

# **PROSPECTUS AND INVITATION**

GoSpeak.org  
J. Randal Matheny

March, 2010

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# GoSpeak

Dear Brethren:

The challenges of our age present us with unequaled opportunities. Now, more than ever, is the time for churches of Christ to move forward into the world with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The documents included here serve as an introduction to our work and a bit of context. With the loss in June, 2010, of 85% of our personal support, we are now seeking new relationships with interested churches and individuals.

Please consider this an invitation to share with us in the gospel, to be presented to the eldership or missions committee in your congregation.

The Somers Avenue congregation in North Little Rock, Ark., assumed oversight of our work Jan. 1, 2010. They have been a supporting church for a number of years and now have accepted sponsorship of our ministry.

In May, 2010, I will be in the U.S. to talk with churches about our efforts. Then, we'd like to schedule a time to make this invitation personally.

If, in the interim, you have any questions or would like further information, please feel free to contact me by email at [randal@fastmail.fm](mailto:randal@fastmail.fm) or by phone, direct dial from the U.S., 011-55 (12) 3942-7753.

May God give us the strength to forge ahead in spite of the difficulties.

In Christ,

*J. Randal Matheny*

Randal Matheny

## **J. RANDAL MATHENY**

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### **OBJECTIVE**

To create new partnerships with churches and individuals and fund the Mathenys' GoSpeak missions ministry with \$5000.00 monthly beginning July, 2010, to replace lost personal support, while also reinforcing existing ministry efforts.

### **SKILLS**

- Fluent in Brazilian Portuguese language. Studied Portuguese at Abilene Christian University for two years under Dr. Robert Brown and in 1986 was awarded the Certificate of Proficiency from the Yazigi Language Institute in Belo Horizonte.
- Events organizer: World Missions Workshop for Christian colleges, 1979 student leader; National Christian Workers Encounter, 2000 coordinator and master of ceremonies; 20-year celebration of SJCampos church, 2008.
- Lectureship and retreat speaker, gospel preacher. Cold Harbor Road Lectures, Mechanicsville VA; Maywood Missionary Retreat, Hamilton AL, 2006-2008; Pickwick TN church of Christ, 2009 (planned); many Brazilian cities and churches.
- Writer, author, editor, publisher, webmaster.

### **PERSONAL BACKGROUND**

- Born 24 August 1957 in Paragould AR, to James D. and Darlena F. Matheny, Randal grew up in the Stonewall, Hooker, and Lafe communities of Greene County.
- Graduated from Marmaduke High School in 1975, he went on for a B.A. in Bible and Communication from Freed-Hardeman College 1979 and a M.Miss. (missiology) from Abilene Christian University 1983.
- He began preaching at age 16 and served churches in Blackwell TX, Shiloh TN, Ashland MS, and Paragould AR, before moving to Brazil in 1984.
- In 1979 he married the former Vicki Lambert of Iuka MS, whom he met at FHC. She was born in Greenville TX, and graduated with a B.S. in Early Childhood and Elementary Education.
- The Mathenys have three children. Micah Doyme was born 1983 in Abilene TX. Joel Alexandre (b. 1986) and Leila Jean (b. 1992) were born in Belo Horizonte and hold dual citizenship. Micah married the former Valerie Horst of Huntsville AL Dec., 2007; Joel married the former Tansy Waldrop of Mt. Juliet TN May, 2009.
- Randal and Vicki moved to Brazil in November, 1984, with a four-family mission team. They began a new congregation in the city of Belo Horizonte, the nation's third largest city with 3 million population. After 10 years of evangelism, leadership training and publications ministry, the Mathenys moved to the city of São José dos Campos, where Brazilian families Alvaro Pestana and Otávio Carvalho had a small beginning. He has helped to establish two more churches in the area and given support to a third.

### **EXPERIENCE**

- Member of Freed-Hardeman University's A Cappella Singers chorus and member of tour/campaign to Virginia and Europe in 1976.
- Campaign and missions experience in Brazil (1978, 1979, 1981), Scotland (1978), Georgia (1973), Indiana (1979).

