



# Christ For Aracaju



*Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far has the LORD helped us." (1 Samuel 7:12 <> NIV)*

"Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some." (1 Corinthians 9:19-22 <> NIV)

The Urgency of salvation, it is difficult to grasp. It is startling when we stop to think about it, but in our day to day business it seems so often forgotten. We who are mortal, have a sense that life is so long, but in comparison with eternity, truly as God says in the book of James, we "... are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes." (James 4:13-15 <> NIV)

O Lord, please help us to remember the urgency we have in sharing Jesus with others. So often we get caught up in our busyness, our desires, our lives, and our things that we forget that it is no longer our busyness, our desires, our lives, or our things, but that we surrendered all to Jesus. Jesus called His apostles to make disciples, and as disciples of Christ, He is everything that we need and everything that we need to be about. Please O Lord, help us to remember this fact and to fulfill your will in our lives and with our lives.



*4<sup>th</sup> Annual Spiritual Retreat – I Have Been Crucified With Christ*

how we had our first annual retreat in 2003 and how it has carried on and grown since then. It is such a huge blessing for the church here in deepening and strengthening our love for one another and our faith in the Lord and His working. This year's theme was "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me". We had six lessons based on Galatians 2:20 that contemplated: (How - I have been crucified with Christ) and (How - I no longer live), but (How - Christ lives in me), (How - I live my life in the body), (How - I live by faith in the Son of God), and (How - HE loved me and gave himself for me). It was very edifying to see how this theme impacted the church. I remember how at the end of the retreat and how even days later there were those who were still reflecting on how it is that, "I No longer live but Christ's lives in me and the vital need to remember this fact in the face of daily trials, temptations and struggles. I am so thankful to God for this retreat and the spiritual growth with which He blessed us through it in our walk with Him.

### Continued Growth Through Preaching The Good News of Salvation in Christ

Our Retreat was especially blessed this year as Edelizete decided to be baptized during this occasion. Edelizete is 50 years old and has 8 brothers and sisters and 2 children. She is one of the sisters of the "ete" - family" as we jokingly say. Her mother Valdete and her sisters Bernadete, Odete, Marizete, and her niece Edlaine and nephew Diego are all baptized now. They are from Malhador, a town some 50 minutes from Aracaju that I have mentioned in other letters where there is a small growing congregation. Edelizete lives here in Aracaju, and came to obey the gospel through the example of her family members and being taught by them. We praise God for the beautiful gift of salvation and how one by one He is saving this precious family. When I think of her and her family, I think of their example of incredible faith in the Lord and of the great blessing they are for all of us.

As I reflect on the work here, I find myself thinking about how I am thankful... I am so thankful that the Lord has used us to reach others. I am so thankful that God has used us in His great, beautiful and unfathomable plan of salvation that began before creation, was made possible by His Son and is being accomplished by the power of His Gospel. I am so thankful that the Lord continues to accomplish His greatest desire through His Spirit, His Word, His Gospel, His Church, ... I am so thankful to be here in Aracaju at this time with my wife with whom God has blessed me, to be working with His church here in conjunction with His church there. We are so blessed... May Our Lord continue to bless us to reach an ever greater number of souls to His Honor and Glory in His Son...

### Continued Growth Through Strengthening Relationships in Christ

In June we had our fourth annual Spiritual Retreat! It is great to think



*Baptism of Edelizete*

On the morning of July 24<sup>th</sup>, señor José Passion was baptized for the forgiveness of his sins... to become the possession of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, ... to be buried with Christ and raised with Him to a new life. I am so thankful for the incredible blessing to experience the joy of these moments. Señor José had been visiting the church for several months and is now finishing the course "Let the Bible Speak" for the second time with us at the School of The Bible. He is 61 years old and he and his wife have three children and three grandchildren.



*Baptism of José*



Sunday, August 26, was a day of great edification for me. On this morning, Anderson, gave His life to the Lord and received the remission of his sins in baptism. Anderson is the brother of Josi who was baptized last year. I am so inspired by his heart and attitude. He said that he has worked hard at purifying his life, and asked if he had not managed to do so perfectly if he could still be baptized. So, we talked about repentance and forgiveness and about the growth process of how we are born in Christ and of our need each day to die to self and grow up to be more and more like Him. I praise God for Anderson's heart and for his



*Baptism of Anderson*

decision... the most important decision in life.

