



## PHIL & CORENNE SMITH

### **Greetings Beloved Partners!**

Wish you were all here with us in Brazil. We just finished “Carnival” or better known as Mardi Gras in the United States. Carnival is kind of like Labor Day. Summer is over, and everyone is back to work, back to school, back to business—so things are just now in full swing. Our residential students (200 in 11 different houses) are back in school. The day students (500) are back in session attending the 15 different certification courses we are offering this semester. The courses vary each semester as the demands in the marketplace change. We are so happy to be out of quarantine, even though the entire country is still masked—COVID numbers are significantly down. Everyone you talk to has been vaccinated at least twice and awaiting the third. There is rarely a discussion as to the pros and cons of the vaccination. I am not entering into the discussion. Just reporting on the culture here.

**Praises:** We finally will be opening our second church. The space has been rented, the pastor has been hired, the cell group has been trained and all are praying. We are proud

that our first church plant in Campinas has now sent two missionary couples out to serve: One nationally in Brazil and one to serve in Indonesia.

Our new church building will also be the site for our first thrift store in Vitoria as well as our graduate half/way home (where our graduates will live for six months as they launch into their new life) and a small drug detox program where heavily addicted adolescents can receive treatment before they enter into our residential program.

**Prayer requests:** It may seem like “old news” that we lost two boys to murder during quarantine, and our lead house parent was killed in a car accident. The staff and kids are still traumatized from all the loss and have seen a turnover in staff indirectly related to the stress. Please pray for us to effectively deal with the trauma in a healthy, Christ-centered way. And please pray for us as we prayerfully struggle to find new house parents who are willing to give a 10 year commitment to serve with our children. Anything less is a monitor, not a parent.

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I will close with a story of one young man that had dinner with us last night. He is 20 but started dating a girl, which he found out was being abused by her step father—with the knowledge of the mother as well as the rest of the immediate family. Although a neighbor, who also figured out what was going on and called Child Protective Services, nothing was done. As their relationship deepened she admitted that her step father also allowed his brother to rape her. When the father got out of jail (where he was serving time for his abuses) the mother told the daughter she had to move out even though she was 15 because the step father was coming home.

The young man, frustrated with the situation, asked her to move in with him. Although he felt like he was doing the right thing, he also felt shame and fell away from the church.

The pain she shared with him brought up painful memories of his own tumultuous past. How could a mother knowingly let her child be abused? How could his own mother have abandoned him? If there is a God in the world, why does he require us to have pain? It is easy to have answers in a seminary classroom, but when faces with such raw agony, it is tough to give an answer.

The young girl left this young man about a month ago. She doesn't want to be in a mature relationship—she wants to be a kid. And shame on him for thinking otherwise. Nevertheless, he is hurting terribly. He did lots of things wrong. It absolutely was not the right thing to have a girl living with him, but life is very messy here in the slums—nothing is cut and dry. I am so relieved he doesn't have this girl living with him anymore. Now we will sort out the pieces...

Pray for all of our boys, who want to do the right thing, but sometimes don't really know what that right thing is. Pray for our girls who are abused and shattered. Pray for us to have wisdom, and patience with each of our kids and with each other.

Thank you for being our partners in this important ministry. We love you all and remember, our doors are always open!

**In His Precious Name,  
Phil & Corenne Smith**

On earth as it is in heaven

*Matthew 6:10*



International Ministries, also known as the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, works cross-culturally to invite people to become disciples of Jesus Christ and to proclaim, through both word and deed, God's reign of justice, peace and abundant life for all creation.

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