

March 2004,

Dear Pastor and Friends,

In December we were privileged to host a missionary candidate school for our daughter, Rachelle. God has blessed her mobilization efforts and now many Brazilians are on the field. There were 7 new candidates approved to go to Russia, Bosnia and Iraq. In January, she also took 6 Brazilians to Bangladesh, passing through South Africa, Hong Kong and Thailand. We, as normal parents, were a little concerned with our 29 year old baby being on the other side of the world. Little did we know that she was safer than we were.

The next week we stayed at the Haven of Hope property. One of our church members called and asked if she and some friends of the mayor could come to play ball. We decided it would be a good political move. The night before, Diane, I and the caretaker's wife and children were getting things ready. All of a sudden the alarm went off. Denise told her son, "Go tell your Dad to turn that off, he's hard of hearing." To our surprise he came running back, "Mom those bad guys have a gun to Dad's head." Quickly we ran into the living area and the women and children locked themselves in the bathroom. I went downstairs remembering the garage door was opened. I heard one of the 3 thieves yell to Jaime, our caretaker, "Where's your boss, we know he's here. Show us where he hides the dollars." We all kept quiet.

At the same time, the other 2 bandits held our guard, Claudine, at gunpoint as he was coming out of the shower. He grabbed his gun, but they threatened to kill him if he didn't hand it over. He wisely did. Just then they heard the alarm and accused Claudine of setting it off. Angrily, they made him kneel down and they pulled the trigger with intentions of killing him. When the other thief heard the gunshot, he ran down and drug him down the road. Fortunately, he jumped into a ditch, and the bandits ran off. Finally, we heard Jaime's voice, "It's okay now, they're gone, you can come out now."

After an experience like this it is hard to describe the paralyzing effect of fear. Thankfully, God was faithful and veered the bullet upward so Claudine did not die; He did not permit the women and children to be involved, and Jaime escaped. But there is an aftermath of questions and doubts, a sense of responsibility of the families that live there, a fear that lingers. For these matters we covet your prayers. Since then we have hired another guard and started building a 10 foot high wall with electric wiring. Fortunately, 2 of our churches, Youngstown Baptist and Atlantic Shores have met this need. This is the first of three phases to put the wall around the entire property. Please pray God will supply these added expenses and watch over His work because ultimately, we know it is the Lord who protects, whether in Bangladesh or Brazil.

Yours for Brazil,
Russ and Diane Dean