

# SCARBORO MISSIONS

## *DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE Solidarity visit to Pernambuco, Brazil*

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COVER: Accompanied by Danny Gillis, Development and Peace animator for the Atlantic province, D&P members Ann Flynn and Caroline Dow (New Brunswick), Sandy Gibbons (Newfoundland), Kathy Gillis and Kerrienne Ryan (Nova Scotia), and Brenda Chaput-Saltel (Manitoba) took part in a solidarity visit to D&P partners in Pernambuco state, northeast Brazil in August 2010. Here they gather with representatives of three communities who have fought to gain legal title to land, which has provided economic sustainability. See article on page 10.

Photo credits: Most of the photos appearing in this book were taken by members of the group who traveled to Pernambuco.

THANK YOU! Scarboro Missions magazine gives a special thanks to Danny Gillis for his collaboration in putting this issue together.

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By Kathy Gillis

Last August I traveled to Brazil to experience firsthand the struggles of the poor. Wearing two hats, one as editor of Scarboro Missions magazine and the other as a member of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, I took part in a Development and Peace solidarity visit to the state of Pernambuco in Brazil's northeast. We visited D&P partners who are helping people to better their lives.

Scarboro's connection to Brazil goes back to 1961 when the first Brazil mission team arrived in the town of Itacoatiara on the Amazon River. The new Canadian missionaries were soon to be influenced by the Second Vatican Council, Fr. Ron MacDonell writes, and later by the "preferential option for the poor" adopted by the Latin American Bishops at their 1968 conference in Medellin, Colombia. Fr. Omar Dixon recalls that along with pastoral duties, they began accompanying the people in their struggle for better health and education, for indigenous and land rights, for the preservation of the fish and the rainforests.

The missionaries supported the Base Christian Communities that were springing up all over Latin America. "As the people gathered in community to reflect on their life situations with the help of the light that comes from the Word of God, they discovered their dignity as human beings and sons and daughters of God." Scarboro's Bishop George Marskell, Bishop of Itacoatiara, wrote these words in 1996, just three years before he died of pancreatic cancer, ending

his 37 year journey with the people of Amazonas. "The strength that comes from unity," he said, "led to action in transforming the unjust structures of a society dominated by a privileged class. The Church, to be faithful to the gospel, made an option for the poor."

During our visit last August, it was apparent that the situation in Brazil is improving for many, yet millions still struggle for land and life. We were to meet some of these people and hear their stories.

Each morning we set out to the offices of a different Development and Peace partner organization. They gave generously of their time, presenting their social analysis, the issues they work on, their challenges and successes. After the office visits, one or two staff from the organization took us to meet the communities they were accompanying.

In the 12 days, we visited a youth communications centre with young people who are learning skills in photography, web design, and videography. They are using these skills to depict, for example, the amazing folk dances they are reviving as well as the harsh reality of crack cocaine use in the favelas (slums) where they live. They spoke to us about becoming instruments of change.

We visited new urban housing complexes for people who once lived in favelas. We met with rural families struggling for land and others who have gained land title after years of intimidation, hardship, and violence.

We were welcomed by communities of descendants of escaped slaves who are fighting against the con-

struction of a hydroelectric dam that would submerge their 300 year old villages.

Everywhere we visited, I noticed that the staff who accompanied us did not speak on behalf of the people. Rather the community members did all the talking. They knew the issues, they were informed, political, and active. They were some of the bravest people I had ever met.

I thought, too, about the courage of Bishop George Marskell (*Dom Jorge*), Dom Helder Câmara, Sr. Dorothy Stang who was martyred in 2005, and other bishops, priests, sisters, and lay people who have lived the "preferential option for the poor," standing firmly on the side of the Brazilian people and taking part in their struggle for life. "Yahweh has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken, to proclaim liberty to captives." (*Isaiah 61*) Today, the Brazilian Bishops Land Pastoral Commission, founded in 1975, continues to support communities in their struggle for land.

Development and Peace, founded by the Canadian Bishops in 1967, has also made an option for the poor, supporting partners who are on the front lines—in the favelas, fields, and rainforests, working to bring dignity and hope, working to build a world of justice and peace.