#### *Continued Growth Through Partnership in the Gospel*

The following is an article by Gilvan Rodrigues Couto (Translated from Portuguese). Gilvan is the secretary at the School Of The Bible and much more; he is also a professor at the school, a preacher, Bible class teacher, song leader, small group coordinator and more. Most importantly of all, he is a faithful servant of the Lord. I asked him to write an article that could edify and help those who are supporting this work to understand better what the Lord is accomplishing here in Aracaju, Brazil, and that is just what he did in this article which follows.

*(Article by: Gilvan Rodrigues Couto - 30 Years Old.)*



*Elissandra & Gilvan*

Since the School of The Bible was implanted here in Aracaju in 2003, God has been glorified through this work. Hundreds of people have been blessed through the courses that are offered for free, and thus, through the School people have been reached for God's glory. The School of The Bible has attracted various types of people from various social levels and denominations both from here in the capital as well as other cities, towns, and villages, people who are seeking answers for many questions that they have. They are tired, frustrated and deceived with the religious world and arrive here with the hope to know the truth about God. It is moving to hear the students publicly declare their Thankfulness to God for the School of The Bible and for having been allowed the opportunity to know God better. I, Gilvan, am witness to the value that this work has and how significant it is for all of us. The School of The Bible is an instrument of evangelism that has given much fruit for the glory of God. At the moment it has not only been the principal source of evangelism of the church, but also has functioned as a Training Center.

When I was baptized in 1999, the church had few members, most of whom have now moved away. With the implantation of the School of The Bible, the church grew and today 90% of the present members are fruit of this work. I write this with great emotion, filled with thankfulness to God for each one of you brethren and for the love you have for the Lord, for us here in Aracaju, and for all of the lost. God has been and is being glorified here, and this is the results of great effort and sacrifice from each one of you. It is worth it, it is worth it investing in this work and all of your effort and sacrifice for the cause of the Lord. At times we feel discouraged and frustrated with problems and difficulties that arise and we wonder if it is worth it, but when we hear people speak of the importance and see souls being reached for God, we erase our doubts and confirm that truly it is worth it!

I would like to share with you a few comments made by some of the students and brethren here.

Francisnaldo: "The School of The Bible has been for me of great importance, because it has brought for me understanding without equal opening my comprehension of the Bible. I have found meaning in the Word of God. What before were doubts, now is understanding. What is taught at the School of The Bible is of great worth and of spiritual richness without equal. May the Lord continue to bless this work.

Elissandra, (my wife): The School of The Bible is very important for me. It was through the School that I came to know God's will for my life. I recognized what my situation was without God and made a decision. Thank God I was reached by Grace and today am part of this church. I thank God for Eliana, my friend, who signed me up at the School of The Bible without me knowing beforehand, for the School of The Bible for teaching me the Word of God, and for all of you who support this work. Thank you!

Another student said, No matter what happens, do not let this work stop. I would be very sad if the School of The Bible were to exist no longer. The name of this student was Amintas. Sadly he had serious health problems. He was a very faithful student and never missed a class until one day. The next day we found out that he had suffered an accident and passed away.

My dear brothers and sisters, on behalf of the church here in Aracaju, Sergipe, and all of the students of the School Of The Bible, I would like to thank all of you for the help you have given us, both materially and spiritually. We will always remember you in our prayers filled with gratefulness. May the God of all grace continue blessing each one of you with all sorts of blessings in Christ, Jesus. Amen! Please continue praying for us. Your brother in Christ, *Gilvan*

Again, thank you all for your prayers. Angela was granted her visa and it is just one more step in the process as we prepare for our visit there. We will be arriving in the U.S. on the 25<sup>th</sup> of this month of September, Lord willing, and will spend a little over 6 weeks visiting some 11 congregations. We are greatly looking forward to being there and spending time with all of you and sharing what God has done and is doing among the people of Aracaju, Brazil and its surroundings. Please keep us in your prayers as we continue with preparations for our trip there that Our Lord may use us to His glory and to edify all with whom we will visit. Please continue to remember, The Ledbetters, me and Angela, our families and loved ones, the church and the lost in your prayers. We thank you so much. "Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you "(2 Thess 3:1 <> NIV) May the Lord bless you and keep you all always, *Randy*