



A GREAT OPPORTUNITY

Jaraguá do Sul, situated in a strategic position with about 160,000 habitants, is living the reality of continual expansion and attracts people from every part of the south of the country. It is estimated that the population of this city will double by 2015. Faced with this reality and being in the region of Brazil most resistant to the gospel, we have a great opportunity to contact people who are out of their own culture.

All this has revealed a great gap in the infrastructure of local government to support such a rapid increase in the population. For example, there are not enough vacancies for children in the cities crèches to meet demand. Just this week we found ourselves in a great dilemma. Monica, a woman who recently came to our church, has four children: Felipe 12 years old, João Vitor 5 years old, Augusto 20 months and João Paulo 9 months. As her husband's salary is not sufficient to sustain the family, Monica is obliged to work away from home. A neighbour offered to care for the children in the mornings while Felipe was in school. However this situation did not last long. In consequence, Felipe stopped attending school in order to care for his younger siblings. The municipal authorities, in spite of the lack of conditions to help this family, noted the fact and Monica was in danger of losing her little family. Not being able to leave her recently acquired job, this mother experienced days of intense personal conflict.

Such a situation as this is not uncommon. It is our intention as a church to help such cases by providing pre-school facilities that can increase as our own structure expands and strengthens. Usually the people who are most likely to rise and meet such situations in Brazil are the Spiritists. Should we as ambassadors of Christ leave such a great opportunity, such a great Mission field, to them? Therefore if we can offer help, time and space to such children, we will have an open door to evangelise families and influence them for God.

The church itself is growing under the pastoral care of Pastor José Soares Filho. At present we are developing the Pioneiro [campaigners] programme. On Monday and Tuesday nights we have 50 boys and girls in our care and this has an enormous potential to grow. Last week we had 11 people in the baptismal class. The church is engaged in an ongoing Home Bible Study programme which has good neighbour participation and the church members who are actively involved in the programme are greatly encouraged.

It is an undisputed fact that this society is increasingly and positively hedonistic; however, the Lord is blessing and we pray for a great harvest. This church could become a great blessing here and beyond in the future.

On the human side, the expansion of the work depends on the possibility of carrying forward what we call the Jaraguá Project. Our difficulties start with little internal resources to promote our Conservative Bible Teaching Program. The local government has also restricted the areas that religious entities can occupy and the price of land is high. In this situation we reach out to you for your help and your prayers. ■

Joe & Evelyn McCartney