For me, this visit to Brazil was a journey of hope.∞

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By Danny Gillis

# Relating lovingly to the land

The Landless Movement in Brazil — the people's struggle for land and an alternative way of living

In the 1960s Scarboro missionaries arrived in the Amazon to find a great injustice being perpetrated on peasant farmers. Many subsistence farming families were living near the rivers on small plots of land their ancestors had cleared. Though they had tilled and worked this land for two or three generations, very few possessed the deed to their land. A deplorable registration system used by the local Land Title and Registration Office, as well as the corrupt officials who worked there, allowed greedy estate owners to exploit the situation. A few well-placed bribes could make it possible for tax receipts and other official documentation, even land titles, to disappear and for peasant families to be put off their land.

One of the Scarboro priests who championed the cause of the peasant farmers was Fr. George Marskell. Fr. Marskell saw a geopolitical link in the land theft that was occurring in the hinterland of the Amazon. He could see that Brazil's military government was intent on legitimizing the extensive land holdings of large landowners. He observed that the appropriation of Amazonia by cattle-raisers, agro-industrialists and mining enterprises was a process of corruption that would lead to the internationalization of Brazilian territory. And he said, "All this was carried out with the connivance of most of the democratic governments of the developed West."

When George Marskell was

appointed bishop of the prelate of Itacoatiara in 1978, he carried his concerns to the Brazilian Bishops Conference. He took a special interest in the newly established Land Pastoral Commission (CPT) set up by the bishops in 1975 as a response to the atrocious situation of the landless in Brazil. Even now, after years of struggle, 1.6% of the country's landowners control roughly half (47%) of the land on which crops can be grown. Since its inception, the CPT has played a decisive role in promoting the Brazilian farmers' access to land, water, and other rights. It was instrumental in founding what has become the largest and most important social movement in Latin America—the Movement of Landless Rural Workers, known as the MST.

Officially formed in 1985, the MST carries out a program of peaceful occupation of unused land. On these lands they help peasants construct houses, clinics, and schools for children and adults; they establish cooperative farms; they promote indigenous cultures and gender equality, and they promote a healthy and sustainable environment.

“ The MST's success lies in its ability to organize and educate. Members have not only managed to obtain land and therefore food security for their families, but also continue to develop a sustainable socio-economic model that offers an alternative to today's dominant model. ”

MST asserts that land occupations on unused land are rooted in the Brazilian Constitution, which says that land must have a "larger social function." The land occupation strategy used by the MST has won land title for more than 350,000 families living in 2,000 settlements. MST supports another 180,000 encamped families currently awaiting government recognition and title.

The MST's success lies in its ability to organize and educate. Members have not only managed to obtain land and therefore food security for their families, but also continue to develop a sustainable socio-economic model that offers an alternative to today's dominant model which puts profits before people.

## Development & Peace partners

Both the CPT and the MST are long-time partners of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace. Since their earliest days, the two groups have relied on Development and Peace for financial support. However financial support is only one aspect of the partnership. All three organizations are

bound together by their membership in a movement that struggles for the same goals while helping each other to further their understanding of the situation of the landless. In fact, all who support the cause to bring about beneficial change for the landless of Brazil are part of this dynamic move-



While visiting Normandy Farm and the Paolo Friere School of Formation, we were shown an organic garden called a mandala, which students learn about at the school. At the mandala's centre is a duck pond that supplies water and natural fertilizer to the rest of the garden. Beds of vegetables, herbal plants, and fruit trees encircle the pond.



ment. Certainly Scarboro Missions and the people who support Scarboro and Development and Peace can see themselves as part of this wider movement of justice for the landless.

In August of last year, our group of seven Development and Peace members had the opportunity to visit three communities each at very different stages in confronting the issue of landlessness. One was the Fazenda Jabuticaba (see page 22), supported by the MST. This community, living in makeshift tents and facing regular eviction, is in the most difficult stage

of their struggle. Desperately poor, they long for the day when their efforts will be rewarded. A second community (see page 10), supported by the CPT, had just won title to their land after years of incredible oppression. The struggle, the violence perpetrated upon them, and the victory they achieved are very fresh in their minds. They are now on the cusp of building a life of stability and abundance. The third community is a settlement called Assentamento Normandia (Normandy Farm).

