



The *Smothers* family

Church planting in Teresina, Brasil

Dear Praying Partners,

May 25, 2022

My apologies for not getting this update sent out sooner, as I had a very pleasing interruption to getting it written and sent out last month. We are excited to announce the early arrival of our son, Samuel Ray Smothers, on April 16, weighing 7 pounds 3 ounces and measuring 19-3/4 inches long. All went well and Noel has recovered easily. He is a wonderful ray of sunshine to our family and is growing quickly. We also thank the Lord that even though our plans for Noel's mom to be here before his birth did not happen she was able to immediately change her ticket without any cost and came in the afternoon of his birthday.

Our move went well and we have gotten settled in here in Teresina. The Lord greatly met our needs with the moving truck and everything made it here safely. In just a couple of weeks time, Joel made the twelve hour trip from Teresina to Belo Jardim 5 times driving around 5,000 kilometers(3,100 miles). We praise the Lord that the car ran well and each trip was safely made. Also, the finalization of the house in Belo Jardim went well enough and we are able to focus on our needs here in Teresina. I had a very packed car on the final drive from Belo Jardim to Teresina!



Many have been asking about the progress on Joel's visa and I will try to summarize it as best as possible. The renewal for his ministry has once again been unapproved. I say "unapproved" because it is not an outright denial but they are continuing to ask for paperwork that neither we nor our lawyer understand what they are demanding in order for the approval to be met. Just FYI, his specialty is immigration law and has done this process many times. We are still considered "in process" if we can produce the paperwork they are requesting. With the birth of Samuel, we were hoping that this would change our abilities and give us a new option called "family reunion". With this function, Joel would be granted permanent residency status like Noel has due to her brother being born in Brasil. Last Friday, we were able to get an appointment with the Federal Police and applied for this residency. The good news is that it is possible to do this and would finalize Joel's visa needs. The bad news is that because the ministry visa expired in November last year, without being renewed (even though we have been trying to do so since September), and this is a new process, they would term him as being "illegal" for the past six months and we would have to pay a large fine that is accruing with each day that it is not resolved. If we could get the renewal of the ministry visa to process through before September this year we would then be able to use the family reunion for permanent residency and avoid the fines. Our lawyer is working on getting in contact with someone from the appropriate department to figure out what the paperwork is that they are asking for and if there is a way to just do the family reunion and avoid the fines. We ask for your prayers for us and the lawyer to be able to understand what is needed and what is the best direction to take. We know that none of this is unknown to God and that He is in control.

New ministry opportunities have been a blessing as God has opened doors for us. Through Noel's pregnancy she has been able to share the Gospel with her doctor and nurses that attended her through the

delivery. We have had many people ask us what would bring Americans to a place like Teresina. The general population here is made up of people that go back generations to when it was started as an industrial city in 1852. In general, outsiders are rare. As a result, we have had many open doors to explaining our purpose and mission to being here in Teresina, Brasil.

Another family that we have been able to reach out to is a family whose son has begun attending Noel's parents' church in Porto Alegre, while he is

attending college there. While here, Tammy(Noel's mom) was able to contact them and have them come over to the house twice during her time with us. They have some "Bible" knowledge but it has been tainted by various religions. Please specifically pray for Doctor Lara D., Aline, Jayra and Robert, and the family - Daniel, Ivoneide and Ylka. The family is supposed to be coming again this Sunday, please pray for an open door to further share the Gospel with them.



Another set of documents that we need are all of Sam's US certificates for which we will need to go to the consulate in Recife. This is about a 16 hour drive for us back across the country. Our plan will be to stop in Belo Jardim to visit with friends there and give everyone there a chance to meet Samuel. Please pray for us as this could be an eventful trip with a newborn and a three year old. We also will need someone to take care of things here as we will likely need to be gone for about a week.

I know this is a lengthy update with a lot covered in it, but I hope it gives you some insight into our lives and how God is working. Many thanks to all who faithfully pray for and support the work here in Teresina.

Prayer Praises:

Move to Teresina
Samuel's arrival
Meeting new contacts

Prayer Requests:

Visa documents
Trip to Recife
Salvation of contacts

Yours for the souls of Brasil,
Joel, Noel, Gabriel, & Samuel Smothers

Teresina skyline, Poti river and observation tower bridge



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WORLD WIDE
NEW TESTAMENT BAPTIST MISSIONS