

November 2006

Mission Trip to Southern Brazil

The Beginning of a New Apostolic Era

Introduction

This is an amazing time in the Pentecostal Church of God in Brazil. God is raising up a church of passion and mission like the Church of the Book of Acts. New leaders are emerging with a new vision that is focused on reaching the lost, discipling new Christians and planting new mission churches. For the last 12 years, I have had the privilege to be a friend and mentor to many of these new leaders in the PCGB. Many of the members of my church, Spirit of Life Church in Houston, Texas, have gone on mission trips to teach and encourage the churches of Northern and Western Brazil in the Amazonas and Porta Velhu Regions. This trip, I will be traveling to the South and Eastern regions of Sao Paulo and Minas. There I will have the chance to meet and minister to the remaining pastors of the PCGB I have not yet met.

I am also excited about going on this trip because I bring with me a message from the World Mission Director of the International Pentecostal Church of God in the United States, Pastor Lloyd Naten. He has been impressed by this emerging church in Brazil and believes that God has given Pastor Montefusco, the President of the PCGB, a message for the Church. Pastor Naten has invited Pastor Montefusco to come the National Convention of the PCG this June in the US and bring



God's message to the Convention. This will be a historic moment. It is the first time a Brazilian has ever addressed the PCG Convention. It is the beginning of the emergence of the new church onto the world stage. It is an amazing time.

I have been invited by Pastor Montefusco, the newly elected President of the Pentecostal Church of God in Brazil (PCGB), to accompany him on his yearly visit to the pastors in the districts of Sao Paulo and Minas. Accompanying us will be Pastors John Nunes, President of the Amazonas District, and Pastor Cezila, President of the Sao Paulo District. Pastor Montefusco wants me to teach on the first Apostolic Church of the Book of Acts and share my insights about how the PCGB is entering a time of ministry very much like that of the Church of the Book of Acts. He feels that the friendship I've developed with the pastors of the PCGB over the last 12 years and the fact that I am an "outsider" gives me credibility to not only share this teaching, but also challenge them to this new ministry God is calling them. We plan to spend two weeks on this trip visiting churches and meeting with pastors. We will also conduct two 3 day seminars with pastors and leaders of the Sao Paulo and Minas Districts.

Chad M. Miller

November 20, 2006

Journal of My Mission Trip to Southern Brazil

The Beginning of a New Apostolic Era

Pastor Chad M. Miller

Spirit of Life Church, Houston, Texas

Friday, November 3, 2006

10 hours on a packed plane flying from Houston to Sao Paulo is a long flight. When I arrived, Pastor Montefusco met me and gave me a quick tour of downtown Sao Paulo. He took me to a street he called "Christian Street". It was a fascinating section of the downtown retail district where all the stores had Christian names and sold Christian merchandise – books, clothing, music, videos, church supplies. It was so refreshing to see a clothing store where the mannequins had shirts imprinted with logos like "I Belong to Jesus" and "Jesus is my Savior". The stores on Christian Street were packed with people, blaring Christian music, and lots of laughter. It had a very special spiritual feel. Just think of the people who would be shopping on Christian Street – so many were new Christians wanting to fill their lives with the Word of God, the sounds of Christian music, and clothing which would proclaim their new found Savior. It was quite a spiritually energizing place. I wish we had such a place in the US.

With little chance to rest, we were starting our first night of a 3 day seminar here in Sao Paulo. All the pastors from this region of Brazil have been invited. I am supposed to open the seminar tonight with a message.

I have met about 65% of the pastors of the PCGB who live in the north and western parts of Brazil. But this is new territory for me and my first meeting with these pastors. They have heard a lot about the work of Spirit of Life over the last 12 years and how we have been a blessing to the churches in the north and west. In fact, they have been trying to get me to visit them for a couple of years now. So there is a lot of interest in this seminar. We had a good crowd of about 40 pastors. My first message was on Dreams. I shared how the PCGB was a church grown out of dream. The first American Missionaries who came 50 years ago, came with the dream of sharing the Gospel and raising up a great church in Brazil. They passed this dream on to the first Brazilian pastors they trained. And I shared some of the dreams and visions these founding pastors have told me about over the years I have been coming to Brazil. And then I challenged them with the story of Joseph in the last part of Genesis, to take ownership of the dreams God has given them, the dreams they have held on to for the last 50 years, and receive the work God is doing among them to fulfill their dreams in the PCGB. I ended my message with the

word: "The Pentecostal Church of God in Brazil, your name is Joseph." They really understood this word. They have cherished the dreams that have been passed on to them from their founding pastors. They have dreams that have confirmed their calling to this same ministry. And they understand, like Joseph, God has been quietly growing their church for the last 50 years to play an important leadership role in the Christian Church beyond the boundaries of Brazil. It was a rousing evening of optimism and new hope. It was like a fresh wind was blowing through the souls of these pastors reminding them of the design God has for their ministry and the love He has for their lives. Their name is Joseph.