Supported by the MST in their



The People's Assembly, held every two years, brings together the communities throughout the Prelacy of Itacoatiara. Scarborough missionary Bishop George Marskell (seated above) saw his pastoral mission as one of empowering the people, recognizing their dignity as sons and daughters of God. He said, "I hope to see the day when people have enough to eat, just salaries, better working conditions, title to their land; because this is what God wants—fullness of life for all people."

10 year struggle to obtain land title, Normandy Farm is a community of 50 families each living in a solidly built house with a backyard cistern to store their water, with livestock, thriving communal gardens, and a school for their children. The community has access to health care and receives twice-a-week water delivery from the local municipality.

In 1998 the MST set up a model farm and an adult formation school in the community. Named the Paolo Freire School of Formation after one of the movement's icons, each year the school accepts peasants from various organizations and other MST settlements into a program of leadership formation. The three-year program equips the students with practical skills such as animal husbandry, gardening (such as the mandala shown on page 5), building cisterns, the use of herbal medicines, and so on. It also equips them with

leadership skills and an understanding of the ethos of the movement of which they are an integral part. They spend part of each year at the school and the remainder of the year at their farms and communities. At the end of three years, after a graduation ceremony and the going-away gift of a pig, the students are expected to go and serve their community as leaders and builders. Individuals come to see themselves as being at the service of their community and of the movement.

In 1991 Bishop Marskell (known as Dom Jorge by the people of his diocese), travelled to Sweden to accept a prestigious award on behalf of the CPT. That year the Right Livelihood Award, popularly known as the Alternative Nobel Prize, was awarded jointly to the CPT and the MST. The CPT "for their dedicated campaigning for social justice and the observance of human rights for small

### The struggle for land

On the first day of May 1993, 179 families occupied the Normandy Farm on the outskirts of the city of Caruaru. The occupation became a symbol of resistance and of the struggle for land in the state of Pernambuco. The families were evicted from the land four times, each eviction followed by a re-occupation. On April 17, 1996, 14 members of the community began a hunger strike, vowing to starve themselves if the land was not given to the community as their own. The strike received widespread publicity and 11 days later victory was achieved with a promise by the government to provide land for the 179 families, some on Normandy Farm and some in other areas of the state. Today 41 families live at Normandy Farm. The old manor house on top of the highest hill in the area has been transformed into the Paolo Freire Formation Centre, named in homage to the great Pernambucano popular educator.

farmers and the landless in Brazil," and the MST "for winning land for landless families and helping them to farm it sustainably."

In his acceptance speech, Dom Jorge said, "we are witnesses to our people's creativity in the search for alternatives and their wanting to relate lovingly, yes lovingly with the land. Because for them land is not a piece of merchandise but rather a place and a condition of life. We know that by attaining land our people will gain citizenship and the possibility of an alternative way of living in an alternative society."∞

*Danny Gillis is the Development and Peace regional animator for the Atlantic provinces. He is a former Scarborough lay missionary who spent four years in the Philippines among the Manobo tribal peoples. He and his wife Kathy live in Antigonish, Nova Scotia.*



By Fr. Ron MacDonell, S.F.M.

In October 1961, at St. Michael's Cathedral in Toronto, five young Canadian priests were missioned to the Brazilian Amazon. They were Scarborough priests Michael O'Kane, Vincent Daniels, Douglas MacKinnon, Paul McHugh and George Marskell. The latter two would eventually become the first two bishops of the Prelacy of Itacoatiara, a name meaning "Painted Rock" in the Tupi language. The term "Prelacy" refers to a new church region assigned to a religious congregation until it is sufficiently autonomous (i.e. with local clergy) to merit the status of "Diocese."

The newly-formed Prelacy was 274 kilometres east of Manaus, the jungle's main city. The neophyte missionaries travelled by boat down the Amazon River to their new mission. At the time, a rough road was being hacked out through rainforest. Years later, the priests would recount how early attempts by jeep could take up to 24 hours, the tropical rains having turned the road into deep, muddy ruts, and how they would spend the night on the road at the mercy of mosquitoes. Now, the trip is a fast four hour drive on paved road through the jungle curves and stretches.

