

Andy's Brazil Update



December 2008

Dear Friends,

A very happy new year to you all! I hope that you had a great Christmas and a peaceful new year.

Welcome to the final update from Brazil... By the time I write the January update I'll be sitting wrapped up by the fire in England! - compared to just sitting in shorts and still being too warm... which leads me nicely on to our newest feature 'the temperature checker' (sadly the last time I'll be able to have a little dig at you all for a while): my computer is showing bright clear sunny skies in Olinda with a temperature of 31°C compared with a -3°C cloudy York – should I really be going back?!?

So now that we've got that little dig out of the way we can continue with the newsletter! ☺



One of the 'jealousy' photos - Pina Colada at one of the nicest beaches in Brazil



A happy Dave at the Christmas party in my apartment with Rose and the girls!

Only in Brazil – “This country!”

There are many wonderful cultural differences between Brazil and England. Everyday you come across something that we English would find very strange and you just have to exclaim (a lá Alan Partridge) “This country!”...

This month it is **‘Christmas time in Brazil’**. It's strange how Christmas is basically celebrated in the same way in the majority of the world with snowy Christmas trees and a fat Santa. Brazil is no exception, and even being a hot, tropical country, has Christmas trees with fake snow on and big blow-up Santas. I would have imagined that at least they would have adapted Christmas a little... such as decorating palm trees or, instead of Santa being wrapped up in a big fur coat, have a bronzed Santa in his board shorts on the beach. For the vast majority of Brazilians snow is an unknown concept, especially for those living in

the tropical north east! And so it's strange to see people decorating their homes with fake snow or singing translated carols about a white Christmas.

So it's understandable that this identity crisis causes a little bit of confusion... the shopping centre's Christmas display in Olinda was complete with Christmas trees, Santa, reindeer, toys, and of course... a fake-snow-covered Panda. This country.



At the shopping centre with its Christmas display complete with snow-covered Pandas.

Project Life

December arrived with the scary thought of end of year school exams for the boys. The Christmas holidays here in Brazil are the equivalent of our summer ones and so these exams are important to see whether you pass the year and move up in school or whether you have to repeat the whole year again. The boys seemed to take the exams in their stride and thankfully all passed and move up a year. Most of December and January are therefore holidays and so we've been busy sorting out things to fill up the days and to keep the boys occupied. Trips out to the cinema, shopping centre and the city have been good fun for the boys – especially for those who have never been to a cinema or shopping centre before! Trips to the water-park, zoo and hopefully a week at the farm or beach are going to happen as well!



Some of the boys at our cinema trip to Madagascar 2

For the past few years, all of the boys at the project have gone home for a week or so over the Christmas and newyear period. This year, however, most of the boys stayed in the project since some of them have absolutely no family at all or not suitable family or substitute family available. This was a bit of a sacrifice for the workers who were looking forward to a little break but it was a privilege to try and provide the boys with the best Christmas and new year that we could – read about our antics later on!



Giving Gabriel his presents before he goes to a substitute family for Christmas

This month was also a month of birthdays – first off, my Rose had hers on December 5th which proved to be a great day. She was peacefully awoken by half of the boys singing happy

birthday with some pans from the kitchen for percussion. That was followed swiftly by a more civilised breakfast for just the two of us and then we all went out with the boys to the local pizza place! A great day.



A rousing round of Happy Birthday to wake Rose up



She doesn't look best pleased...



Later on in the month it was our English volunteer Hannah's turn and we took the opportunity to head out to a nice restaurant in Recife – without the boys!



Out for Hannah's birthday

The project also had its big end of year party this month to celebrate this year in the project. Each of the boys got a certificate and some presents and all of their families were there. Unfortunately the only boy without his family there was Inaldo, who went home to collect his Mum but found her too drunk to come.



End of year party at the project

Apart from these things, this month has passed like any other with its fair share of arguments, fights and problems as the boys fight against their past and look to the Lord for a changed present and future.



The MFH band at the party



Rodrigo getting his presents

Things I miss about England

#42 – Christmas Pudding – Something that both Rose and I have missed this year is a good Christmas pudding with cream or brandy sauce! Yum. Thankfully we managed to get hold of an English one and I have to be honest – the taste brought Christmas to Brazil.