Saturday, November 4, 2006

The weather here is much more pleasant than the hot humid weather of the northern Amazon. It is comfortable, just barely warm during the day. The nights are cool and pleasant. There are no air conditioners anywhere, just fans. This area is also very different with regard to the church. You can tell the pastors here have not had that bond together like in the Amazonas. They have been very independent and as a result none of them have prospered like in the north. They have also had poor leadership on the district level. John says these two factors are why the church is small and weak here in this region. But they seem to have an openness to me. Last time John and Montefusco were here they only had a turnout of about 20 people. Today we were in an auditorium and I would imagine there were about 200 people. This is a miracle according to John. I think these presentations are really in the middle of the stream God is moving here. This district has a new president.. His name is Cezila. I didn't make this up. They say the name is Italian, but I never heard it before. He seems to have the spirit and attitude of ministry that John has. He is very much like John. They have hopes he will really help turn things around as the President of the Sao Paulo District.

This morning I went through the discipling material. I have a break this afternoon and then tonight I'll do the Apostolic stuff. A lot is changing very fast. I have brought them exciting news from Pastor Lloyd Natan, the World Mission Director of The International Pentecostal Church of God in the US. He wants me to share with them that the Holy Spirit has told him he should give his speaking time to the next National Convention to Pastor Montefusco. This is huge. Pastor Natan feels that God has given Pastor Montefusco a word for the church. This is the first time a Brazilian has ever addressed the Convention of the PCG. When he does, the quiet work God has been doing these last 50 years in Brazil, will catch the attention of the world.

When I shared this message, they were shocked and blown away. It is beyond anything they have ever imagined that their leaders would be asked to bring a message from God to the International PCG. It will be a test of their maturity and vision to see how they handle this attention. I don't think they fully understand the magnitude of the moment Pastor Montefusco will speak at their convention. I'm telling them how significant it is. I think it is a bit overwhelming to them. My brother, Pastor John, he gets it. I don't think John really wants to be the one translating for Pastor Montefusco. I'm working on him. He is an excellent translator from English to Portuguese. But he thinks he is not qualified to translate from Portuguese to English. He is intimidated. When he told me he didn't think he was qualified, I told him it is not a matter of qualification but of being chosen. It's pretty hard to argue with that.

I am in a hotel in a community about a hour from Sao Paulo called Braganca Paulista. I shared with them that God was calling this church which has been hidden and silent as far as the rest of the world knew, to now have a voice and be heard. I told them about Montefusco speaking for the hearts God has been nurturing in Brazil for the last 50 years. This is their jubilee year. It's not just a year of freedom for them, but freedom the world will experience through their message. I think this is really blowing them away. I was telling them this was really about the next generation and the young people who would not just be children of Brazil, but children of the world, taking their faith beyond Brazil. I was swarmed by all the young kids, 16 to 25 year olds, who were saying they wanted to be a part of reaching the world. About 25 of them were crowding around me for pictures. They were really buzzing. A new vision is being birthed here. They really thanked me for what I've done for the church here. I don't think it is really that much, but it has really connected with what the Holy Spirit is stirring. I kept saying "you know this is true - you feel the stirring and burning in your heart. The truth is already there. It really struck a heart cord. Pastor Montefusco came up and wanted my prayers for

him and blessing for what is ahead. He got on his knees at my feet before all the people and I prayed for him. It was an amazing moment. I can't hardly believe I'm a part of it.

