What in the world?

PRESBYTERIAN EVANGELISTIC FELLOWSHIP (PEF) / M8-32 - Brazil

NOTE: This is "the newsletter that almost refused to be written!" Seriously, this has been a work in progress since early June, but ministry interruptions (e.g., the World Cup, new semester) kept us from finishing it... until now! We sure hope it was worth the wait!

THE WORLD: Gettin' Crazier by the Minute!

This world is becoming crazier by the minute! We watch the news, we receive the emails... and all point to the absurdities of living without Christ as Lord and Savior. With the World Cup just finished here in Brazil, the news here isn't very different from what has probably shocked you in your corner of the world:

• A 30 year-old American tourist was seriously injured last night by a drunk driver in a hit-and-run in one of Rio's nightclub districts (vs. 1 Cor. 6:10).

• Our city, Niterói, held its annual gay pride parade in early June. We were downtown at a restaurant celebrating my (Bill's) birthday and, needless-to-say, we were all reminded again of man's total depravity vs. God's holiness (vs. Rom. 1:26-27).

• We hear of sons and daughters rising up to kill their parents while the Brazilian Congress recently made the spanking of children illegal (vs. Prov. 13:24).

• Christian psychologists here are losing their right to exercise their profession because they offer help and hope to those wishing to leave homosexuality (vs. 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

• A campus of UFF two hours up the coast (We minister on the main campus in Niterói.) recently allowed a satanic ritual/orgy/party to take place (see photos on next page). Although the story shocked most parents, leading to a public outcry, students on that campus held a protest a week later decrying what they considered to be censorship by the university and federal govern-

The World Came to Brazil!

That's right! Now that the World Cup is over, we are getting back to normal after the "foreign invasion" of soccer fans from all across the globe. Because most of those fans weren't particularly focused on their spiritual condition (Rom. 3:23; 6:23), it was the job of the global Church to alert them to their real situation as sinners in the hands of a holy God, especially among fans and players from politically and religiously-closed countries like Algeria, Iran and Ghana, not to mention spiritually-desolate European nations like France, the Netherlands, Italy and Germany. It was the job of the Brazilian Church to alert its own citizens and, in partnership with visiting short-term missions teams and multi-lingual evangelistic materials, alert the fans who had come from other nations.

We at M8-32 (what we call The 8-32 Movement in Brazil), as well as a number from our church, tried to make good use of a long winter break during the Cup to be at the stadiums and FIFA Fan Zone - on famous Copacabana Beach - where tens of thousands would gather to watch live and televised games. We were joined 18 of those days by South African evangelist Michael Van Rensburg, preaching with banners unfurled and bullhorns blaring. People from around the world needed to hear the gospel preached (Romans 10:17), and this may very well have been their first and only chance to hear it!
WARNING: Strong images of human depravity... that reinforce man's need for JESUS!

“Black Bloc” protestors (in all black clothing) mixed with common protestors to publicly express their frustration over Brazil's HUGE investment in the World Cup, while its socialized medicine, public education and other government-funded programs saw no increased investment. Millions of dollars in damage, hundreds of arrests and involvement of mainly youth, including college students, characterized these protests all over Brazil. One cameraman was killed by explosives launched by protestors in downtown Rio de Janeiro. As we preached the gospel in downtown Rio we would regularly be confronted and ridiculed by youth heading to the protests. Several challenged us to “put your bullhorns to better use... to protest the local, state and federal government!” We responded with, “Our cause is greater because we're dealing with the root problem: man's sin... and in light of your protest, the institutional consequences of it. Those who govern - and you - need to repent of your rebellion against God and plead for His grace and mercy in Jesus Christ!”

UFF - Rio das Ostras: This is a scene from a recent on-campus party, which included satanic rituals (including a portion of a human skull), nudity, genital mutilation, alcohol, drugs, orgies... and everything that happened was defended by the coordinator of the campus in the name of "higher education" and freedom of speech!

UFF - Niterói (our campus): A satanic statue stands "proudly" in the center of campus with words engraved on it that essentially curse the student body: “Wrath, (Sensual) Love, Depression, Prejudice, and Loneliness.” It is also common knowledge that there is at least one satanic group active on campus.

UFF - Niterói: This is an increasingly common scene on campus. We witnessed this "public display of affection" from about 30 yards away during our weekly M8-32 meeting. Do you think this may have been an attempt to provoke some sort of reaction by "those homophobic Christians?" We do. We didn’t take the bait, however... this time.

L to R: 1) "Diversitas" is UFF's official LGBT group. 2) & 3) Darwinian evolution and other unbiblical worldviews are taught in university classrooms. 4) "Education without Homophobia, Citizenship, Diversity, LGBT, Education, Inclusion, Respect". 5) "Quiet", in reference to Mackenzie University's Presbyterian reaction to its students' invitation of a well-known gay congressman to speak out against homophobia in churches.

L to R: 1) College beer bashes are alive and well on campus. 2) & 3) Christians protest with "(Traditional) Family is inspired by God" and "The Bible is homophobic? Are they now going to tear out its pages?" 4) Another life wasted at a college party... this student got so drunk he drowned in only 6 inches of water! 5) The "Gay Christian" movement is alive and well in Brazil: "I have the right to be gay and Christian" (with 2 gay pastors "married" to one another).
L to R: 1) Aïda and a student manning our M8-32 table outside UFF’s main student cafeteria… where we advertise our presence on campus and share our faith. 2) Our small but committed M8-32 group celebrating a birthday at our weekly meeting, where we’ve been teaching them bible study methods, biblical evangelism and systematic theology. 3) Opening our home to our church youth and the M8-32 gang is a high priority; between youth meetings, planning retreats, prayer vigils, socials, etc. our home has become quite a resource to the younger generation… and we totally love it.