- Editor-at-large and essayist for “Affirmatives” column for two years for The Morrock News Digest.
- Poet published in literary and general magazines such as *Voice of Truth International*, *Christian Bible Teacher* and Britain’s *The Scripture Standard*.
- Writer published in *Gospel Advocate*, *Power for Today*, *21st Century Christian*, *Voice of Truth International* and *La Voz Eterna*. E-zines such as Daily Wisdom and Heartlight have published his articles.

### MINISTRY INVOLVEMENT

- On the field, inserted into Brazilian culture and language for 25 years since Nov. 28, 1984.
- Personal evangelism, church planting, leadership training, personal counseling, discipleship, music training, writing and publishing, public preaching, seminars and workshops, Internet ministry.
- National Bible School, a Brazil-wide leadership training school; the Mt. of Olives Christian Camp; Christian Corner child care program; Lar Cristão Christian Home.

### WEBSITES

- Missions ministry site, with reports and newsletters: <http://GoSpeak.org>
- English website for SJCampos and area churches: <http://churchofchrist.randal.fastmail.fm>
- BrotherhoodNews.com, Internet news for churches of Christ: <http://brotherhoodnews.com>
- [Forthright Magazine, ezine with daily articles on the Bible and faith: http://forthright.net](http://forthright.net)

### REFERENCES

- **Michael Hughes**, elder, Somers Ave. church of Christ, North Little Rock AR; Registered Nurse and Clinical Systems Analyst, Arkansas Children’s Hospital; Retired Army/Army National Guard, Rank Major. Cell phone: (501) 920-4109; email: [mhughes50@yahoo.com](mailto:mhughes50@yahoo.com)
- **Ron McElyea**, elder, Baker Heights church of Christ, Abilene TX; President & CEO, Western Surplus Lines Insurance Agency Inc. Phones: (325) 572-5166, work: (325) 695-9820; email: [macjdm1@aol.com](mailto:macjdm1@aol.com)
- **Greg Enlow**, elder, Iuka MS church of Christ. Lock and Dam Supervisor, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Phone: (662) 423-3594; email: [genlow@bellsouth.net](mailto:genlow@bellsouth.net)

# Country, Region and City Overview

## Country Overview

Brazil is the fifth largest country by geographical area, occupying nearly half of South America, the fifth most populous country, and the fourth most populous democracy in the world. It is one of the top 10 economies of the world.

Brazilians speak Portuguese, the sixth most spoken language in the world. The country has an estimated population of 200 million. The urban areas hold 86% of the population. The country has over 50 million Internet users.

The religion is predominantly Roman Catholic (nominal) 73.6%, with the Protestant growth now at 15.4%, and the Spiritist/Spiritualist at 1.3%, according to the 2000 census. Catholicism has lost about 20% of its adherents in the last 30 years, with most of the losses going to Evangelical Pentecostalism.



## Paraíba Valley / Eastern Paulista Cone



West of the state of Rio de Janeiro and south of the state of Minas Gerais, lies the nose-shaped area of São Paulo state called the Eastern Paulista Cone (EPC), or often referred to by its largest area, the Paraíba Valley. See area in figure marked “São José dos Campos.”

The state of São Paulo is located in the southeastern region of Brazil, the most industrialized and heavily populated. The area extending between the cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, of which the EPC is a part, is considered a megalopolis.

Little work by the churches of Christ has been done in the EPC. The first permanent effort was in SJC Campos in 1988. Over 38 municipalities make up the area, with a population of 3.3 million.

## City of São José dos Campos

The city of SJC is located on the Rodovia (Highway) Via Dutra, which connects the state capitals of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. It is about a 50-minute drive from São Paulo's International Airport in Guarulhos. The city is 90 km from São Paulo.

With a population of 610,000, it is the aeronautics and space center for the country, as well as a major technological and industrial center, with factories and businesses like General Motors, Johnson & Johnson and Panasonic. One of Petrobrás's largest oil refineries is also located here.



