men who were selected for the process of training to be a deacon or elder. Lord willing, later this year he plans to install their first eldership.



To help keep the 14 congregations in Greater Recife focused on the goal of moving toward an eldership there is a monthly meeting for church leaders and their wives called **Older Servants** (formerly called *Aspiring Elders* but not all will serve as elders). At the meeting in February we had as guest speakers **Mark Frost** (preacher and elder) and his wife **Cheryl** from the church in Trenton, MI. While Mark spoke to the 40 men present, in another room his wife Cheryl taught the 20 wives that came.



Last month I helped teach a short course offered at **EBNESR** (pronounced 'Ebenezer'), Recife's school of ministerial studies, on how to begin and maintain a SCHOOL OF THE BIBLE outreach program at their local church. There were 20 students representing ten congregations. A few of them had come from out of state for the weekend-long course. In EBNESR's regular semester I just finished teaching two courses: 'Ministerial Orientation' and 'Restoring the Kingdom' (a history of the intertestamental period). In a week I begin teaching on 'The Pentateuch'.



In another form of training, the teens were invited to lead a Sunday assembly last month. Our **Jonathan**, (pictured here) and **Daniel**, (pictured earlier in this report), divided the preaching duties between the two of them. Each one dealt with a portion of Ephesians 6:10-18 "The Armor of God". Everyone did their part well. Jonathan spoke in a confident voice that all could hear. His lesson needed a little more work and he did not make much eye contact but it was a good first sermon.



FELLOWSHIP



We had a very special blessing this quarter in the visit of brethren from the congregation in Trenton, Michigan. Nine came for a busy 10-day working mission trip. In the photo above, they are (from left to right): **Jim & Cora Canterbury, Gordon & Jan Payne, Patti McClelland**, me (sunglasses), **Mark Frost, Jerry Bryan, Aureni, Sharon Bryan and Cheryl Frost**. From this vantage point overlooking the city we prayed for the salvation of its three million inhabitants with a better comprehension of the immensity of the task.

The second photo shows the women cutting and sewing with the sisters here to make teddy bears that are given away at the children's hospital. This is a weekly activity Aureni organizes.

The next one shows Mark Frost teaching a half day mini-seminar to the 'Ministerial Orientation' students at EBNESR. While in Recife he also preached at the downtown church Sunday, taught a devotional to the church in Paulista (10 miles North) at their midweek prayer meeting and taught my SCHOOL OF THE BIBLE class.

After a couple of days painting and preparing the room, the ladies ended their week with a special seminar for the grieving. All five of them took turns teaching while Aureni did the translating (see *fourth photo*). The thirty Brazilian sisters that attended said it was wonderful.

While the ladies were busy with these projects the men were hard at work building a metal frame (14'x14') gazebo behind the church building (see *next to last photo*). This is now being used as much needed classroom space on Sunday mornings (*last photo*).

It's always faith-building to 'see' God work. Before they arrived we had planned to build the gazebo out of wood. So we'd need a carpenter for the job. Jim Canterbury is a retired welder with over 30 years experience. After they got here we went out to buy the material and discovered we couldn't afford to make it out of wood. It would have to be made out of metal. So we needed a welder after all.

In truth, the most lasting thing that was built by their trip here was a closer bond of fellowship and a greater appreciation for one other and for the Lord we both serve.

*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.
Honor one another above yourselves. – Romans
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