

Well we made it through another year and God is still in control and blessing His children. Brazil had quite a turbulent 2013. They are preparing to host the upcoming soccer's premier event of the World Cup. It has caused many issues in Brazil, because it highlights the inequality that is so prevalent in the country. A story in the English newspaper, The Guardian, told of a woman in Fortaleza who sold her baby for \$20 and the government spent \$20,000,000 on a stadium. With the country spending millions of dollars on upgrading soccer stadiums and airports, the people felt the injustice of being forgotten. When your child is sick and you have to stand in line all day to see a doctor; it can be upsetting. Then to add to this, sometimes there isn't a doctor that day and you can't be seen at all. Then you go get the bus and it is so crowded that you can't get on and have to wait even longer till one with space comes by; this can be upsetting. When all you have is a small substandard space, but it is your home, and they tear it down to make a new stadium; you get mad.



(Home)

)When school is mandatory and you go to register your child and there is no space for him in any school in your area; you get mad.

When your president speaks and says that things are changing for the better and still murder is the number one cause of death in your male children; you get mad. What do you do when you feel powerless and feel you have no recourse, you get mad, protest and sometimes you react with violence.



(Protests)

Not since 1992, when they impeached their president, Fernando Collor de Mello, had there been so much popular protest in the country. The bulk of these protests came during June and July. People were arrested, even journalists, who came down on the side of the people, some people were hurt and property was destroyed. The protests have continued throughout the year and most were legitimate and peaceful. Then you get the ones that turn in a melee and the outcome is different. During some of these protests they have burned busses, to protest high fares. They usually come on and tell everyone to leave, but in December, things turned ugly.

Jer. 29:11 (NIV)

"For I know the plans that I have for you," Declares the Lord, "Plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."



(Burned Bus)

They stormed and lit it before everyone was out. A woman and her child were badly burned. No one was arrested and nothing but sorrow comes from these actions, but desperate people do desperate things.

We will never eradicate injustice, poverty or even stupidity in our lifetime; so what can we do? We continue with what God has told us to do. Go into the world and show them that He loves them and that He is the only true way to change their lives. Let them know that He has given us this privilege to serve.

I had such privilege when we were out doing the food ministry in the Progresso neighborhood of Sao Paulo. There we have a program where the people participate in being ministered to through the Word and with food. On this day we finished distributing food and after having a wonderful time being able to bless the community we were preparing to leave.



(Progresso Group)

An elderly lady came up and asked if we had any diapers. We said no, but was there anything else we could help her with. This lady, Josefina, was not in our program, but with a neighbor of another lady who participates. She vouched for the lady and said that everything she was saying was true. Now, why would someone think they would need to verify the veracity of her story, because it was incredible and if not you would say she was delusional and making up this story.

Josefina said that she was taking care of her 2 week old grandson and had no food in the house. She was currently feeding him bean juice, because that was all they had. She cannot work because she is recuperating from shattering her arm. The reason she has the child was because her daughter is not allowed to be with him because she is bi-polar and unstable. Josefina had gone to the hospital and petitioned his release only to her due to her daughter's mental state. This seemed bad enough, but as we asked questions she told us more of her story. The baby had just been released from the hospital after 2 weeks; he had to stay because he was born with a lung infection. A lung infection that he got because his mother, while pregnant with him, threw herself off a bridge and attempted suicide. She got the baby home; she and another daughter were taking care of him. This daughter who was working and buying food, but is no longer able to help because she was recently taken to a mental hospital due to a psychotic break.

I carry food in my car just in case we encounter emergencies and we were able to give her food and powdered milk for the baby. We got all her information and scheduled a home visit and got her enrolled in the program. That was a privilege, how God led her to us and that He had prepared people that could not only help in the immediate, but will be with her for the continuing battle. This is how you make a difference, one person, one child and one life at a time.