The city has a 98% literacy rate, higher than the national rate of 88.6%.

SJC has four shopping malls (called *shopping* in Portuguese), and an active downtown commercial district as well as the Satellite commercial area.

## Where does Project Reach, reach?

NOTE: This text was originally published June 17, 2009, at this link:

<http://randalmatheny.com/2009/06/17/where-does-reach-reach/>

In Portuguese, we call our ministry Projeto Alcance, that is, Project Reach. You may wonder, where does Project Reach, reach?

Within Brazil, these Portuguese-language writings and studies go north and south, from jungle to concrete. We are read by digressives and faithful brethren, appreciated by evangelists, missionaries, elders, preachers, teachers and deacons.

Catholics and Protestants get it. Pastors and laypersons read it. Ministerial groups and religious schools receive it.

We reach into state legislatures and the national Brazilian Congress, into the Senate. It goes into the Health Ministry, the Justice Ministry, federal and regional courts, federal universities and a federal bank.

Reach sends mail to the state-run post office. We provide the water of life to a state water and sewer company.

This ministry provides wisdom to information companies and a heavenly perspective to multinationals. Reach even goes to a dog kennel and the agricultural college of a state university.

All this in the Portuguese language. This doesn't include what we have to say in English.

We provide biblical facts to a state-government data-processing center. The government oil monopoly and a regional power company hear from us about the power of God. We tell a space institute how to reach God.

Reach reaches people on the Amazon River, in the interior of the country, in the big cities.

It reaches not only Brazil, but other parts of South America (even though they speak Spanish), the U.S., Europe, Africa and Japan.

It offers aid to USAID and provides value to investment firms. Reach provides a tour of the gospel to people in tourist agencies.

And we keep reaching out to people in the Portuguese language, asking God to widen the influence and impact of this ministry, for his kingdom, for his glory.

Pray with us to that end.

# The Church in Brazil

NOTE: This text is taken from the webpage: <http://churchofchrist.randal.fastmail.fm/#Brazil>

To attempt a description of the Brazil churches of Christ can be a dangerous task due to the size of the country and the lack of accurate data. Here are a few brushstrokes to paint a general picture.

## Churches

Congregations are often known as the church of Christ (*igreja de Cristo*) or merely as Christians. Quite a few have their own buildings, but probably the majority meet in public schools, rented facilities and private homes.

Brethren in Brazil have a high sense of brotherhood across the country. Regional and national gatherings, such as the Northeastern Christian Lectureship and the National Christian Workers Encounter, are well attended.

Meetings show more emotional fervor than American churches and typically last longer, especially in the Northeast. Short meditations of 10-15 minutes, based on Scripture, during the Lord's supper and the offering are typical.

Dozens of churches are now shepherded by elders, though one might conclude this sign of maturity has been slow in coming.

## Statistics

No church growth research has been done in Brazil in the last 10 years, so no one has any idea how many churches or Christians there are. A wild guess is that there are over 200 congregations. Churches are more concentrated in the Northeast and Southeast, especially the states of São Paulo and Pernambuco. A strong house-church movement, begun by Bryan and Jacqueline Bost, seems to be occurring in the city of São Paulo.

In the early years, Allen Dutton Sr., collected statistics on the churches. Reach Project published three lists of churches and church workers in the 1990s.

Michael Pruitt and Alcides Marques have gathered information on churches in the Northeast. F.H. Gates in Belo Horizonte has collected church addresses for contact through his television program, though the list includes progressive churches.

## Training

A Bible institute founded by the original 1961 mission team in São Paulo during the 1970s provided the first organized efforts at training preachers, evangelists and elders.

Today, several American-led or funded formal training programs operate in Belo Horizonte (National Bible School, Eddison Fowler, president), Campo Grande (*SerCris*, Álvaro Pestana, director), Curitiba and Recife (*Ebnesr*, Randy Short, director). These programs draw students from across the country. Other training is done within congregations or offered in city-wide or regional efforts.

