

Andy's Brazil Update



November 2008

Dear Friends,

A happy Advent to you all – hope that you're all well! I think I need to put in another monthly section to this newsletter – the temperature checker! Its 4pm here in Brazil (still light too!) and my computer tells me that it's a mild 32C compared to a zero degree Newcastle and a snowy York.

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



Gabriel, me and Renato

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 ‘**unnecessary over reactions in friendly football games.**’ As you will read later on, Brazilians become extremely competitive

when it comes to football, probably because football is linked so strongly to the Brazilian identity. Sometimes it's so ridiculous it's laughable. One of my good friends ties a little rope tightly around his bicep – he says that it helps him concentrate on the game and prevents his mind from wandering. One of my other friends reacted badly to another friend giving his shirt a little tug by taking off his shirt in the middle of the game and throwing it at the other friend shouting ‘If you want it so bad you can have it!’. This country.



All of us at the beach a few months ago

Project Life

November kicked off with a visit from Richard Crofts who is a part of the SAMS (South American Mission Society) home team. This project is linked to SAMS and when I go back to England in the new year I hope to be taken on board as a SAMS missionary. I first met Richard 5

years ago here in Brazil so it was good to see him again and to show him how the project and the church have grown in the past 5 years. He chose a 'good' day to come with one of the boys having a tantrum and throwing roof tiles all over the place. Richard's visit was also a good excuse for Rose and I to escape for a day or so and drive Richard up the coast to Joao Pessoa to visit our friends, SAMS mission partners, Marcus and Tamara. Marcus, Richard and I also managed to spend an afternoon body-boarding in the warm sea – no need for wet suits here!



The view from Marcus and Tamara's apartment in Joao Pessoa

It was straight back to reality, however, in the project – two of our oldest boys, Joao and Deyvisson, had a real falling out and, due to their pasts, unfortunately the first thing that comes to their mind is killing one another. So one picked up a metal bar, the other went for one of the garden tools. Things like this happen almost daily but this time it was much more serious. It all resulted in me having to restrain Joao for around half an hour and sadly Deyvisson leaving the project (more about this later!). It was a pretty serious night and if I hadn't done anything something much more serious would have happened. Thankfully, Brazilian law allows us to use reasonable force in a dangerous situation, but all the same it's not very nice to have to do it.

Things have been a lot calmer since then and project life continues as normal. I've been taking some of the boys to the dentist, who through helping Gabriel has offered free dental care to the other boys. Most of the boys are in desperate need of dental treatment with most of their teeth rotting or broken. The treatment has been working really well; I've witnessed a lot of extractions and one of our boys may even get a brace for free! There's been quite a few funny 'one liners' from the boys when I've taken them to see the dentist... for example, yesterday one of our boys swore blind to the dentist that his tooth only hurt during the month of February.



Deyvisson back-diving into the pool

We had a good publicity opportunity this month too - Recifeliz is a huge Christian music event in Recife and our project was invited to have a stand at the event. It was a great night and good to raise the profile of the project and our work; lots of people were interested in what we do so let's pray that we'll see some good results out of the interest!



Things I miss about England

#78 – The run up to Christmas! – Ah, when the Coca Cola Christmas advert comes on the TV and Fenwicks are putting up their ‘seasonal’ display you really do know it’s Christmas! The Christmas lights in town and the freezing cold just makes you feel all festive. Christmas lights and trees here in Brazil in 30 degree heat just don’t have that same effect...

Things I love about Brazil

#78 – The run up to Christmas – Thank goodness that Brazil doesn’t have late night Christmas shopping where there’s a throng of stressed out people trying to get their last minute shopping done and the days aren’t grey, cold and depressing. Christmas is a lot more relaxed swinging from a hammock between two palm trees.



Rose and I with old boys Diego and Jadson at Recifeliz

Youth 18 – 30s

This month has been pretty busy so we haven’t been able to meet regularly with the youth. Some of the youth did manage to organize a big worship event in church with different bands and dance groups from other churches. It was a great night and Rose and I were the presenters!

We also managed to get a birthday party organised for one of our good friends – Gordo (fatty) which was a great night too.



Renato arrived in the project around 3 months or so ago and was described as a ‘pest’ by the child welfare. He’s 12 years old but is pretty small for his age. We don’t know much about his back story but it seems to be pretty much the same – becoming involved in gangs etc... we do know that he used to carry a gun.

He was picked up by the child welfare and transferred to us. Renato is a really sweet kid but it’s obvious he has serious psychological issues; one moment he can be fine and the next he’s trying to kill someone. The smallest thing can set him off and he’s a bit of a handful when he’s in a mood – just yesterday he tried to grab a knife from the kitchen! Thankfully these outbursts are getting rarer as he becomes used to discipline and starts to respect our authority. He needs professional help (as do all of our boys) to sort out these psychological problems, but unfortunately our psychologist has just quit! She realised the seriousness and depth of the problems of the boys that she gave up saying that she didn’t have the time! So, unfortunately we’re back to looking for a psychologist – keep praying!



Me, Gordo and Rose in a nice step-ladder formation!

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...

Renato!