Bishop McHugh, ordained as bishop of the prelacy in 1965, attended the final sessions of the Second Vatican Council. The Council's emphasis on the church as the "People of God," and the Latin American bishops' "preferential option for the poor" at Medellin in

# Mission to Painted Rock

50 years of Scarborough Missions' presence in the Amazon  
1961-2011



The church of Itacoatiara today. The first Scarborough mission team to Brazil arrived here in 1961 to walk with the people.

1968, would determine a shift in the new missionaries' approach. They broadened their mainly sacramental duties to include social concerns, rooted in the movement of base Christian communities (BCCs). To follow Jesus is not only to strive to live a holy personal and charitable life, it means also to work for justice, to look at the social needs of the people in the areas of land, health, education, employment, and cul-

ture and to respond to these needs. During Brazil's brutal military dictatorship (1964-1985), these base Christian communities were often the only places where people could meet in relative freedom; political parties, workers' unions, and all popular organization were outlawed, and many who spoke against injustices were arrested, tortured, executed, or exiled.

Over the years, other priests,

“ The Second Vatican Council’s emphasis on the church as the “People of God,” and the Latin American bishops’ “preferential option for the poor” at Medellin, Colombia, in 1968, would determine a shift in the new missionaries’ approach. ”

seminarians, and lay people from Scarboro would follow this missio-logical approach in Brazil. They were joined by priests and lay missionaries from a sister church, the Archdiocese of São Paulo. Pastoral commissions were created at the national level and organized in Itacoatiara as well, by missionaries and lay volunteers. The catechetical pastoral commission provided a unified approach to the religious formation of children, youth, and adults. The children’s pastoral commission taught young mothers about infant care and nutrition. The pastoral commission for minors lured adolescents away from street life though alternative skills programs. The women’s pastoral commission

created spaces for women to meet and talk about their concerns, often focusing on physical and sexual abuse. The Formation Centre of the Prelacy of Itacoatiara (CENTREPI) was founded, a simple structure overlooking the Amazon River where groups could meet. Celebrations of the Eucharist included songs and symbols which spoke of the people’s struggles, lamenting their pain and celebrating their victories.

Itacoatiara’s second bishop, George Marskell, was appointed national vice-president of the church’s Land Pastoral Commission (CPT). The CPT worked at accompanying landless groups and fought for better land distribution. “We

already have land in heaven, we want land on earth.” In the Amazon, that meant defending not just land but water and fishing rights for small communities, protecting their lakes and small rivers from over-fishing by commercial trawlers and by community members themselves.

Initially, Prelacy decisions were made by the bishop and his fellow priests. Gradually, this forum expanded to include sisters and lay representatives. Under Bishop Marskell’s leadership, a Prelacy council was organized, consisting of all missionaries (priests, sisters, lay agents) and a number of representatives from the communities. This council met three times a year to discuss Prelacy concerns and to carry out planning. Every two years, a major event was held: the Assembly of the People of God. Each of the 250 base Christian communities sent one representative to voice concerns, to celebrate victories, to debate and decide upon pastoral priorities. The last People’s Assembly was held in 1998, a month before Bishop Marskell’s premature death.

Bishop Marskell understood that any Christian social action must be centred on Jesus and rooted in prayer. In 1989, the Benedictine Sisters were invited to found the Monastery of Living Water, 10 kilometres outside Itacoatiara. Here many individuals and groups come to pray, to drink in the silence of the jungle, and to find strength in Jesus. “...Anyone who drinks the water that I shall give will never be thirsty again: the water that



The children’s lending library at the Dom Jorge Marskell Association. Top right: Dona Sylvia Aranha de Oliveira, president of the Association, with Fr. Ron MacDonell. Dona Sylvia has worked in the Prelacy of Itacoatiara for the last 40 years as a pastoral agent.

**Dom Jorge Marskell Association**

Since 2001, volunteers aim to continue social outreach in the spirit of Scarboro missionary Bishop George Marskell (1935-1998) through a children’s lending library, music classes (flute, choral, and guitar), legal aid for poor people provided by volunteer lawyers, and other community programs. Donations can be made to the Association through Scarboro Missions. On June 5, 1998, Bishop George said to the People’s Assembly of the Prelacy of Itacoatiara: “I know that all of you believe with me that our church is, and tends to be, more and more participative, more and more a church of solidarity. Only so can we become a church with the face of Jesus.” These words are printed on his burial stone.

