



Christ For Aracaju



"Thus far has the LORD helped us." (1Samuel 7:12 <> NIV)

"And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again." (2 Cor 5:15 <> NIV)

Our Lord God and Savior continues to bless us with exciting happenings! Along with many new births of souls in Christ, we recently celebrated the birth of a new congregation on July 5th! A man whose name is Marcos Alberto in past months took the course "Let the Bible Speak" which is our key evangelistic course we give at The School Of The Bible. He is a former pastor of two different denominations. As he worked his way through the 14 lesson course, he began to reanalyze his past and see that he finally came in contact with the truth within its context in the Bible.



Marcos & Daniele

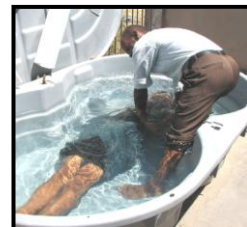
As he began to vocalize his discoveries, his past and his desires for the future, our professors began to take note. One of these, Luis Pereira, a member of the church here who also serves as a professor at the School, was able to dedicate time to accompany Marcos

outside of the classroom which led to him and his wife Daniele being baptized.

Taking hold of the opportunity, Luis, has helped Marcos begin to evangelize the contacts he had as a pastor. As a result, at this time there has been a total of 11 more baptisms including his mom, dad and one of his brothers! With the aid of Luis and the present congregation, Marcos and this group began congregating in their municipality of Socorro (population 100,000 - bordering Aracaju) in the Marcos Freire neighborhood on July 5th! Luis and his family plan to congregate with them and aid them for the first year or more until they are able to "stand on their own feet."



**Birth of New Congregation!
In Marcos Freire – Municipality of Socorro**



Luis Baptizing Marcos and Daniele



Marcos Baptizing His Father and Brother

The beginning of this new congregation is part of the realization of the vision for the work here to form congregations of disciples of Jesus, Christ in each community focusing on the 75 municipalities of Sergipe and the 36 neighborhoods of Aracaju. One of our recent goals in regards to this vision is to continue to prepare an ever increasing number of workers and families to help begin and mature future congregations of disciples as Luis and his family are doing in Marcos Freire in Socorro.

As I spoke with Marcos recently, I asked him to tell a little about what brought him to this point, and here in his own words is a brief telling of his story of how God is working in his life.

"Since I was little, I was raised in this (religious) environment learning things that are in the Bible and not in the Bible... about 98% not being in the Bible. When I was 13, I began to be trained as a minister as part of becoming a Pastor.

When I was 16, I became an Assistant Pastor and at 17 was named Pastor being able to take charge of a congregation. I began to teach in congregations (in cities) outside of the capital (Aracaju) such as Itabaiana, and Largato as well as in Lamaraun (one of the Neighborhoods in Aracaju) spending from 6 months to one year in each one of these. When I was 20, I married Daniele, and about a year after being married I began to perceive that something was wrong in this church (in which I took part). I began to think, "I do not believe this is what God wants". Yet, the manner in which we learned to interpret the Bible kept the problem hidden. When I was 22 years old, I decided to leave the (Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus) "Universal Church of The Reign of God" (having taken part since childhood). When I left I had to give up a salary, a car, an apartment, position and teaching, often times hundreds of people at a time.

I asked him, "What are some things that led you to leave the Universal Church?" He replied, "The preaching of prosperity. As I began to visit members of the church I saw that many of them were not prospering like we were preaching. People would say to me, "Pastor Marcos, I am doing everything I was taught, why am I like this?" I began to have doubts."

Another example is the church in Lamaraun. The goal was for the offering to be (a minimum of) \$R 3.000 Real (US - \$1,500) per month. When there was an increase in that goal, one month I did not reach it and that congregation was taken away from me and I was demoted to Assistant Pastor. I was revolted by this happening and told my wife that I was going to leave that church. She did not want to do so.

Every year they have (what is called) "The Holy Bonfire" – and each pastor has to surpass what they collected for this event the past year, if not they will be demoted to a lesser position. Piabeta which is a small congregation in a poor area one year managed to raise 10,000 Real (US - \$5,000) for this event. At one time my mom who was a member of the Universal Church even donated a very nice house that she had. I believed in that religion, but began to see. Yet, many practice these things (knowingly) with wrong intentions.

At that time when I left, one of my uncles moved here from San Paulo where he was involved with another denomination. I worked with this church for one year as a pastor. At that time 3 pastors came to visit us and "help". At that time I received a great shock when my wife and I saw them drinking, arguing with merchants at the shops and discovered that one of them was involved in homosexual activities. This chilled (devastated) me and I almost had no will left to serve God... the President Pastor spoke with them about what I had seen and depending on how the situation was handled was what would determine how I would make my decision. He said that each person has his own life and will respond to God. Based on this response, I told him that I would not have anything else to do with him. I lost the will to continue... I gave up position and the promise of receiving a salary.

During this time I prayed and one day my mom showed up with a pamphlet from the School Of The Bible and what called my attention was the phrasing of the name of the course, "Let The Bible Speak". I liked the first class but by the third class I began to see many things that clashed with what I had always been taught. I wanted to stop, but decided to continue to the end to see the whole of what was being taught. I brought José Marcos (a member of one of the churches where Marcos Alberto had been pastor) with me for the 4th class and he also saw the difference. After we finished the course, we visited the congregation (that meets in the School of The Bible) for the first time the (Sunday) we received our certificates (for the course). We began to attend regularly and see people living what the Bible says.

Marcos ended his story thus: "We began to teach what we had learned. I had contacts nearby from the 3 congregations where I had worked, 25 in Lamaraun, 20 in Piabeta, and about 10-15 here (Marcos Freire). One of the great challenges is that many of the people we know that are involved in these denominations now consider us as false prophets and our reputation is being attacked. At times we can sense that they avoid us as if we had a contagious disease. One of the hardest things for me is that my father-in-law who is a Pastor calls me a false prophet and has told my wife to leave me. There are many hard words that people have said to us which have marked us... "be careful with Marcos-Alberto and Jose Marcos and the other false prophets." Daniele and her sister (Paula) have also gone through this treatment."

We ask that you please keep this family and these new brothers and sisters in Christ in your prayers as they face persecution and as they strive to grow and share the truth of the gospel with others. Please pray that we will be able to help them in all their needs and that this new congregation will bloom and grow helping others to know the truth of Our Lord and Savior in the municipality of Socorro. We thank God for this new beginning and thank all of you for your vital part in what Our Lord is doing here in the growth of His Kingdom in reaching an ever increasing number of souls with His Gospel of Salvation. Thank you for your continued prayers for the church, the lost, me and Angela, the Ledbetters and our loved ones. May the Lord bless you and keep you always, *Randy and Angela*



July 5, 2009 - First Worship Service Of New Congregation in Marcos Freire Neighborhood in Municipality of Socorro - With visitors present from 3 of the 4 Existing Congregations of Barrio America & Barrio 13th of July, and the Municipalities of San Cristovauun & Malyador