L to R: 1) This is the group that M8-32 took (including several students from our church) to the annual FIEL (FAITHFUL) College and Young Adult conference in the neighboring state of São Paulo. 2) Francielly, a Law School student from our church, peruses some great books (mostly published by FIEL Publishing House) to stock up on – some up to 50% off! 3) Bill preaches the gospel to World Cup fans in front of the famous Copacabana Palace Hotel (and the FIFA Fan Zone just across the street - on Copacabana Beach) with South African evangelist Michael Van Rensburg (left) and Luis Franco (right), a member of our church.

L to R: 1) Bill translating for Michael while Luis’ wife, Ana, secures a banner. 2) Some of the M8-32 gang after our weekly outdoor meeting – when weather permits. Next to Bill in front row (l to r): Tayna, (Chemical Eng.), Renata (Law), Lilian (Math), Brunna (International Relations) and Humberto (Biology); back row (l to r): Lucas (Law), Talita (Law) & Aïda. 3) M8-32 distributed more than 3,000 bi-lingual (Port./Eng.) Gospels of John (donated by The Gideons of Canada) on campus, while partnering with a number of local churches (ours included) to distribute 150,000 copies before and during the World Cup all over Rio and Niterói.

L to R: 1) Amelia (facing front) & Jessica (in lavender – back to camera) help M8-32 students Lilian & Tayna hand out Gospels of John at World Cup Fan Zone in Copacabana. 2) M8-32 partners with UFF student Brunna Barros’ church by ‘takin’ it to the streets’ in the city of Niterói, RJ. 3) Bill teaching the M8-32 Biblical Evangelism seminar in Brunna’s church. 4) The M8-32 booth at UFF’s Freshmen Orientation days (l to r): Aïda, Daliane (Social Work), Lilian (Math), Lucas (Law), Talita (Law) & Aïda. 5) M8-32 distributed more than 3,000 bi-lingual (Port./Eng.) Gospels of John (donated by The Gideons of Canada) on campus, while partnering with a number of local churches (ours included) to distribute 150,000 copies before and during the World Cup all over Rio and Niterói.

L to R: 1) For evangelism during the World Cup M8-32 developed a bi-lingual tract based on receiving a yellow card during a soccer match, which is considered a stern warning… in order to not receive a red card (and be kicked out of the game, leaving your team with one less player). The gospel application should be obvious! 2) What better way to spend a Sunday afternoon with your church family handing out 5,000 Yellow Cards to fans heading to the World Cup final? 3) Lifting up the name of Jesus in song for all to hear on campus… at an “oasis” called M8-32!
OUR WORLD: Gettin' Crazier by the Minute! (cont.)

In light of the current state of our planet M8-32 is committed to reaching the lost both on and off campus with the TRUTH of the gospel. This is why we recently participated in an effort to place 150,000 bilingual World Cup versions of the Gospel of John (graciously donated by The Gideons International of Canada – and included testimonies of well-known Christian soccer players) into the hands of students (3,000 were given out at UFF) and residents of Rio de Janeiro and Niterói. The response was quite eye-opening:

• UFF student Brunna Barros asked for some to give out at her internship. I gave her a box of 60. Brunna proceeded to dedicate each copy by writing a note inside each booklet. Everyone who received one thanked her and began reading their copy, reporting back to Brunna with their observations and questions. Several even decided to start attending churches near their homes as a result of Brunna’s creative initiative!
• While handing John out at UFF some professors, especially those from the Humanities, would actually ignore those offering the booklets, revealing their disdain for anything “Christian.” Some people would take John and, upon seeing “Gospel” or “New Testament,” would turn around and return the copy just taken.
• Most of these booklets were distributed during the week the Canadians were in Rio (one million were donated for distribution), with the remainder being distributed as part of the evangelistic strategies of churches and groups like M8-32 for the World Cup.

PEF/M8-32: Changing the World with the TRUTH

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• Homosexual activists have come up with a new strategy to get Bible-believing Christians in trouble for “homophobia.” Recently during our weekly meeting on campus (which is outdoors - UFF doesn’t allow Christian groups to use its buildings) two male students sat near us, kissing and embracing each other for nearly 30 minutes (see photo – p. 2). Needless-to-say, we were appalled at this open display of rebellion against God, but we have to choose our battles wisely (see our Solutions section in this newsletter) while keeping our eyes on the schemes of the devil (Eph. 6:11).
• Despite the eyes of the world being on Brazil during the World Cup, social protests (like the ones last year – see photos on p. 2) threatened to put a damper on this once-every-four-years sporting event. In light of all the craziness, what are we, as Christians, doing? What should we be doing? If the gospel is the power of God for salvation (Rom. 1:16), shouldn’t we be boldly proclaiming it from the housetops (Matthew 10:27)?

All in all M8-32 has “preached” the gospel (e.g., distribution of evangelistic materials, street and World Cup preaching, one-on-one and small-group evangelism, street drama, etc.) to nearly 110,000 people (including 30,000+ during the World Cup and 6,500 college students) so far this year! Since January M8-32 has trained 173 Christians (including 49 college students) in how to – biblically - share their faith. We are also personally investing (through discipleship) in the lives of 13 Christians, 10 of whom are students (also our key leaders).

We are so grateful for your participation in this – literally – world-changing ministry! Surely we could not be here doing what God has called us to do these past 23 years without your faithful participation! Thank You!