One young lady, a pastor's daughter, Marcela, was so stirred. It touched something that has been burning for a long time. She speaks very good English. She was saying how everything she was hearing was compelling her to go into the ministry. I would guess she is about 25. I really felt strongly she has been chosen for something important. I really did my heart good to see this message stirring the next generation. Pastor Montefusco has a form that young people fill out to request to work in mission for the church. He said here he has gotten a huge stack of forms he doesn't quite know how to follow up on. Well, that's his problem! We should all have such problems. I couldn't help but think of our kids and only hope the Lord will someday have such a grip on their lives. It was an amazing evening to say the least.

Sunday November 5, 2006

This morning we had a meeting of the pastors of this area. Counting the wives and teens, I guess there were about 40 people. Pastor John had a devotion about being more truthful in your life with others and yourself. The message seemed to convict a number of them and they came forward for a time of prayer about this issue in their lives. This is important because of the history that "haunts" this place. This property seems to have little purpose in the church. It belongs to the denomination. It was once a larger tract of land that one of the original missionaries, Robert



Thunderberg, purchased as his home. It is a beautiful spot on a very clean lake. You can tell it was a luxurious place 40 years ago. There is a pavilion that you can hold gatherings and have services. But Thunderberg was quite a bad character. I haven't heard anything positive about him. John tells me the story of how

he one day bought a rifle to kill one of the other American missionaries. It seems like this is a stronghold of the conflict and strife of the past. I get the impression many bad things happened here. Over the years a number of Brazilian leaders have lived here, but the place seems to bring heartache and conflict into their lives. So for quite some time, the house has sat empty. It has a beautiful semi-circular window and porch. The front room has a wood parquet floor that must have been gorgeous in its day. Now it is abandoned. Some of the Brazilian pastors who travel here stay in the back rooms, sort of a dormitory. But the front part of the house which was Thunderbergs living space is abandoned. And you can feel the emptiness. There is a dark spiritual presence in this place. No wonder no one wants to be in those rooms.

We met in the pavilion next to the house. I shared a devotion that encouraged them to choose a different road than the one they have been on in the past and be a part of what God is doing in their denomination. John and Montefusco are surprised at the openness and eagerness of the pastors to make a new beginning. A lot of this has to do with the new leadership of Pastor Cezilla. The still have a couple of pastors that are independent and doing their own thing, but most of them are ready to abandon that old paradigm. John and Montefusco feel that this is a real and lasting change. We had a question and answer time and I was very pleased at how they were really ready to make a new beginning and to break the patterns of heartache and sin of the past.



Then Pastor Montefusco brought out about a dozen vials of anointing oil. They were passed out to the pastors and they spent about an hour walking the property, inside and out, anointing it to bring freedom from the evil history and stronghold darkness. Everyone dispersed all over the property, praying, anointing and asking God for freedom for this property from the evil done here in the past and forgiveness for past sins. I could only imagine that was going through the hearts and prayers of those who had been connected to this history. John and Montefusco asked me to come with them and we walked into Thunderberg's living spaces. We prayed and they poured oil on the floor of every room as we prayed for exorcism of all the evil that was still lingering there. It was a very dark place spiritually.

As we were praying, one of the young pastors came in and said as he was praying at the gate of the property he saw a vision. As he looked up in the sky, he saw a bright powerful angel with a sword in one hand and a bowl of burning fire in the other. The angel flew over the property and poured out the fire over the entire property, burning away the sin of the past. And then on the charred ground, new grass grew back everywhere except a circle a few feet from the front porch of the house. There the grass did not grow back. He said he felt that some act of "witchcraft" had been done there. I suspected it was probably something worse. Pastor John just stared at me. I handed him my vile of oil and said, "You better go and anoint the circle." Without batting an eye, the young man took the vile and headed out the door to the circle he saw in his vision. The next thing I saw was all the Brazilians except John and I, standing in a circle holding hands around the evil spot and singing asking God for freedom from this home of evil and sin.

This has been a place of unspeakable evil by those who claim to be doing the work of God. I felt a great sense of emptiness there now. I told John that if it were up to me, I'd bulldoze the house down. Hopefully, now this place can be a home of God's work in the future.

This afternoon we traveled to the hometown of Pastor Cezila called Camanducaia. It is a beautiful town in a mountainous farming community. The climate and forested hill sides are lovely. This area is much less populated and much more affluent than the north of Brazil. Tonight we will be visiting Pastor Cezila's church. He has a very nice facility and nicely equipped. His members are mostly young. I would guess 85% of those in attendance were between 15 and 30. There was a wonderful spirit here. These people have a strong sense of community and a lot of optimism in what the Lord is doing in their lives.

