

WEEK 12 • MARCH 25, 2023

Brazil: The Neighbors Noticed

Romans 12:2—“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

The city of Salvador in Brazil is changing. The Adventist Church is growing fast there; but despite the strong growth, unentered areas still exist in the city.

For years José [jo-ZAY] drank alcohol and disrupted the community. Ari knew that José was unemployed, so Ari offered him a job with his construction company, building churches.

José noticed that Ari treated him well and talked about God a lot when others treated him rudely. In time Ari invited José to read the Bible with him.

José felt his heart change. Things he had once loved, he no longer cared for. His life was transformed. José accepted Jesus as his Savior and asked to be baptized.

José’s neighbors saw the changes in José. He no longer played loud music and wasn’t drunk every evening. The neighbors asked, “What has happened to you? You’re so different!”

“I’ve met Jesus,” José said, his eyes shining with joy.

Some doubted that a drunkard could change so completely. José began inviting his neighbors to his home on Friday nights to talk with them and pray for their needs. José pointed to the Bible, showing them a Creator who cares deeply for them.

José’s neighbors are getting to know God. As a result, 10 people have been baptized and more are preparing for baptism. Small groups such as José’s form the core of the church in Salvador. These small groups grow into congregations, and these congregations divide into more small groups and spread throughout the city.

Five years ago, the church leadership in the state of Bahia, where Salvador is located, set a goal to build 1,000 churches in five years. They reached their goal, and all 1,000 churches now hold new congregations. The 1,000 churches across Salvador and the state of Bahia represent growing congregations of believers who, like José, have been changed by Jesus.

José’s life testifies that no matter what struggles someone may face, Jesus can transform their life.

Your regular and systematic offerings, called Promise, are your partnership with God. He promises, “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over. . . . For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you” (Luke 6:38, NKJV). If you doubt this promise, test God. Prove Him, and you will see for yourself.

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