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inTouch

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The Voice of Evangelical Action (Brazil)



Elizabeth and John Medcraft
after baptising new Christians

DRUGS

Brazil now consumes 18% of the world's cocaine.

This has been called “the most worrying side-effect of the country's recent consumer boom,” with drug use spreading not only across slums, but also among the swelling middle class, who now comprise more than half of the population.

This not only affects the person taking the drugs, but their friends and relatives, as well as the people who have been burgled so the drug user can pay for the drugs. Since then, the drug situation in the interior of north-east Brazil has got catastrophic.

Friends of John, Robinson & Miriam Cavalcanti, were stabbed to death by their own adopted son who was taking drugs. Robinson was the Anglican Bishop of Recife.

Ten years ago we arranged for students at the Patos Bible College to attend a lecture on the question of Drugs and the Church. Pastor Salvador gave an excellent lecture which knocked some of the students for six with its impacting challenge to pray and do something to help. He said the church must be the Good Samaritan and cannot just “walk by on the other side”!

We set up a monthly meeting at the church for those seeking help as well as for members of an addict's family and friends to come for support.

We also work with a Baptist Drug Rehabilitation Centre near João Pessoa, and have taken several men there where they will spend about 9 months. Besides both spiritual and psychological support they will do occupational therapy on the land. Assistant Pastor Raphael of the Patos church now accompanies them to the Centre.

Drug-fuelled gangs all try to be the toughest gang, and gun fights are common. The two dominant drug gangs in Patos continue their war to control territory.

There were 7 shoot-outs in the first 4 days of 2022. The gangs decreed a curfew and told people to stay indoors at night or get shot.



Pastor Rafael

The gangs are relentless – if you don't pay for your drugs or do what they say you get shot.

A young man was murdered one night at 2.30am as a patient in the Patos General Hospital! Someone got in and shot him a number of times. The victim was in hospital recovering from another murder attempt in the gang war which is ongoing here.

Our school children are not immune from drugs and violence. One boy from our Patos School murdered somebody one day. This demonstrates the sort of borough where our school is located with our children living in extreme poverty surrounded by a drug culture, promiscuity, violence and teenage gang warfare.

One of our girls at EAB Action School in João Pessoa had an arson attack on her house with all the family inside it at the time. Gratefully all escaped but the house was totally destroyed.

Apparently the attack is directly linked to the fact that she had a sister who lives with a drug trafficker, and the attack seems to have been some sort of revenge for lack of payment or the likes, as happens so often here. The family members are all very fortunate to be alive.

Ipueira Pioneer Church

Ipueira is a small town about 42kms (26 miles) from Patos with a population of 2,253.

EAB rents a small house where services and children's work are conducted.

If it is not raining, services are held in the street outside the building – you simply put the chairs out in the road, and set up loud-speakers so all the people in the area can hear!

The Christians in Action group from the Patos church take most services. This team help support some of the pioneer churches and are doing a great job in sharing the Gospel.



Green Pastures Walk

One morning at 8am, in brilliant sunshine, John guided 40 youths from the Patos church around Green Pastures for about 2 hours.

Now in the rainy season Green Pastures was filled with trees and flowers, and the walk had the aim of increasing their appreciation of nature whilst stimulating them to care for God's creation.

The youth spent the whole day at Green Pastures staying for the service with the local church at night when they sang a song. The service was excellent with deaf Pastor Luiz Carlos preaching the message with Daysa interpreting for all of us that don't know sign language.

Two of our sign language interpreters, Daysa and Geralda, have degrees in sign language. It was good that a group of young teens from our Patos school were also with us for the day including the service.



THE DONKEY MAN

In the last Intouch we told you about a family who had moved from a shack into a concrete government house, but went back to their old tumble-down home because there was not enough room for his recycling 'job' and so no money to pay the rent.

They came to our attention as the two girls had left our Patos Action School.

One of the young men from the church went to see if it was true they had gone back to their roofless mud and stick house with crumbling walls. There was no toilet, running water or electricity. This was where the parents, Manoel and Patricia, had lived for 6 years with their five children.

