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We have just celebrated Easter, the beginning of spring and we are looking forward to what this year has in store for us.

Having just returned from Brazil I am excited about what we experienced and the new and existing projects that are happening. In Brazil we are not exempt from what is happening in the world. El Nino has caused devastating flooding, wiping out whole communities in its path. The global economy has hit Brazil hard, unemployment and inflation is up and hitting the at risk group we serve in a major way. I see the people working twice as hard and getting very little in return. Most do what is called "bico", a day here and there paying maybe 15 dollars a day. Inflation is going crazy because their corrupt government has stolen and abused their country without impunity. They have started impeachment investigations against their President and interviewing her entire cabinet, but so far this has just caused more instability. There are daily protests in the streets of all major cities and violence between the protestors and the police. This is just feeding the discontent and anger that is running at a fever pitch in most neighborhoods in every part of the country. Also the upcoming Olympics, which should have been a good thing is causing strife. They are militarizing the Favela, the shanty towns, so they don't cause problems and even destroying homes to make way for new roads. Brazil is ready for change; let's pray that we can show them that Jesus is the change they need. Please pray for the churches and spiritual leaders to have wisdom and courage to do what is right and righteous for this country.

This does not mean we are backing or slowing down, but that we see the urgency of what needs to be done and touch as many lives as possible while we can. Let me tell you about some of the plans for this year. We will continue with our feeding programs in the neighborhoods. Currently we have 100 families who receive food baskets every month and have a waiting list of 50

families. The criteria to receive these baskets is they attend 2 meetings a month. Meetings that are centered on Christ and improving the family and their quality of life. Last year we built 2 houses from scratch and repaired 2 others. The church we support, Palavra de Amor, celebrated its 1st year and baptized 20 souls, the latest 2 on Easter Sunday. The team does community outreaches in the streets and other churches; they are impacting those not only in their walls, but throughout the neighborhood.

One of our partners, Novidade de Vida and their school, Arca das Crianças currently serves 200 children on a daily basis. We have expanded our feeding program to their immediate community, Jardim Noronha. We have 20 families currently enrolled in the program.

(Easter goodies at ARCA)



Another area, Vera Cruz, which is one of the poorest and most violent in Sao Paulo, and one of the most ready for transformation.



(Vera Cruz home)

It is an area isolated by streets that not passable by any car or truck and hills that could make Olympic athletes cry.



(Olympic Hill)

One of our ladies had a heart attack and they had to carry her out and up the hill on someone's back just to get where an ambulance could get close enough to take her to a hospital. The police don't come into the neighborhood. One of the little girls, 10 years old, was raped and 8 days later the police had not even bothered to show up to investigate. The mother even gave them the name and where to locate the rapist. The fact that they don't have sewers or legal electricity is just one of the smaller inconveniences of their daily life.



(Trash just flows down hill)

Saying that does not mean that God is not moving and changing lives, He does and He is. In the middle of all this we meet, Placido, he lets us use his garage for our meetings and food distribution. On our last visit we were talking and he was telling us of some of the bad things in his neighborhood and then told us of his project. He has a soccer program in the neighborhood and it has had great results in the boy's lives; a 160 kids every week.



(Some Vera Cruz Boys and new equipment)

gives them somewhere to go and run off frustration and channel their energy into something positive. He says it is a simple and poor program, but the kids are enthusiastic and happy to participate. We will be partnering with him; furnishing him with soccer balls, vests and gloves. We see this as a way to be able to integrate our program and minister in their lives. Hopefully we will soon be sending some of our men to participate and interact with these boys. I see this as a positive move in change for this area. We have seen this program work and transform other neighborhoods.

The people in Vera Cruz have the least and are the most willing to change of any of the groups with whom we work. Before Placido offered his garage, the people walked about 5 miles to the meetings to get the food baskets. They were always willing and pleased to get any help that was offered at wherever they could get it.

We are anxious for what God has for us in the upcoming months; keep us, the children and the workers in your prayers.