I spoke about how God uses dreams and visions to speak to us based on the passage from Acts 2:17 and the story of Joseph in Genesis 37. I asked them how many of them had had a dream or vision from God. About half of them raised their hands. Preaching to them was so much fun. Their hearts are young and open. I encouraged them to have confidence that God who gave them their dreams could make them a reality in their lives. A young man named Aldiea who has been driving around has an amazing life story. He was a field laborer with nothing and God gave him a dream that he would be successful. When he shared it with his friends, they laughed at him. God has given him great success and he now owns several businesses. Along the way, Pastor Cezila has made a huge impact on his life.

I had him come up and share his testimony.

It was a powerful illustration, especially since he has generously used his success to help support the ministry of this church.

As I preach on this theme of dreams and visions, I'm surprised how many people are coming up to me and telling me about their dreams. Pastor John pulled me aside after tonight's sermon and said, "I had a dream early in my ministry." It was back in the beginning of his ministry when his church was only a couple of years old. He was working very hard and people were coming to his church, but they were not really committed. John was discouraged because his efforts didn't seem to be very successful. His mother in law asked him if anyone was getting saved in his church and he really didn't know. He was really discouraged and feeling like a failure.



At the time John was living in some rooms attached to the church. Outside his kitchen window was an orange tree that never produced any oranges. He had a dream. He dreamed he woke up the next morning and went to the kitchen to fix some coffee. When he opened the shutters of the window, he saw the

orange tree was loaded with fruit. He counted 37 oranges. But just behind the oranges he counted, he could see more oranges in the more distant limbs of the tree. This dream really encouraged him that his ministry would be successful. He said from that day, his church began to grow through conversions. No longer was he trying to carry the ministry with only his might, but God began growing the church.

I asked him if he knew what the distant oranges meant. I don't think he had thought about them very much. I told him the 37 he counted was the fruit of his immediate ministry. The distant oranges were the future generations of disciples who would come to faith through his ministry.

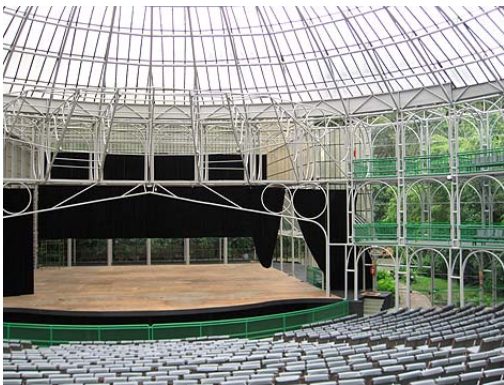
It was a great moment.

Monday November 6, 2006

We traveled this morning up into the mountains above Comunducaia to Monte Vista. This is amazing country – huge rolling hills, green and lush. It looks like the pictures I've seen of the highlands of Scotland. They clear acreage on the rolling hills and plant potatoes, corn and other crops that grow in sandy soil. They grow year round, enabling them to make 4 potato crops a year. Monte Vista is a tourist community built by immigrants from Germany. The homes they built look like European Chalets. It's pretty strange. But the hill top community is absolutely beautiful. It's not something I ever expected in Brazil.

After doing the tourist thing this morning, we headed back to Comunicaia to load up and head south 10 hours to Curitiba. Four of us pastors are in a mid sized double cab truck. We were crammed in pretty tight. We drove all afternoon and evening. It was about midnight when we got into town and found a hotel.

Monday November 7, 2006



In the morning we did a little sight seeing. The Pastor here is named Marcus and he took us downtown to beautiful glass concert center. It's all glass and make you feel like you are outside, surrounded by the forest. It's built next to a 300 foot rock face with a waterfall that spills into a beautiful lush lagoon. This is one of the most beautiful and unique concert halls I've ever seen. Here in Curitiba they are trying to preserve and keep the beauty of nature in their building designs. In the north, less regard is given to preserving the environment.

We drove about 6 hours south of Curitiba to Itajai. It is a costal town with a very busy sea port. There is a beach just to the south with resort hotels. Itajai is the home of Pastor Cliton, a young pastor who has just started a new church 8 months ago. He and his wife are so excited about starting a church. They have a 2 year old daughter. Everyone in the church is a new Christian. After freshening up we went to services in the small 20 by 40 foot building they are renting for their church. It is a very simple church, but for Cliton and his wife, it is their dream.

