

Dear Pastor and Friends,
September 2004

As most are aware, we have been diligently seeking approval for the Haven of Hope Children's Home, but to no avail. At times, we felt we were just spinning our wheels and getting nowhere. The other day God reminded me of the scripture in Acts 16: 6-10, where the Apostle Paul was hindered by the Holy Spirit to preach in Asia. He wanted to go to Bithynia, but the Holy Spirit did not permit him, instead, he was led by the Lord to go to Macedonia. Like Paul, we too did not understand why the Lord had not given us the approval, but we definitely sensed the Holy Spirit closing the door to the original vision and opening another one. This other door would accomplish the same objective: molding the lives of abandoned, hopeless children.

During this past month God has clearly confirmed this new vision through various persons and happenings. First of all, we met some directors of private daytime organizations and visited their facilities. After seeing such marvelous results with limited resources and space, we were convinced our property and buildings were more than adequate to already begin. Also, God gave a vivid "green light" on this project when a dear friend with excellent credentials, accepted the position of coordinator. Another confirmation came from a special missionary colleague, Donna Faircloth, who presently runs a children's home in Recife, Brazil. After explaining our situation and our thoughts of having a daytime program, Donna told us, "That is the way to go now in Brazil. Children's homes are a thing of the past." Donna has been working in this area for about 20 years, and she said they were changing their ministry to "Family Integration". The goal would be to reunite the children with their parents and have a ministry with the parents as well. Normally, these street kids live with a single mother or some other relative or friend, but most of the time the guardians cannot afford to sustain the child with food, clothing, and educational materials. These children usually go to public school for a half of a day, but then they return to the streets unattended and without care.

A daytime program would provide structured workshops of various types: music and other arts, computer science, physical education, agriculture, classroom reinforcement, English, and of course more importantly, religion. Gradually a higher level of training will be offered. We would have the opportunity and privilege to teach and mold these lost lives that have so much potential. We would bus the children from school to Haven of Hope at noon, provide them lunch, 3 workshops of their interest, and later a snack before they go home. They will learn skills which will prepare them for the working world. Our intention is to begin with 30 children from the 3rd and 4th grades, and these same students will remain in the program until they are 15 years old. Our desire is for each child to feel loved, accepted, and valued in an atmosphere of peace. This week we are submitting our proposal to the Secretary of Education. Since there is an enormous need for the city to take care of its, 2,000 street kids, this approval should be quicker and less complicated. Please pray earnestly; our goal is to begin when school starts, February, 2005.

Thank you for your prayers for a church building; we found an excellent building in a thriving location. We are now in the process of remodeling the 7,000 sq. feet. Our urgent need is to buy the lot next door for parking and future construction. Our members are assuming the costs of the renovation (\$20,000), but we are asking our faithful co-laborers to contribute in the purchase of this land, about \$35,000. If 70 of our churches and friends would give just \$500, our main challenge would be met. God has blessed tremendously with many more conversions, and we sense the Lord is going to use our church as a model in this 21st century. Our new auditorium will seat 400-500, as we are already averaging 100. We are so grateful you have made it possible for us to serve in this great country. Undoubtedly, hope has been given to many lives.

Yours for Brazil,
Russ and Diane Dean