I give will turn into a spring inside them, welling up to eternal life” (John 4.14).

Only one Scarboro missionary remains in the Prelacy of Itacoatiara: Fr. Omar Dixon, a native of Dingwall, Cape Breton. Parish priest downriver in Itapiranga for the last 26 years, and soon to turn 70, he has many stories to tell about his missionary life, particularly about the years he lived on a Prelacy boat upriver. Stories, indeed, that all 23 of us Scarboro missionaries could tell: tales of storms and boat mishaps, illnesses and recoveries, confrontations with corrupt authorities, but also tales of great joy, of friendship with the people, of finding Christ in this Amazonian church. “The desert is fertile” wrote

the prophet Archbishop Dom Helder Câmara. So, too, is the jungle, as witnessed by Scarboro missionaries—fertile with love of God and thirst for justice.∞

Fr. Ron MacDonell worked in the Prelacy of Itacoatiara from 1986-1992 as parish priest of Urucará and São Sebastião do Uatumã. Currently he lives in Boa Vista, in the state of Roraima, and serves as linguistic resource person for CIMI (the Missionary Indigenist Council), accompanying indigenous groups in Amazonas and Roraima in language revitalization work.

Scarboro Missions



**Scarboro missionary appointments to the Prelacy of Itacoatiara, Brazil**

1961	Vincent Daniel Douglas MacKinnon George Marskell Paul McHugh Michael O’Kane
1963	Timothy Ryan William Smith
1966	Lewis Hewer
1964	Justin MacInnis Raymond O’Toole
1968	Omar Dixon Hubert Den Tandt Bryan Manning
1970	Terence O’Sullivan Malcolm Burke Chester Gabriel
1974	Alan King
1977	Gregory Morrison
1980	Marlene Bourdeau
1986	Ronald MacDonell
1988	Timothy Charrette
1993	Mark Donagher
1995	Paul McGuire Karen Van Loon
2003	Beverley Trach

Scarboro Missions



For more than 40 years, Fr. Omar Dixon has been present in the Amazon in the Prelacy of Itacoatiara, Brazil. He is pastor of the riverside community of Itapiranga. He says, “the people in the Base Christian Communities, with their lay leaders, organize the liturgies and the pastorals (child, family, youth, catechetics, and so on) accompanied by a pastoral agent. The Prelacy currently has six Brazilian priests, four Guadalupe missionaries (Mexico), and one Scarboro priest.” Above, Fr. Omar celebrates mass with the community of Santa Maria-Madrubá.

# Earth, water, seeds, life!

By Kathy Gillis

**M**ile after mile, nothing but sugarcane fields fill the windows of our van. This area was once lush forest. Today less than three percent of the Atlantic forest remains from when this coastal region of Brazil was colonized in the 1500s. The small remaining islands of forest, called the Atlantic Forest Zone, is preserved amidst a “green desert” of sugarcane.

Here, more than 90 percent of the cane is cut by hand. One “cold meal” worker can cut five to six tons of cane a day and earn 10 Reais a ton (a little less than CDN\$6). These seasonal workers come here from other parts of the Northeast to earn money to support their wife and children back home. The cut cane is taken to the mills in trucks and separated for either ethanol or sugar production, depending on market supply and demand.

About 70 percent of the people of this area are directly connected to the sugarcane industry. With the monoculture of sugarcane, plantation owners have evicted many families and communities so as to obtain more land to grow even more cane. The people want land to grow food crops for their own consumption and to sell in nearby villages.

We are on our way to meet members of three of these communities who have obtained legal entitlement to land after years of struggle. Accompanied by a representative

from the Brazilian Bishops’ Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), we arrive at the Chico Mendes community centre named after the well-known leader of the movement to save the Amazon rainforest. Chico Mendes was martyred in 1988.

**T**he poster on the wall of the Centre reads, “What future do you prefer, biodiversity or a green desert?” Members of the community association welcome us and tell us that our visit is “an exchange of experience.” Laid out in a circle on the floor are items representing the people’s life and livelihood, including seeds, water, earth, the foods that they grow—all surrounded by pictures of their struggle for land. The letters “CPT” are written in corn and beans.