It was so wonderful to preach to this group of about 35 people. They were all so happy. We forget how fresh and full of hope we once were when we discovered Jesus as our Savior. They have just experienced the Gospel and are full of the hope of all Jesus will yet do in their lives. You could see the joy in their eyes. I shared a message that affirmed the hopes their hearts were full of. I told them that one of the secrets of the Kingdom of God is that God uses small things to make big. I shared Jesus' parable of the Mustard Seed and told them they were a "Mustard Seed" Church. That God had planted them to have a huge impact on their community. It's hard to even describe how affirmed and excited they were. God had already radically changed their lives. They were all so eager to have whatever God had planned for them.



I wanted to encourage Pastor Cliton with an offering. I put \$300 R (\$150) in the offering basket during the offering time. I was really happy giving the gift and knew it would really affirm their ministry. At the end of the service he asked me to come back up and announced tonight's offering was the largest they had ever received in the history of their church. He wanted to give it to me and my church as an offering for the work we were doing for them. I didn't want to take it, but I know the tremendous value this gift had for Pastor Cliton and his new members.

What a great and generous heart.

It is so characteristic of new Christians. They really are trusting God to provide and they get so much joy in giving. The Bible says you can't out-give God. But you can't outgive new Christians either. It's so wonderful to see people with so little getting so much joy in giving. I know God will bless Pastor Cliton's ministry. I'll just have to wait until tomorrow to give him my offering.

Wednesday November 8, 2006

We kicked back in the morning and had lunch with Pastor Cliton. I took him aside and told him I wanted to encourage him to stay the course in his ministry. I wanted to give him an offering to support and bless his work starting his church from scratch. I gave him a few bills folded over. He was very humbled to be given an offering from me. He accepted it and put it in his pocket. Pastor John and I prayed for him, his family and his church. I wish I could have been around to see his surprise when he opened the bills up and found \$ 1,000 R (\$500). It really refreshed my heart. It felt like my faith got a bit younger and fresher.

We crammed back into the truck to return to Curitiba where we were to have services tonight at Pastor Marcus' Church. His church is also a mission which is a couple of year old. Pastor Marcus and his wife, Alnice, are in their late 40s. I knew they had had a lot of struggles getting their church going. I could tell from meeting him the day before that he was so glad to have us visit him. He and Pastor Cliton are the only pastors of their denomination in this area. They often feel isolated and alone. Visits like ours are such an encouragement.

Our trip back to Curitiba was quite a comedy. We were cutting it close on time. So when we got lost trying to navigate in this sprawling city, we were in trouble. It seems like there are no real thoroughfares through these communities. You have to weave yourself through them. These Brazilians don't use a map. They just pull over and ask anyone walking along the road for directions. Of course, most of the streets don't have names, so the guy on the street just points you in the right direction. You have to keep stopping to get more directions every couple of miles. It was really funny. And the frustration was growing as we were running very late and knew the service had already started. Actually we were in a panic when we found the community of Pastor Marcos, but couldn't find the church. So they called him and he said he would come meet us in a couple of minutes. John said, "We have to get ready now." We were still in our grubby traveling clothes and not looking that good. So they hopped out of the truck, pulled out the suit cases from the back, and started getting out a jacket, shirt and tie, anything to improve their appearance. This is all on the side of a busy road. I was laughing so hard as we were changing with all the cars going by. What was really funny was Pastor Montefusco was wearing some "overall" type pants and he ended up putting a dress shirt, tie and wrinkled jacket with it. I'm not going to tell what I was wearing. It was a riot. And as we were tossing our luggage back into the truck, Pastor Marcos comes walking up waving his arms. Here we were changing on the side of the road less than one

block from his church. He had walked over to intersection to get us. It was just crazy.

We finally got to Pastor Marcos' church. They were waiting for us to start. Pastor Marcos opened with the last two verses from Psalm 126. I don't often get everything that is being said, but I read the verses that talked about God turning our tears to joy and putting a song back into our hearts. I glanced at the beginning of the psalm and saw it mentioned the word "dream". I was going to talk about something else in my message, but I felt the Lord wanted me to share my "Dream Message".

Psalms 126:1-6 (NIV)

¹ When the LORD brought back the captives to Zion, we were like men who dreamed.

² Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."