In Campinas, São Paulo state, Allen Dutton Sr. began, and Allen Jr. continues, the Intensive Studies, a week-long annual program of studies, for preachers and evangelists. Held after the Easter weekend, when brethren come from around the country for the National Christian Workers Encounter, dozens of men and women stay for the Intensive Studies. Teachers are usually a mix of brethren invited from the U.S., American missionaries and Brazilian teachers.

A notable example was the Nucleus of Advanced Studies, based in São Paulo and directed by Sidney Leite, before his move to the U.S., in 2007.

In Nov. 2008, we began a regional training program which promises to draw from churches within our region and beyond, since there are presently no formal ongoing programs in the state of São Paulo. [A nucleus of the National Bible School was reactivated 2009 in the city of São Paulo.] The program meets the second Saturday afternoon of each month and will have principally Brazilian teachers from the state and perhaps beyond.

## Evangelism

Much evangelism in the church in Brazil is done through a variation of the storefront approach, in the School of the Bible (*Escola da Bíblia*). Radio has been widely used, and some television programs have provided sporadic efforts as well. The Internet has been harnessed in recent years. Publications such as Bible correspondence courses continue to be used.

Evangelistic campaigns with American college students has long been a staple of outreach efforts. Other groups, such as Let's Start Talking, have also been active.

## Missions

In the early years, the Brazil Breakthrough recruiting effort brought a number of mission teams to the country in the 80s and 90s. With an expanded role as Continent of Great Cities, the ministry has taken a definite turn to the progressive side and recruited teams which clash doctrinally with previous efforts.

Since the need for missionary personnel continues to be great, brethren should consider a means of recruiting new teams and workers that will adhere to biblical authority and preach the gospel brought by the first missionaries in Brazil

## Benevolence

Alma and Arlie Smith established an orphanage in Rio de Janeiro in the 1970s, I believe. It moved to São Paulo state in the 90s and is associated with Southern Christian Homes in Morrilton, Ark. Orphanages are being established in Belo Horizonte and Recife, the latter slated for operation in 2009. A child-care program was established by the Belo Jardim church in Pernambuco, but we have no recent news of their efforts.

## Youth

Local congregations often have strong programs for young people. The Christian camps in Embu Guaçu, outside of São Paulo, and near Belo Horizonte, conduct numerous sessions for youth by age.

The Christian camp in Olinda, Pernambuco, near Recife, is now defunct and the grounds will become the future children's home.

## Literature

A strong emphasis in published materials has blessed the Brazilian church since its beginning. Though resources are still limited, such efforts as Eddie Cloer's Truth for Today ministry do provide some materials to churches. Other materials are produced in Brazil such as the Reach Project (*Projeto Alcance*) and Christian Life Publisher (*Editores Vida Cristã*).

Two magazines serve the national church: Christian Woman (*Mulher Cristã*) and Edification (*Edificação*), a general Christian periodical similar to the Gospel Advocate.

## Doctrine

Twenty years ago missionary Allen Dutton Sr., observed with gratitude that the churches of Christ in Brazil enjoyed great unity. Since then, however, the churches have been disturbed by the International Church of Christ and the anti-institutional movement. More recently, progressive elements, especially those supported from the U.S., have made heavy inroads and teach their doctrines widely in the churches. Influence from evangelical churches sometimes blurs the distinctive plea among brethren.

## Prospects

The Brazilian church will have to deal in the future with doctrinal challenges from both right and left. As it assumes greater responsibility for outreach and training, it will have to discover how to conduct its efforts without the heavy investment of American funds that have been both a blessing and a curse.

Churches are burdened with heavy bureaucratic tasks, especially those which establish a legal presence in their communities. The house church movement avoids those distractions, allowing Christians to focus on evangelism, edification and benevolence and to devote their full financial capacity directly in these areas. It remains to be seen, however, how well these will cultivate a spirit of national brotherhood and integrate with other congregations.