“Earth, water, seeds, life!” the young man says as he moves around the room with a small branch and a bowl of water, lightly sprinkling everyone in blessing. A young woman reads Psalm 61: “...For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe...” We are participating in a *mística*, a characteristic of the Landless Movement in which the people articulate their struggles and reality, their empowerment, love, and solidarity through a celebration of the Word of God.

The community association represents three settlements of 160 families, all concentrated in one area

with the land belonging to all. Each family has its own house with six to eight hectares for growing a variety of crops. The people have been in this region for generations and many had worked in the cane fields. In March 1997, after they were evicted from their homes by the plantation owners, they decided to come together to fight for their right to land. The CPT have accompanied these communities since they started preparing their action.

Louisa (inset) begins to tell us their story. There were many moments of adversity and resistance since the action began. After eviction, the people set up a roadside camp, going to the fields each day so that they could continue to plant and tend their crops. They numbered nearly 200 with two or three families in each tent. At night their sleep was disturbed with the vibration of the cars and plantation trucks going past. Sometimes they awoke to gunshots fired by militia hired by the sugar mills to frighten them. These armed thugs, carrying machine guns, chased the people. The police came too, supported by the sugar barons and staying at their big estates.

“Everything we had done to achieve economic sustainability, they came to destroy with the support of the state,” Louisa says. Men, women, and children were beaten, their crops



**Photos above and right:** After eviction by the sugar plantation owners, the people were intimidated and abused in their struggle for land, but they were victorious. Without land, they would have been forced to the cities where there is no work, and to live in dangerous slums. Today, the three communities live in one area, sharing the land in common, with each family in their own home and able to support themselves.



destroyed, the river water poisoned, and sand put in the wells. The people no longer had access to the river to wash their clothes.

Through it all they continued the resistance. “One thing they could not destroy,” she says, “was our dignity.”

They went to Brasília, the capital, to fight through legal means with a lawyer from the CPT. They also had support from areas of civil society and from the international community with people coming from other countries to stand with them in solidarity. Many priests supported them. At this point in Louisa’s story, others in the room call out the names of priests. Dom Pedro Casaldáliga and other bishops came, she says. “It was important to have the priests and bishops with us as this reconfirmed the faith of every man, woman, and child in the community.”

It was a long legal battle with seemingly hopeless moments, but their lawyer told them, “If you can see a light at the end of the tunnel, I will continue to fight for you.”

Today, Louisa’s daughter and many others still suffer from psychological and health problems from the trauma of the experience and from ingesting the poisoned water and

food.

Others in the room share their memories of the intimidation and struggle, speaking in turn. And then Louisa says, “We have been talking about the bad parts.” She wants to close

on a memory of hope and tells us about an action by the women on May 1, 2003. In the face of the destruction of their crops and with the men threatened with beatings if they went back to their fields, the women decided that they would replant the crops collectively, doing all the field and planting work. Soon the police and the aggressors arrived and told the women that they had 10 minutes to leave.

“We resisted the whole day,” Louisa says. “More and more women arrived, and then the men and children, and the CPT came with other groups by the busload. The police came on horses and with dogs, but they could not stop the action.” The



people were victorious.

At the end of our visit and after sharing in a meal from the bounty of their land, I am given the task of thanking the people. My voice breaks from the impact of their courage and strength in the face of real persecution, struggling for a piece of land to live on that would provide for their needs. I promise them that we will not forget them and will tell others about them. This is their story.∞

# A solidarity visit to Pernambuco, Brazil



Our meeting at the school in the Sonnote Quilombo community near the town of Santa Maria da Boa Vista.  
L-R: Marta and Rose (standing) and Nivea (seated), who are working with the Movement of Peoples Affected by Dams, community elder Aubino, Danny, Sandy, Caroline, and Tico who represents EQUIP. Front row: Kathy, Brenda, Ann, and Kerriane.



CANADIAN CATHOLIC ORGANIZATION FOR  
**Development  
and Peace**



**“When we dream alone it is only a dream. When we dream with others, it is the beginning of reality.”**

*Dom Helder Câmara (1909-1999),  
Archbishop of Recife and Olinda,  
recalling a Brazilian proverb*



## PERNAMBUCO STATE



**Population:** 8,745,000.

**The Landless:** Approximately 28,000 landless families are camped in makeshift black canvas houses. There are 130,000 agricultural workers demanding the right to land and citizenship. Major land holdings are owned by a dozen families.