³ The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.

⁴ Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like streams in the Negev.

⁵ Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy.

⁶ He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.

I realized this was about the Jews returning from captivity. They had had great sorrow and were returning to their homeland that had been destroyed long ago and now inhabited by strangers. They had known heartache and hopelessness. But as they returned, God gave them back their joy and laughter. They were returning with a song in their hearts. The first verse says of the returnees, "*we were like men who dreamed*".

Pastor Marcos' Church was different than Pastor Cliton's. Pastor Cliton's members were young in the faith with a fresh hope in the future where nothing was impossible for God. They had not had their hearts broken while they were trying to live the Christian life. Pastor Marcos' people were different. That had gone through a lot. Many of them had been bounced around hard by life. I didn't know it until later, but a few years ago, his 12 year old daughter died a slow death from leukemia. It really hurt them. So I knew "Dreams" was the message. I shared how life sometimes takes us to a pit where we really question our dreams – even our faith. I talked to them about how God helps remind us of the dream He has put in our heart and to never give up on it. That was the right message the Holy Spirit wanted for this church tonight.

When I was done, Pastor Marcos shared his dream and how he and his wife lost heart for ministry after their daughter's death. But God spoke to him and told him his daughter was in heaven. He was crying. This helped him reclaim the dream of starting a new church, but he had no property. Then out of the blue, a soccer player he had prayed for was signed to a great contract. The player felt it was because of Pastor Marco's prayer for him, so he bought Pastor Marcos his property as an offering. It's a nice piece of land.

Pastor Marcos was so excited. Our presence and message really affirmed him. His wife was the worship leader, one of the most gifted I run into in the Churches I've visited. I really enjoy the worship she led, almost as much as ours at Spirit of Life. And there was the cutest little dark haired girl that kept coming up to Pastor Marcos' wife. I thought she was just one of the kids in the church running from person to person for attention. I found out later that she was theirs. God blessed them with another daughter. I saw some pictures in their house. One of them was of their deceased daughter. She looked identical to her sister. Isn't God good! What a day.

Friday November 10, 2006

Today was a tough day. We were in the truck more than 10 hours. I'm getting too old for this. We made it to Minas about an hour before the conference was to start. I've been praying that God would open the hearts of the pastors here in Minas. There has been a tension between the pastors here in the south with those in the north in the Amazonas. So if an idea comes from Amazonas, normally the Minas crowd will be skeptical and often unsupportive. The churches in Minas have struggled and developed a climate of criticism toward each other which has really taken a toll on their self esteem.

Tonight I spoke about Dreams. There were about 150 pastors there and they were very friendly and attentive to me. I think they relaxed when they realized I was bringing them a message of encouragement and hope. God had a dream for them and He would make that dream a reality. My message was an invitation for them to remember the dreams they had in earlier times and reclaim them for today and the future. It was a good evening and I think I broke the ice. Afterwards I had a chance to meet several of the first pastors whose ministry went back to the beginning days of the denomination.

I gave each of them my complements to the foundation they laid and the dreams they passed on to many of their disciples. I encouraged each of them.

It was a good evening. But I don't really know where so many of their hearts are. Pastor John said the people of Minas always "eat their soup around the edges where the people of the Amazon are more direct and eat from the center of the bowl". This is kind of a strange metaphor, but what he means in the people of Minas are know to be slower and less direct than the folks of the Amazon. Its so good to have Montefusco, John and Cezila with me. We are just mingling with the pastors and leaders at this conference and supporting me as we do this together.

Saturday November 11, 2006



This morning I will be giving 2 presentations about the 5 major changes (Paradigm Shifts) in ministry that have happened in the last 10 years among the pastors of the PCGB. These changes are much more obvious in the ministry of the pastors of the Amazon region than here in Minas. Pastors of Minas "eat soup around the edges". During my presentations they seemed very

attentive. I felt they were paying close attention. As I encouraged them to move toward equipping leaders and discipling, I felt the Holy Spirit convicting them in some deep places. They know this is true and what God wants from them. But they have been disappointed in their past efforts to make changes, and the criticisms they have received have made them reluctant to consider new ideas. One of the men raised his hand and asked what to do if they don't succeed and others call them failures. That's one of their biggest fears. It gave me a great opportunity to give them permission to fail and learn from their mistakes. I also spoke strongly how they should be encouraging each other and remove this spirit of criticism that exists among them. I felt the Holy Spirit really affirming the teaching as undeniable truth in their hearts.