Manoel's only job is to go out collecting paper, metal and plastics and selling it for recycling. They get a small handout from the government but still have to rely on others giving them food. Sometimes the children hunt for iguanas to eat and one day they were seen cooking lunch on the open fire. In the pot was the skin of a chicken that Manoel had picked up on his rounds. Often they have no food.

Their house contained an old mattress on the floor and a barrel of water. During the day in the intense heat, they shelter in the shadow of one of the walls or in some of the huge pipes nearby which the council will be using when building more concrete-block houses on the site.

When it rains there are two solutions – the empty pigsty just 1 metre high, or in the pipes when the pigsty gets flooded. Manoel would be happy to move to a plot of land providing it is large enough for his recycling work. He is even willing to build them a house himself. Without education he believes it is difficult to find any other work.

All he wants to do is support his family better, but they remain a family cornered by poverty and haunted by hunger.

He has managed to borrow a donkey and cart but we are trying to raise the £100 needed to buy him one for himself as he hopes to be able to work with freight, deliver coal and collect recyclable materials in a more efficient way.



A Message From John

Liz and I are at the phase in our ministries where we are focused, above all else, in passing on our experience to our leaders spread all around our churches.

It is great to see a good number of young pastors amongst our leaders. Last night Liz was with the workers in children's work passing on things from her vast experience.

She used to teach a class of 120 children 60 years ago! I have been an EAB/ACEV pastor for 50 years. I was assistant pastor to Frank Dyer for 15 years.

We value your prayers for this important aspect of our ministries.



Social Projects Team In Action

Recently our social projects team held a meeting in the Santo Agostinho Community, in the rural area of Teixeira, to see about the possibility of drilling or digging a well.

The community is 18km from the city, and has about 424 inhabitants. At the meeting were community leaders, our social projects team and members of the EAB church, plus other local churches.

At this initial stage, the community learned about the criteria of the project and how the actions develop. Our social projects team is in action to define the locations for the 3 wells we will be digging/drilling this year.

It is an arduous and challenging process including meetings with local communities as well as technical work etc. We value your prayers for this.



Chief Of Police

The leader of the Patos men's fellowship is a deacon in our church. He is Lieutenant Colonel Esau Lucena.

He is a lovely brother in Christ. He has just been promoted to Chief of the Patos Police. We knew this was likely to happen as Esau had secretly shared this with us for prayer. Now it has been officially confirmed.

Please pray for Esau. The responsibility of being chief of police in a town of 120,000 population is great, especially with all the drug related gang warfare and killings.



Pastor Rafael, Esau Lucena and John Medcraft

Children's Day Cake

Across Brazil Children's Day has been celebrated in schools and churches.

We do not have a school in many of the smaller towns where we work, but the leader of the church in the landless settlement near Sao Mamede wanted to do something for the children living there.



Dodora baked cakes and then distributed slices of them to the children, which was a real treat for them. It also gave her the opportunity to invite the children to their church services held in her front garden.

Our Newest School

Barra de Oitis is an extremely poor village of descendants of African slaves which has great needs.

We've been working in the village since we drilled a well about 10 years ago, and since then donated goats, chickens and even built bathrooms for the poorest of people.

Recently it was discovered that some of the children and adolescents cannot read or write.

It is sad to see how the local government school largely fails in these basic areas of schooling. Our Action Schools leaders met 2 months ago and decided to set up our 12th school. To make it viable, we trust it will be financed by sponsorship of £20 a month to sponsor an individual child, or you can donate any amount to sponsor the school, either as a one-off gift or a monthly donation.

The school will meet in the new church building where 20 children will learn to read, write and basic maths, as well as receive Christian teaching.

This is an extremely important project so as to fit the children for work later in their lives. Malu, who goes to the church, has already started work as the teacher. Please pray for this new venture of faith.