**Capital city:** Recife, the fourth-largest metropolitan area in Brazil with 4,136,506 inhabitants. The city of Olinda (part of Recife's metro area) is a UNESCO Heritage site and the first cultural capital of Brazil. It hosts one of the country's three biggest carnivals. Pernambuco's culture and architecture is influenced by its Portuguese colonizers and also by the Dutch who occupied the state from 1630 to 1654.

**Land Mass:** 98,311 sq. km.

**Geography:** Pernambuco is made up of three distinct geographical zones:

- The hot, humid, fertile Atlantic Forest zone, formerly covered by rainforest. Less than 3 percent remains, having been cleared primarily to grow sugarcane.
- The agreste, a high altitude plateau with a temperate, drier climate.
- The sertão, a semi-arid swath of land that covers 647,500 sq km of the north-east of Brazil. The landscape of the sertão is characterized by thorny scrub forest. It is the most populated semi-arid region in the world. The San Francisco River forms part of the southern border of Pernambuco and is an important factor in the livelihood and culture of the sertão.



Left: The view from Olinda (“Oh Beautiful”), looking across the bay to the city of Recife, capital of Pernambuco State.  
Above: Market scene.  
Right: Some of our group in Recife.





By Sandy Gibbons

# The river is our Father

A hydro dam mega-project planned for the San Francisco River threatens the Quilombola culture, heritage, and way of life

What is the lens through which you look? The reality of the Quilombo peoples in northeastern Brazil was formed centuries ago when their ancestors were brought here as slaves to work the sugarcane plantations of Pernambuco State. From the mid 1500s until 1888, when slavery was abolished in Brazil, the people hid in fear from their slave driving masters. Today the Quilombola are the descendants of these runaway slaves. Their reality was conceived in their past where the memory of their history extends beyond these bounds to East and West Africa.

My reality extends from Ireland from whence my ancestors seven generations back, now some 300 years ago, set out for the island of Newfoundland to find a new life free from the harshness of landlessness.

When I visited Brazil last August as a member of Development and Peace, all my knowledge of Brazil and its people, previous to our exposure trip, was gathered from the Internet, D&P literature, and my own bias from previous education. What was I to find on my journey to Brazil?

Part of our trip was a visit to the Quilombo settlements. We drove for 10 hours to the city of Santa Maria da Boa Vista located in the state of Pernambuco along the San Francisco River. We were accompanied by representatives of MAB (Movement of People Affected by Dams), a Development and Peace partner. Within a 30 minute drive from this

city, three Quilombo communities, Sonnote, Inhanum and Cupira, with between 500 to 760 inhabitants, live on the land settled by their ancestors. Their land is semi arid with sandy rocky soil and low growth trees and shrubs. The San Francisco River, which provided refuge to their ancestors, has nourished and allowed the culture of the Quilombo peoples to grow and be established along its waters. There is a similarity to their bounty and that of my Canadian province. How can we be sustained and nourished from the bounds of the earth to which we become attached?

Today, the Quilombo culture, land, and livelihood are under threat. The national and state governments together with private companies are

pushing for greater economic growth with a plan to build two hydroelectric dams on the San Francisco River. This plan will have major adverse effects on the Quilombolas. That plan proposes to submerge their lands and destroy their homes, communities, fishing grounds, and the farmlands where they grow their food and herd their animals. There will be a complete destruction of their way of life including the culture and heritage that is their unique development. Their ancestors found these lands many centuries ago and the people we met are resolved that their lands will not be sold, destroyed, or taken for the benefit of the materially powerful.

Bookmarked between economic development and these communities



Albertina, her brother Aubino (centre), and João lead our procession to the shrine to Our Lady on the hilltop overlooking the majestic San Francisco River. A planned hydro dam mega project will submerge the lands where they have lived for 300 years.



At a cost of three billion dollars, 620 kilometres of canals are being built to divert water from the San Francisco River. The MAB, CPT, and other groups claim that the real purpose of the canals is to expand sugarcane production and shrimp farming. The poor will see no benefit from the mega project.