I was able to have time off in the afternoon and got the chance to be alone for prayer and preparation for tonight's message. This message about the Emerging Apostolic Era in Brazil was the most important of all the messages. We had a good turnout with about 300 pastors and leaders.

I felt permission in my spirit to be strong and very forceful. I described the characteristics of the Apostolic Church of the Book of Acts and that God was calling them to be that church today. This is moment to put their differences and failures aside and support the apostolic gift that will lead them to unify as the Body of Christ and understand the importance of this moment.

This year is the 50th anniversary of the PCGB, the Jubilee Year. It's a year to seize the freedom the Gospel has brought them and prepare to reach not only Brazil, but beyond to the world. Then I shared the message from Pastor Nathan, the World Mission Director of the PCG, wanting Pastor Montefusco to give a word from God to the Convention this June. I told them how significant this moment was. No Brazilian had every spoken to the PCG Convention. That Pastor Montefusco would speak for the hearts of every Brazilian pastor about the emergence of a New Apostolic Era in the Church in Brazil. And then the secret of what God has been doing in the last 50 years in this church would be known to the world.

It was a tremendous moment when they realized that this was the beginning of a great time of opportunity for them to speak a message to the world. I said everything I had in me to say. I was done.

Then I called Pastor Montefusco up and asked the leading pastors to surround him for a time of pray. Pastor Montefusco got on his knees and it was a great time of prayer. It was a special moment for new hope and new beginnings. And people knew Pastor Montefusco was the chosen man to lead them.

Everyone was talking afterwards and finally John, Montefusco, Cezila and I went out for some pizza and to talk. Pastor Montefusco thanked me for what I and Spirit of Life had done for their church. He said we can't imagine the impact we have had. That I was an outsider without an agenda, I was able to be among them as a friend. I didn't want a position or authority like others who have come before. My authority was my message from God. He said I have now visited and preached to their entire church and have won their hearts. He had gotten feedback from many of the pastors and they know this message is prophetic and the direction of God for them. No one has challenged it in any way.

He said their pastors are protective and do not let outsiders speak in their churches. But he said I will be welcomed into any of their churches. Whenever I come, I will always have a house to stay in and someone to take me wherever I want to go. He said no other outsider has that authority. He gave me gift, a lapel pin of the PCG emblem. I had seen it worn on many of the jackets of their pastors. He said he wanted me to wear it. This pin is given to their pastors at their ordination. It was the highest honor I could be given. I was really humbled.

We all talked over the pizza and marveled how strange it was that God brought me to speak to their church. I am just a simple pastor of a small church without roots in the "Pentecostal Camp". But this is one of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. He often uses the small and unexpected things to do His work.

I came to the Amazon 11 years ago and made a couple of friends on a river boat. The Lord brought our hearts together, and out of our friendship He has spoke to a denomination about the beginning of a new age of mission and ministry. It's a real testimony of how God works through relationships and those who have are willing to journey through life with the comrades God has chosen. I still don't speak their language. So much of my communication is smiles, handshakes, and hugs. There is a look we can see in each others eyes. We know God has made us spiritual comrades.

It's what the Body of Christ is all about.

Sunday November 12, 2006

I went to a humble church today in a very poor part of town. The pastor's name is Valdamire. John had been invited to speak there this morning and I was just going to tag along. The pastor was so proud to have us. There were about 30 people there. They asked me to say a few words and I did. But I realized this was a special church. I found out that 5 years ago this property had been a place for witchcraft and evil rituals. This pastor and his wife came and raised up this



church "from the scratch" as the Brazilians say. In the early days, they would find the remains of satanic rituals on the church property. It's interesting, this pastor and his wife have fought for this property. This is real spiritual warfare. And their battle is raising up a church that is bringing blessings to the community. They have the brick walls up of about 10 classrooms where they are going to start a preschool for the community. At the end of the service, the pastor's wife brought about 10 kids from their children's church and I was so impressed. They had a craft, a burning bush from the story of Moses, and a bag of chips. They followed her back into the church like chicks follow a mother hen. They were some of the most pleasant and well behaved kids I ever seen. It's a real affirmation that this couple is gifted by God for their vision for the church. I'm really glad I came. It was kind of like icing on this entire trip.