Things I love about Brazil

#5 – Parties – I have to admit the Brazilians know how to throw a good party. Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve are the special days here in Brazil – it's traditional to have a meal together... although the meal doesn't start until midnight and the party goes on for the rest of the night!



Getting ready for Project's Christmas footy match

Youth 18 – 30s

Since Rose and I are heading to England at the end of the month we're going to have to hand over responsibility of this group to someone else – please pray for wisdom as we think about who that person could be.

We were able to organise a big Christmas party at my apartment for us all – it was a great evening, I managed to cook some roast chicken and we had a good time complete with wine and Christmas games!



The youth at the party along with Ian and Siméa

Christmas and New Year

Like I said, most of the boys stayed in the project over Christmas and New Year and so we had to split up our team so one half worked Christmas

and the other worked New Year so at least we got a few days off!



Christmas Eve pizza trip with the boys

Rose and I spent Christmas here in the project. Christmas Eve is the traditional time here in Brazil for a family get together and to open presents, and thanks to some of the Newcastle team members Rose and I were able to buy a bag of presents each for the boys, plus a stocking! On Christmas Eve we chilled out playing Playstation and then went out to a nice pizza restaurant. When we got back we all gathered round and the boys opened their presents plus some presents from the boy's sponsors in England which were greatly appreciated! The boys woke up on Christmas Day to a little stocking at the end of their beds and I surprised myself by cooking a pretty darn good Christmas dinner complete with Turkey, roast potatoes and roasted veg! The boys were a little suspicious at the lack of rice and beans but they all enjoyed it once they tried it! Unfortunately we didn't have any trifle for afters...



Giving the boys their presents on Christmas Eve



Inaldo with an England shirt he got from his Sponsor family in the UK



New Year was also a great time in the project, Rose and I dropped in at around 2am on our way from party to party and all the boys were still up having a BBQ and swimming in the pool!



New Year BBQ at the project



Everyone gathered for Christmas lunch

Menino do Mês

For those of you who don't read Portuguese this is the 'Boy of the Month' section! Each month I'd like to introduce you to one of the boys here in

the project. This month allow me to introduce you to...



João!

João, 14, arrived in the project back in July. He was sent to us by the child welfare which means that he's not from the shanty town where the church is. He had (and still has) a real problem with stealing. He got involved with a gang and began to steal a lot during which his family disowned him. He spent some time on the streets and says that he actually stood on top of our wall a few times looking over into the project to see if there was anything he could steal!



Our New Year's Eve tour around the parties

When João arrived in the project he had a real problem with his temper and obeying orders. He wound up the other boys a lot and refused to listen to the workers – when you told him off he would stick his fingers in his ears and sing at the top of his voice!

Thankfully over the past 6 months João has changed a lot, he prays regularly asking God to keep changing him and is usually a very helpful and polite boy. He struggles with his addiction to taking things which aren't his... we find a hoard of

pens and other things from the project every now and again in his wardrobe and there has been the odd serious occasion when money has gone missing and it was found to be him. He still has a problem with authority from time to time and is still quite arrogant sometimes. He's also a very intelligent boy; he's behind at school but was skipped up a year since he passed the exams early. It was quite funny going to his Christmas party at school and seeing his class who are all about half the size of him!



Always plenty of food around Christmas and New Year!



A Christmas toast to you all...

His family disowned him but we've managed to get back in touch with them; they have visited João a few times in the project but are still reluctant to take him back for a few weekends.

His Mum has problems and needs help of her own.

João has a lot of things going for him, there's a long way still to go but I'm sure, with God's help, he'll make it.

December Leavers and Returners

Thankfully there were no leavers this month from the project but we do welcome Will, from York, who has come to spend 2 months with us and has already impressed the Brazilians with his no-nonsense work ethic.



Rose and I at the beach

Homeward Bound

From January 26th Rose and I will be in England for 6 months! SAMS (the South American Mission Society) have paid for me to go back to England so I can go through selection with them with the aim of becoming a fully-fledged SAMS missionary which should give me more support, both financially and pastorally, and also allow me to be in Brazil more 'professionally'. The first few weeks will be toing and froing from London for medicals and interviews and the rest of the time will be travelling the country speaking about the work that we're involved with in Brazil, hopefully making the work of the project more widely

known and also looking for some personal financial support. If you know of a church, organization, school, or a group of people who would be interested in hearing about the work in Brazil or who would be interested in supporting me financially, then please do get in touch with me – my diary is filling up pretty quick!

