

September 2010

Dear friends,

Hope this letter finds you well.



The last couple of months have passed by so fast. My bump is growing daily, and the baby has a good football kick already. I am greatly relieved the winter has come to an end, oh how I missed central heating, it even snowed just outside Porto Alegre!

Earlier in September we went to Recife for a week, where I attended the annual national RENAS (National Evangelical Social Action Network) conference, a networking event for Christian social projects. More than 500 people attended from 19 states, and it was a real inspiration. It was particularly productive for developing relationships with folks from Porto Alegre, there were 12 delegates from the far South.

We also had opportunity to spend some time with Pastor Miguel Uchoa, as many of you know he is undergoing chemotherapy treatment for multiple myeloma. Miguel and Valeria have a big place in my heart and are like family to me. Please continue to pray for complete healing and for strength and comfort during this difficult time. Please also pray for him as he prepares for travel to Sao Paulo in November for a transplant.

Here in Porto Alegre the pregnant women's group is going very well, the numbers are still smaller than in Recife, but it has a very different feel. The women who are coming are really developing friendships, and the volunteers are being greatly blessed as well. I am hoping the warmer weather will attract more folks too, it was quite a challenge during the winter as the church building is very cold and damp.

Through a contact I established at the RENAS conference, another pregnant women's group has started. It is at an evangelical social project in a very poor rubbish recycling community called 'Ilha das Flores', where there are lots of expectant mums. It is a 10 week course which started two weeks ago, I am helping with health talks and showing the very capable team of volunteers how the course works. It has been very easy to get up and running, as they have all the necessary volunteers and resources, they just needed a good project to follow.

The fortnightly marriage course is now coming to an end, we have one more talk left, it has been great to watch the couple's at church enjoy and benefit from the group so much, and a humbling experience for Efraim and myself, despite being married the least amount of time, we have been able to pass on all that we have learnt and continue to learn.

The training course I ran for the orphanage staff at ASA was a success, and I really enjoyed the experience and challenge. Following the course I facilitated a small working group to develop their child protection protocol. Together with Joao Carlos the orphanage coordinator I ran a further four training sessions to launch the protocol, which seems to have gone down well. Another orphanage and child care project (Ação Social de Fé), have approached me to do a similar training, which I hope to do over the next 6 weeks before I travel to England.

I continue to enjoy my weekly placement at a local health centre, where I help out with the child health and women's health clinics, getting to grips with the very different Brazilian health system. As you can see the last few months have been very varied and fruitful, it has been a really special time work-wise for me.

A couple of weeks ago Efraim and I received some rather shocking news. Walmart have changed management and dissolved his job role, they want to transfer us back to Recife. In true Walmart style things are never straight forward, so we still don't know for definite. We have been praying a lot for wisdom as you can imagine. In some ways this may be the Lord's way of preparing us for the next phase of our life with the baby. It will certainly be easier for me with a baby in Recife, especially when Efraim is back travelling with work. Also for a few years now, we have been praying and dreaming of the possibility of studying at All Nation's Christian college in Ware, Hertfordshire. With the view to Efraim getting more involved with Christian development work afterwards. We ask you to join us in prayer, as we explore further this option.

The plan at present is for me to stay put in Porto Alegre until 22 November, when I will fly back to the UK after which, if necessary, Efraim will coordinate a house move to Recife. He will then arrive in the UK as previously planned on 26th December for five weeks (God willing in time for the baby's birth). I am still hoping and praying I will manage to attend my sister's wedding on the 8th January, which is the same day as the baby's due date. I intend to return to Brazil if all is well with both baby and me in February. The week before I found out I was pregnant I preached on the crazy circumstances of Jesus birth, and how Mary must have been very obedient and trusting in God to take it all in her stride.....I think the sermon was actually for me!

Thank you so much for your support and prayers.

With love Ruth and Efraim

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PS. A few photos below



Group work with the orphanage staff



Nursing with the staff at Araça health centre



Health talk at Ilha das Flores



Church Bible study



Girls from church dressed in Gaúcho traditional dress



BBQ Gaúcho style!