

**Nice and Peter Armati – Mission report December 20 2015**

**[www.JesusForLife.net/brazilmission.htm](http://www.JesusForLife.net/brazilmission.htm)**



Our mission field is centred on Mirassol, S.P. Brazil (population about 60,000). Nearby São José do Rio Preto has a population of about 500,000. At 500 meters above sea level and 600 Km from the coast (the Atlantic Ocean) and 500 Km from the state capital (São Paulo), Mirassol sits on a plain populated with hills, valleys and rivers. For about 8 months of the year, the temperature varies between 38 and 42°C during the day and 34°C at night. In the other months the temperature goes down to between 25 and 30°C during the day and as low as 9°C at night. All together a very hot corner of the world. Annual rainfall is about 1.65 meters, falling from November through April.

The people in the region call themselves Brazilians, and come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds: mainly western Europe (Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, German, Arabs, etc.) as well as Japanese (Brazil has the largest Japanese colony in the world outside Japan – about 1.2 million Japanese decedents throughout the country). However, most of the ethnicity has blended into what is the Brazilian of today. Mass immigration occurred at the turn of last century and after the 2<sup>nd</sup> WW. Therefore, Brazilians are at this point, 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> generation of the original immigrants and most of them have no knowledge of either the culture or the language of their “forefathers”, speaking only Portuguese – the official language of the country.

Roman Catholicism is the dominant religion (70%), but there has been a recent rapid rise in the number of Evangelicals (Protestants) – around 22%. Here in Mirassol, the Roman Catholics have a profound trust in Mary “the Mother of God” for their salvation, in addition to the good works that they undertake. They also have a strong focus on the saints. They know that Jesus Christ is their Saviour, but most of them are not sure how or why. About 25% of the Evangelicals are traditional; Baptist (1.8%), Seventh Day Adventist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, and other (including Anglican). The remaining 75% are Pentecostal, Assemblies of God (5%), Christian Church of Brazil, Universal, 4

Square, God is Love, Maratha, Brazil for Christ, other. It all sounds wonderful, but please believe us when we assure you that all is NOT WELL in these churches in Brazil.

Mirassol has probably 60 churches. We have visited a number of them, but we have never heard the gospel being preached. Almost all preach prosperity theology: one must give to God, and He will give you back 30, 60 or even 100 times what you give Him. (Malachi 3:10-12, Mat 25:14-30, Jn 10:10, Phi 4:19 and 3 Jn 2). We do not know of any church in Mirassol or Rio Preto where the true gospel is taught and preached. We are not aware of any other Christians in Mirassol, apart from ourselves and the five others who have become Christians through God working through us.

We have tried most earnestly to link up with Christian churches in Mirassol so that we could help them with Bible studies for their congregations, and even possibly for them to help to support us in some ways in our mission. For the reasons mentioned above, we have been unable to find a single Christian church in our region that we would be willing to associate ourselves with, to form that linkage. However, we have made a connection with the Reformed Anglican Church of Brazil (IARB) and with Bishop Josep Rossello who lives in Pindamonhangaba, 700 Kms away. The nearest IARB church to us is over two hours drive away, and their meetings are on Sunday evenings, so it would be very impractical for us to attend there (Ribeirão Preto). Bp Josep has asked Peter to help him with a number of matters. Peter made a presentation at the IARB Annual conference in November 2011 on leadership and theological education.

As we reach out to others to share the gospel with people, we often meet many kinds of resistance. Much of this resistance is the result of damage done to them by previous encounters with "Christianity" or ignorance, or both. If ever they did challenge the teachings of the Roman Catholic church, they have long ago given up trying to discuss things that they are being taught that they truly do not understand. Almost everyone we talk to seems very earth-bound, looking for success in this life, with little thought or interest in spiritual matters or in eternal life.

On a much more encouraging note, we have been well received by other people, such as those in the cancer respite home we have been visiting since mid-January this year. We lead a Bible study there with the residents once a week. Because they are itinerants – they come from various parts of Brazil for cancer treatment and return home when treatment is completed – the attendance varies from 4 to about 16 most of the time. There was one day when we had 24 people around the table, most attentive to the gospel teaching. Praise God!

Most of them go home very excited and with a number of Bibles to give to their relatives, friends and neighbours – thus further spreading the gospel. We also hold a Service in Mirassol on the last Saturday of every month for a small group of 8 to 10 people. Most of them have not yet given their life to Jesus, but they are there faithfully every month. Our friend Teresa leads a weekly Bible study group attended by three or four people. We also minister to various people using Skype over the Internet.

Two people who were converted by God in our early days in Mirassol, Marcia and Hugo, are now wonderful new Christians, full of the Holy Spirit. And now Adriana, Tatá and Sandra. They eagerly look out for opportunities to share their faith. It is a joy to work with them.

We also have been presented with many opportunities to share the Gospel in very unpredictable ways, and we are blessed to have been able to recognize these moments and to act upon them.



Nice at CAPACC, sharing a passage from John's Gospel



A Monthly Church service



Here are some important things you can pray for, to support us in our ministry:

- Praise God that He empowers us to speak bravely and witness to Him in love
- Praise God that Adriana, Marcia and Hugo in Mirassol, Tatá in São Paulo and Sandra in Rio de Janeiro as they boldly share the gospel with their friends
- Praise God for our prayer and financial supporters
- Praise God for our safety and good health
- Praise God for Nice's linguistic skills in translating from English into portuguese
- Praise God that we are able to hold weekly meetings in the CAPACC Cancer respite home in São José do Rio Preto
- Please pray that the CAPACC people will share the gospel with their family and friends when they return home; that they will continue to read the bible and repent and believe in Jesus
- Please pray that we will live Christ-like lives; displaying God's love to all people
- Please do continue to pray for Peter's portuguese speaking skills
- Please pray that many home group members will repent and accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour
- Please pray that God will raise up many new people to hear and receive the gospel

Ephesians 2:8-10 New International Version (NIV)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to walk in.

John 11:25-26 New International Version (NIV)

Jesus said to Marta, " I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this? "