We're both looking forward to our time in England; it should hopefully be a good break for us and a chance to do something different. It will be hard for Rose, living in a strange and different country away from her family and friends, so do pray for her. Hopefully it will also be a great help for Rose to learn English more and get to know my family, plus our country and culture.



Cooking Christmas lunch at the project

We leave Brazil in just over 3 weeks and there is so much to do before we leave. January 15th is technically our last working day in the project before we have a few days free to sort everything out before we leave for England. It's going to be difficult leaving the project and the boys, even more so for Rose who has effectively been their mother for the past 3-5 years! We're praying that the Lord will provide good people to fill mine and Rose's place in the project and so we can leave for England knowing that the project is in good hands. I've still got to sort out my apartment,

which looks like it will stay empty for 6 months, meaning I'll have to still pay the rent and I've still got to sort out my car which I think I'll leave with a trusted Brazilian friend! So please do pray for our preparations and as we leave Brazil for England.



Gabriel showing off his cinema snacks mid-film

One potential worry and major prayer point is my visa renewal. My visa doesn't expire until March but I need to renew it before then which means renewing it before I leave for England. I've only just managed to get all the documents that I need together for it but with only 3 weeks to go before we leave I'm a little worried they won't be able to renew it in time which could cause a potential problem when I return as my visa would have expired in my passport. I plan to go on Monday to the federal police so I'll ask about the possibility of being able to renew it in England.



I don't know who let Ivson be the referee at the project's footy game!

'Brazil Partners' Conference at Bawtry Hall

One of the highlights of 2009 will be our second Olinda reunion – 'Brazil Partners Conference' which is taking place from July 3rd – 5th 2009 at Bawtry Hall just outside of Doncaster. This weekend is open to absolutely anyone who is interested in the work that we do in Brazil or who has been or is thinking about going. Ian and Simea Meldrum, plus myself, Rose and a few other Brazilians will all be present as we meet together with supporters and friends old and new. I would encourage you all to go – Newcastle team be warned – we're going to ask you all to speak and run a session! It will be a great time to hear up to date information about the project, pray for the future, worship Brazilian style and spend some time together. If you're interested in going then please do get in touch with me andyroberts48@hotmail.com



The last reunion in 2007

Thanks to you all for reading this month's update. I think the format of the update will change next month since we're in England, so look out for changes!

Looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible over the next few months! A happy and blessed 2009 to you all.

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for a great Christmas and New Year in the project and that the boys had a great time. Please pray for the boys and their families over the next year that the Lord will restore them both.
2. Pray for our trip to England, that we'll have a great time with my family and that SAMS may accept me. Pray too as we travel around the country talking about the work here. Pray especially for Rose that she may settle in quickly and find a home from home in England. Pray that she'll be able to pick up the language quick and not feel too isolated.
3. Pray that the Lord will provide me with the finance that I need to return to Brazil with SAMS.
4. Pray that my visa will be sorted out quickly.
5. Pray for the project this year that it may continue to grow and improve and that the Lord may provide new workers to replace Rose and I.

Thanks again, guys, for all the prayer and support that you are showing me and the project.

Please do keep in touch with how you're doing and what you're up to.

Prayers.

Andy ☺

Contact Details and Useful Info

I thought it might be worth adding these details on the end... they might come in useful!

Project Address –

A Casa de Meu Pai
Av. Ministro Marcus Freire 5615
Rio Doce
Olinda – PE
53130540

Brazil

My apartment's address –

Apt. 303
Edf. Brinco de Princesa
Rua Jose Cipriano Silva 1084
Rio Doce
Olinda PE
53040 - 140
Brazil

Phone Numbers –

You can call me for 2p/min from an English
landline using the following number
08444621621 then just dial one of the following
numbers.

Project – 00558134928883
My Cell – 00558187706216

Bank Details

Project's Charity Account –

Service of Hope Charity
Sort code - 30-95-05
Acc Num - 01619012

My Bank Account Details

Nationwide
Sort Code – 07-01-16
Acc Num - 09924296

Photos

You can keep up to date with the most recent
pics from Brazil by going to this address...

<http://www.new.facebook.com/album.php?aid=167033&l=3b6ee&id=223703888>