



BRAZIL REFORMED MISSION UPDATE

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#22, 2016



2016 The Year Of Our Lord – M. VanderWel, Chairman

On behalf of Mission Aid Brazil I would like to extend a warm "Happy New Year" to our readers! We're excited about the developments the Lord is blessing in the Brazil Mission Field!

Our Reformed Education Worker Elias Barbosa da Silva officially begins his new post, and is currently busy with "setting up office". In the month of January he hopes to introduce himself in this capacity to the IRB churches, and to meet with a few of the councils to explain the vision and focus of his work. He also hopes to prepare a lecture on Christian Education to present in the congregations. A work plan and budget has been developed for the year 2016 and we're excited to get to work!



Chris Boersema also remains active and now is officially into his Second 5 year contract

with Mission Aid! We're thankful for the work he does and the many "hats he wears" in this important work.

Mission Aid remains active and continues to support on many fronts in the field through The Papyrus Program, Golden Years Project, Pastors Library Fund, Reformed Education, Teachers Symposium, Deacons Conferences and numerous other activities.



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We want to thank all of you, our supporters, for your prayers and offerings to this wonderful

work the Lord is doing amongst our brothers and sisters in Brazil. We are humbled to be a small part of it, and covet your continued support again throughout the year of our Lord 2016. SDG!

The Work Begins – Elias Barbosa da Silva

Dear brothers and sisters, I thank to the Lord for the opportunity to start my new position as Reformed Education Worker here in Brazil. As it is a new position, new experiences and challenges will be faced for all involved. For sure here in Brazil and there in Canada there are some doubt about how this will be. I also have doubts from my side. But doubts make part of the process. I can declare to you that I am motivated with this new opportunity. I ask your prayers so that confidence will be built between all involved and that this position will be a powerful blessing for our churches, families, school boards and teachers. In another time I will write a little bit more about me so that you will know me better. But from now I ask your patience for my English structure of writing, as it is clear that my thoughts are still organized in Portuguese.



This month of January I will be mixing some days of work with some days of vacation. Martin has written a summary of the activities planned for January, but as agreed, the John Calvin Christian School in Maceió – the school where I was the principal – will need some special attention from my side, as they are passing for a hard transition. They just named a new principal,



Elias meets Rev. & Mrs. Stam in 2013

and today we already had a meeting. Have being the responsible for all the administrative and maintenance work at the school, I also was request to meet with a new staff member who will be working with the general services at the school.

use my former

At this moment, I am allowed to office at the

school as there is nobody working there. It is being hard to find a new house to rent where I can set up an office. But we are waiting for God's guidance. Some good options appeared, but soon were rented to other people.

I hope we will improve our communication and that soon you will know news about the work. Thanks for your prayers and support. May God bless you all and strengthen you in His Way.

Brazil Remembers Rev. Clarence Stam – J. VanSpronsen

The pastor in Caruaru (the missionary congregation where I preached this morning) remembered the Stam family in prayer and thanked the Lord for all of

Rev. Stam's contributions to the churches in Brazil: seminary classes, preaching, and several excellent books that have been used to great profit by pastors and leaders who can read English. Having learned so much from Rev. Stam, I praise God that His work continues to bear fruit also in Brazil. May God strengthen and encourage his whole family in this difficult time.

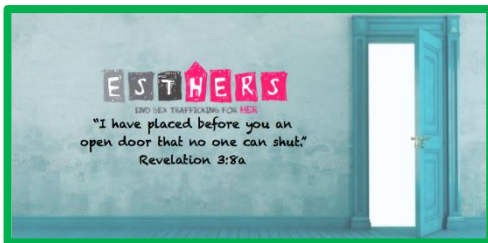
A Sad Ending – K. Weiske

Today we found out that Rogéria has been murdered. Just a few months ago we shared with you the good news that Dona Rogéria, an alcoholic and crack addict, had received an audio Bible. We had made contact with her through our cooperation in community visits with Esther's Children, a group which works with young girls to steer them away from a life of prostitution.

Rogéria did receive a number of visits from pastors, elders and seminarians. She was sometimes sober, sometimes under the influence of drugs or alcohol. She always showed great appreciation for the visits. Over the last months, we've had to draw down our presence in Vera Cruz. Many people have moved away to other places, and we missionaries are not able to keep up with the local work here without the help of a local congregation. We have had to put the project on hold as we concentrate for the time being on strengthening the work of the Recife church which is going through some challenging times.

Rogéria did continue to get mentored by Christian staff at Esther's Children. She

successfully completed a rehab program, and was trying to take care of her eight children as a single mother with very little



income.

She lived in a very dangerous, miserable part of Vera Cruz (the little town near to the ATC). One of her neighbours, a 16 year old boy, is



in charge of crack distribution for the area. He was demanding that Rogéria's 12 year old son participate in sales and distribution. Criminals like to use children, because by Brazilian law the children cannot be charged with the crime like an adult. This has had the unintended consequence that gangs use young children to commit terrible crimes, even murder, in order to avoid suffering the penalty.

Rogéria had been a crack addict for some 25 years. She knew what the life entails. She did not want her 12 year old son getting involved. She told his friend

to flee, and hid her son. The 16 year old drug lord waved a revolver in Rogéria's face and demanded to know where her son was. When she refused to say, he killed her in cold blood. She had a 7 month old baby.

I praise the Lord that Rogéria was still listening to the Word of Life up to the day of her death. She did recognize that she was a sinner and needed the grace of God in Christ. It is hard to fathom what Rogéria's life was like. It is hard to fathom what her children have gone through and are going through. They have been brought up in a context of fear, violence, immorality, and despair. The day I visited her home, the front door was busted off its hinges because a drunk, violent neighbour had wanted to get in the night before. Now their mother is dead, and they have been distributed between relatives and members of the community.

I AM NOT MY OWN. BUT
 BELONG body and soul,
 in life and in death
 to my faithful Savior,
 JESUS CHRIST
 He has fully paid for all my sins
 with His precious blood.
 AND HAS SET ME FREE
from the tyranny of the devil.
 He also watches over me
 in such a way that not a hair can fall
 from my head without the will of
 MY FATHER IN HEAVEN
in fact, all things must work together
 FOR MY SALVATION
 Because I belong to HIM
 CHRIST by His Holy Spirit,
 assures me of eternal life
 AND MAKES ME WHOLEHEARTEDLY WILLING
 and ready from now on to
 LIVE FOR HIM

I'm thankful that Rogéria had some contact with the gospel before she was called from this life. There are so many others who live in a lost state, far away from God and tasting every day the bitterness of the curse on sin. They live in the darkness. They stumble, they fall, they curse, they do not know where they are going or why they are in so much pain.

How we need more gospel preachers. The incredible comfort of Lord's Day 1 is unknown to so many millions of people in this country.

We Got Mail! – J. VanSpronsen & K. Wieske

Always excited to get some Christmas mail!



Editor: M. VanderWel