Brazilians are deeply spiritual, creative within their environment, concerned for their countrymen, and passionate about the gospel. The blessings of God promise to make this country rich soil for a bountiful harvest, and we pray that harvest may manifest itself soon to reach the millions of people who await the light of salvation in Jesus Christ.

## Working Toward a Synergistic Missions Ministry

Synergism: the working together of two things (muscles or drugs, for example) to produce an effect greater than the sum of their individual effects.

- Two mules can pull more weight together than each can separately.
- The concept is not new, for Jesus said, “For where two or three are assembled in my name, I am there among them” (Mt 18:20 NET). In some sense, he is present in a more powerful or effective way than when his people are separated.
- “Two people are better than one, because they can reap more benefit from their labor” (Ec 4:9-12).
- We hope to implement this principle even further than we have thus far. We have made a good beginning; we want to drive ahead.
- Coordinating more closely some efforts among fellow saints whom we have known for many years, though all would maintain own support base and independence of efforts.
- Others have made similar efforts, such as J.C. Choate in *World Evangelism Foundation*, and J.C. Enlow in *21st Century Global Missions*.

### Partners in ministry

- **Barbara A. Oliver.** Multi-talented single missionary who worked with J.C. Choate’s World Evangelism ministry for 14 years and now with Robert and Michal Swain’s Gospel Opportunities Evangelism effort. Served as Associate Editor of *Forthright Magazine*, now Randal’s business associate in *Forthright Press*. Possible areas of cooperation:
  - BrotherhoodNews.com needs a part-time editor to guarantee a regular schedule of news reports.
  - Lar Cristão Children’s Home needs greater interface with American supporting churches and individuals and with Southern Christian Home which sends funds to the Brazilian home.
  - Publications. Already working in *Forthright Press*.
- **Michael E. and Brenda Brooks.** In progress: book-writing project with Mike on major Bible doctrines on popular level, both for American consumption as well as preaching students and Christian in Bangladesh and Nepal.
- **Roy Davison.** Long-term missionary in Belgium and owner of [oldpaths.com/org/net](http://oldpaths.com/org/net). Roy has invited me to assume his heavily visited site after he phases out his work.
- Others already work with us in individuals projects, such as Richard Mansel, managing editor of *Forthright Magazine*.

### Possible venues of cooperation

- Evangelistic efforts or coordinated ministries, such as radio program in areas where evangelism or church planting is taking place.
- Yearly retreat, consultation or fellowship for contact, encouragement and sharing of information and planning.
- Website featuring partners and their efforts.
- Joint fund-raising for specific projects or efforts.

## Letter from Jorge Santana dos Santos

**NOTE:** *The following document was sent to me by brother Jorge Santana dos Santos on April 17, 2009, translated by me and sent to a supporting church, as per his instructions. It is published here with his consent.*

Jorge and Paula, from the city of São Paulo, Brazil, to the brethren in Christ, grace and peace to all from our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dear Brethren,

We thank God for the cooperation that you have given in the gospel, maintaining the Matheny family here in Brazil.

We met Randal and his family (Vicki, Micah, Joel and Leila) in 1996, when we lived in São Jose dos Campos SP and were having Bible studies with Alvaro Pestana, a brother who served Christ in this city.

Paula and I have been married since 1995 and we have one son, Daniel, who will soon be 10 years old. Paula was converted to Christ in Nov. 1996; I in June 1997.

We met with the Christians in the SJCampos congregation until Jan. 2001, when we had to move to São Paulo, capital, about 100 km away, when I was transferred in my job.

We met with a church in São Paulo until about Aug. 2003, when we decided to go back meeting with the brethren in SJCampos because of the project that we had, to share the gospel with our families who lived in the Paraíba Valley region, and mainly in Guaratinguetá SP, about 90 km from SJCampos and 200 km from São Paulo.

During all this time that we met with the church in SJCampos (from 1996 to Jan. 2001 and from Aug. 2003 to the present), we have always had contact with Randal and his family, not only on Sundays, but also, at times, during the week. Such contact intensified beginning in 2003, because of the works for Christ which we took on in the Paraíba Valley region.