Gabriel and I in deep discussion about important life issues such as ice cream flavours and woody the woodpecker

Renato’s family live a long way away, which means it’s pretty difficult to work with them. But they’ve been very supportive and are visiting him every 2 weeks or so. His teeth are in a pretty bad

state due to him always sucking his thumb! He's been seen by our dentist who has said that she'll give him a brace for free provided he stops his thumb sucking! Pray that he continues to calm down and to stop winding the other boys up.



Volleyball at the project

November Leavers and Returners

Unfortunately, Deyvisson had to leave the project due to his falling out with Joao. It was so bad that I had to smuggle Deyvisson out the back door and onto the beach since Joao was at the front waiting to kill him. It's so sad and so obvious that it's the Devil at work since just 2 days prior Deyvisson had talked with me and had given his life to the Lord and become a Christian. We still see him around the *favela* and are hoping that he'll be able to go along to our 'sister' project on the *favela* so that we can keep working with him. Please do be praying for him.

Another arrival is our new cockerel, who was given to us as a present by Deyvisson's Mum (before he left the project!). It's pretty common to be given poultry as presents, especially from the poorer families. It's a beautiful bird and we're planning to get some hens to go with it. We've had to make a good chicken coop, though, to make it Negra-proof; Negra, our guard dog, was responsible for the slaughter of our 6 previous chickens. Little Gabriel has been given the responsibility of looking after the cockerel and is feeding him and changing his water every day.



Our new Cockerel!

On the 10th of December our next English volunteer arrives – Will Rhodes from York. He'll be with us for about 2 months so please do be praying for him as he settles into life in the project and Brazil!

Football, a Fight and a Sermon

I've given two more Portuguese sermons this month – once in Living Waters in the evening service and the other at the morning service here in the project. Both went well and it's been a good challenge for my Portuguese, especially since the sermons have been on the easy topics of 'final judgement' and Hosea chapter 5!



Preaching at Living Waters

I also had my first real experience of being called upon, out of the blue, to give a sermon on the spot! Rose and I went to a different church to support our friends from our dance group who

were dancing there. In the middle of the service I was called upon (Rose said that my face dropped so suddenly!) as the 'English missionary' to give a 'word of encouragement' to the church – a good challenge to think of something worthwhile and meaningful to say in English, let alone in Portuguese! Scarily enough, this is a very common thing to happen in Brazil, especially if you are visiting another church, so you always need to go with something up your sleeve – just in case!



On the spot preaching

One of the things that I've really missed out here in Brazil is a good, regular, organized game of football! So it was to my great delight that a group of us from the church along with various friends from all walks of life have got together for a weekly game at 10pm till midnight on a Wednesday evening. It's been great fun, especially since Brazilians become so competitive when it comes to football and most of the games end up in big arguments... at least its good exercise though. Brazilians are very skilful players but cannot stand the 'brute force' of the English (thankfully I have both! Haha) and so one particular Brazilian, who thought he was Kaká, got so annoyed with me since I was always tackling him, that he wanted to have a fight! Nothing happened and it was all resolved. Unfortunately one of my weaknesses is that I can become a little cocky (all in good fun, of course) on the football pitch but it can wind other people up... so do pray for that! ☺

Brazilian Christmas

We're trying to work out our plans for Christmas at the moment. Technically, the project should enter a two-week holiday to let the boys spend some time at home and to give the workers a much needed break! But unfortunately in this line of work and with these types of boys, some of them don't have any family or a suitable family to go to. We're trying to find some substitute families for the boys but this is proving to be a little difficult. Who would want to look after a 14 year old who has a history of stealing and still does steal for Christmas? So at the moment it looks like the holiday will be cancelled and we'll be here in the project for Christmas and New Year with some of the boys.



Football on the beach – My Father's House v the adolescent project from the favela (our sister project)



Ice cream with Gabriel and Dave



Some kids from the favela with the rubbish dump in the background – where many kids will be spending Christmas

England

Thanks to SAMS and my family, both Rose and I will be arriving in the UK on January the 25th! Rose is not looking forward to the cold (nor am I) but we're very happy that we have this opportunity to spend a decent length of time in England to see family and of course spread the word about the work here and hopefully manage

to raise some support for me to become a SAMS missionary. Thanks to everyone who has already got in touch with me about visiting churches etc... to talk about Brazil and the project – my diary is filling up fast! If you would like a visit or know of a church/group who would like to hear more about this work or who would be interested in financially supporting me, then please do get in touch – we'd love to come!

There's plenty to do over the next 2 months before we leave for the UK... like what am I going to do with my car and apartment for 6 months!? Plus, who is going to replace Rose and myself in the project!? Big questions and a lot of prayer is needed. We'd like at least two people to replace us in the project for the long term as this would hopefully enable Rose and myself to move into a position of direction, leadership and organization on our return.



Rose with Gabriel and some of the boys

So please do get in touch with us about our time in England!

Plus it's Rose's birthday tomorrow (Friday)! We're hoping to get a little party or do something special over the weekend. Happy Birthday!

Prayer Points

1. Pray for Christmas that we might find a suitable family for all of the boys and that the workers can have a break. If not, pray

that we might have a great Christmas all together in the project.

2. Pray for mine and Rose's trip to England, that we'll be able to sort out things this end and that the project will continue to grow in our absence.
3. Pray for the directors of the project. There's a lot of problems with direction and support so please do pray for that.
4. For finance, that the Lord may continue to provide for myself and for the project.
5. For me, that I might endure in this work and trust in the Lord.

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 –

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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>