Baptismal Service

Christmas weekend was a busy one for John and Liz. Besides the usual visiting of shut-ins, distributions of food and 2 church services, both of them assisted at a baptismal service for 15 people at Green Pastures

One of the young ladies was Alice, their own grand-daughter, and one of the young men baptized on Sunday was Lucas, aged 14. He came to Christ some years ago through the Sunday School. Then he won his father Orlando for the Lord. Later he won his mother, Nazareth, for Jesus. His Dad had already been baptized, but on Boxing Day his Mum was baptized on the same day as he was.



Boys Of The Future Project

Our Social Work team visited the youth of Barra de Oitis Community where Jailson runs several activities for them, under the heading of 'Boys of the Future'.

He presented their football team with new shirts. The project tries to encourage teenagers and children to take part in sports both in school and in their leisure times. The project also has a prayer and Biblical reflection for the youth.



Fun and Fellowship

Green Pastures was the perfect choice to host a Fun & Fellowship Day for the youth, with 70 young people from our Patos, São Mamede, Juazeirinho and Teixeira churches.

Ten youths formed an advanced party which prepared food on the Friday night and the main group started arriving on Saturday morning, some very keen folk at 5.30 am.!

The theme of the teaching was 'The conduct of the young as a Christian' (Mt. 5:13-14), and in between sessions they were able to go swimming, play table tennis and volley ball and go on nature walks.

In the evening the youth took the weekly service for farming folk with the young Bible College student Murilo preaching the Gospel.



Baking Pastor Again

Pastor George has been teaching cake-baking again.

This time to a group of 6 mothers at Amolar in Imaculada so that they can make cakes, decorate them, and sell them. This course gives them a wonderful opportunity to earn an income and so provide for their own family.



These income generation training courses are very important as the women live in villages with very limited possibilities of income.

It also means they can provide a special cake for celebrations, something the poor villagers have rarely been unable to afford before.



CONTACTS

Evangelical Action (Brazil)
Founded 1938
Reg. Charity No. 277235

Directors

John and Elizabeth Medcraft

Latin America Address

Caixa Postal 23, Patos
Paraiba, 58700-970
Brazil
Tel/Fax: (0055) 83 3421 3283
eabrazil@gmail.com

UK Chairman

Roy Dyer
Tel: 023 8089 0796
rddyer@gmail.com

Treasurer/UK Office

Mrs Beryl Gough
6 The Glade, Langley
Southampton, Hants SO45 1ZP
Tel: 023 8089 1021
eabfinance@gmail.com

Action Child UK

Marian Rashleigh
59 Rosewall Rd, Maybush
Southampton SO16 5DU
Tel: 023 8034 5945
eabchild@gmail.com

InTouch Editors

John Medcraft & Marian Rashleigh

InTouch Design

Dave Flowers
www.watersidegraphics.co.uk



www.eabrazil.org

ANNUAL CELEBRATION

Our ANNUAL CELEBRATION will be held on Saturday 22nd October 2022 with Tea at 6pm, and the Celebration at 7pm, at Lighthouse Community Church, Hardley Green, Hardley, Southampton SO45 2NZ

Philip Medcraft (son of John and Liz) is the speaker as John and Liz will be in the UK on a 'family and rest' visit at the same time, they will be bringing the latest news from Brazil.

It would be good to see you there!



Make a difference with EAB

If you would like to make a donation towards the work of EAB, please send your cheques made payable to 'Evangelical Action Brazil' to Mrs Beryl Gough, 6 The Glade, Langley, Southampton SO45 1ZP.

Alternatively, if you want to make a direct payment from your bank, our banking details are:
Lloyds - Account Name: Evangelical Action Brazil
Sort Code: 30-91-85 / Acc No: 02385564

If you use this option please email eabfinance@gmail.com giving brief details of the donation. Donations can be made online at www.eabrazil.org. Any gift, no matter how small is greatly appreciated and will be used to further God's work in Brazil. If you are a UK tax payer and would like to 'Gift Aid' your donation, please ask Beryl for a form. Thank You!

LEGACIES: If you are interested in leaving EAB some money, or gifts, in your will please contact the treasurer (her details are on the left) and ask for the legacy details.