The Matheny family has served as an example to the congregation, through their love, faithfulness to Christ, dedication and courage in the proclamation of sound doctrine, in encouraging and motivating the brethren.

Randal and his family have been very useful to the work for Christ.

In SJCampos, Randal has taught in the Sunday Bible school, delivered sermons, besides leading in the other acts of worship to the Lord (songs, Lord's supper, offering and prayers).

Because of the small number of men in the SJCampos church (there are 7 of us, but only 5 have taught in the Bible school and preached), we work, generally, with a quarterly schedule of service. This year, besides leading in other acts of worship, Randal has taught in the Sunday Bible school from January to March. Also, last year, he was responsible for preaching the entire year.

Besides this, Randal has organized events pertinent to the congregation. Last year he organized the commemorative celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the SJCampos church, and took opportunity to invite several brethren who serve in other cities and the brethren Mike and Mary Hughes, from the USA.

Since Dec. 2008, he has coordinated the Advanced Studies course, held in his office every second Saturday of the month. Has already taught two classes and has invited other brethren from other locations to teach.

Vicki and Leila have taken turns, together with other sisters, in teaching the children on Sundays. Vicki also has taken turns, together with other sisters, in teaching classes in the ladies' meetings, which are held the first Saturday of each month in Taubaté and on the third Saturday of each month in SJCampos.

During the week, on Tuesday nights, Randal has taught in the home of brother Haroldo, in Taubaté. On Wednesdays, also at night, he holds Bible studies in his home to evangelize friends, neighbors and others.

Also, Randal has worked in editing *Edification* magazine, devoted to publishing articles written by brethren in Christ; in producing the weekly bulletin "Flight of Faith," in which the works and events of the SJCampos church and region (Eastern Paulista Cone) are published, as well as news, prayer requests, etc., besides maintaining up-to-date information published on the website [www.alcanceweb.com](http://www.alcanceweb.com), of interest to the brotherhood.

In Taubaté, about 45km from SJCampos, Randal began in 2004 worship services to God, held in the home of our sister Valeria, who passed away in Jan. 2008. Presently, we meet in a hotel conference room, rented with monies from the congregation's offerings. Randal has been responsible for the preaching every Sunday, counting basically on my help in the singing, communion, offerings and prayers. The Taubaté congregation has only five other brethren (Claudete, Rose, Haroldo, Humberto, Aline), with the latter couple having moved there in Feb. of this year.

Randal and Vicki also traveled from SJCampos to Taubaté weekly for about one year, when they studied with Odilio and Claudete, resulting in the conversion of Claudete.

Likewise, Randal and Vicki traveled weekly from SJCampos to Guaratinguetá, about 100km, during practically all of 2005, to hold studies with the then recently converted brethren, sr. Benedito, Wilson, Fatima, Bianca, and with others.

Randal and Vicki participate, respectively, in the Fiscal Counsel and the Board of Directors of the Lar Cristão Children's Home, which is maintained by several congregations for the care of abandoned children and adolescents. Randal also has given speeches and studies by invitation of congregations in São Paulo and other states in Brazil.

During the entire period that he has been in SJCampos, approximately 14 years, Randal has not received any financial help from the congregations in SJCampos, Taubaté or Guaratinguetá, whether in study materials or traveling expenses for trips, principally to Taubaté, made every Sunday.

Presently, the only financial help Randal receives is from the Taubaté church, in the amount of about R\$20 [about US\$9], to cover gasoline costs in his trip made to that city to hold studies on Tuesdays in the home of brother Haroldo.

Finally, we'd like to mention that we have often frequented the home of Randal and Vicki and we can affirm that they have lived in a simple manner, with a lifestyle very inferior to people with a social level lower than theirs.

Because of all this, we are grateful to God and to you, and we ask that on that great day God will take into account the great efforts you have made to keep the Matheny family in Brazil.

May the peace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ remain in you.

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