Young people of the community packed the school room where we met and listened attentively as their teacher and others spoke to us about the proposed hydro dam.

is a large wealth disparity between the rich of Brazil—where 1.6% of the population control 47% of the land—and the poor who have very little material power. In this country there is a disconnect between the desires of the rich and the needs of the poor. Past experience in Brazil has shown that when hydroelectric dams are built, the people are forcibly evicted and not properly compensated for their lands. Ironically the dams provide little benefit for the people affected. This fact is clear to the Quilombo people who are against this mega project and ask the question, "Development for whom and for what?"

The Quilombo people have been nourished by this arid earth and bountiful San Francisco River which form the edges of their existence. They have an intrinsic link to the

culture, heritage, and earth that they have formed as home. They have established the sacredness of this place which captures their energy that forms their internal power. This is their divine space that nourishes and forms their essence.

Aubino, a community elder, accompanied us throughout our visit (see photo facing page). When he spoke, people listened and he was given a place of honour at our gatherings. It was through his words that wisdom flourished. Our realities became linked when in a humble voice he stated, "We will not let them destroy the River that is our Father." His words spoke of a blend of the spirituality of their African ancestors with their Christian faith. We continue to uncover riches where least expected. There is a connection between humanity, the earth, our Creator, and

the unfolding divine.

The lens through which I now see is multi-layered. My knowledge is no longer veiled but broadened to encompass other realities. My consciousness is now etched with the scenes and voices of a Brazilian reality that was previously unknown to me. I now know a little more of what Development and Peace means and the multi-layered realities that it represents, an expression that I would offer as "realitization."∞

*Sandy Gibbons, an architect living in Newfoundland, has chaired the St. Pius X parish Development and Peace committee for the past 16 years and the St. John's Diocesan Council for the past two years. In 2006, he participated in a national D&P delegation to the World Water Forum in Mexico City.*



# A gift of burnt corn

Witnessing God's love and presence among the most vulnerable people

By Brenda Chaput-Saltel

I am standing on the side of the road. It is 7:00 a.m. The early heat of the Brazilian sun is coursing over my eyelids. It compares to the mid-afternoon Canadian prairie sunshine that I know so well.

As I stand there, eyes closed, on the sidewalk outside the *pousada* (hotel), I wonder, How is it that a small town prairie girl from Manitoba finds herself in Recife, Brazil, on this exact space, at this precise moment?

My moment of surreal contemplation closes as I am snapped back to reality by a warm, furry sensation on the bare skin of my knee. I smile, already knowing the source, and

open my eyes. At my feet is a new friend—a pitiful, big-eyed dog, boney and street wise, his fur matted. He in no way resembles the fatty farm animals I am used to seeing back home. He is an appalling affair who has taken a liking to me and has been following me for several days on my morning run along the Brazilian coast. My run has become a time of reflection on recent days and anticipation for the day yet to come.

This morning, the agenda for the day is put forward immediately. As I cross the street, dog in tow, I see two people still asleep in the overhang of a building. They are lying on strips of cardboard, their worn, bare feet

protruding toward me. This sight is not usual or acceptable to my naive Canadian eyes, but here in Brazil, it's part of the sad reality.

My morning run has preceded many of these kinds of days. I have seen families living in shacks, in tents, or homeless. I have seen mothers raising their children with little food, with no shoes, without clean water. The impact of this kind of firsthand witnessing to the injustices that are suffered by so many is difficult to describe. It is the gut wrenching, heart tightening feeling that comes from sharing, even if only for a brief moment, in their suffering.

This feeling was never as greatly



After our meeting with the community of Fazenda Jabuticaba, we were offered a simple meal of roasted corn on the cob. One hundred families live beneath the black canvas tents, but that day most were away at market.



Pausing from their day's work, the people gather in their community centre to welcome us and share stories of their struggle for land.



Eating a snack of dry manioc flour.

defined as the day I was brought, along with my companions, deep into the wilderness, in the closed back of a dirty old truck, along a maze of muddy trails, to find a community of landless peasants. We were welcomed into their homes, nothing more than stick tents covered in black garbage bag plastic. We were introduced to their most precious treasures—their children; barefooted little creatures eating dry manioc flour out of dented tin cups; children who were born into these conditions and who have never known any life apart from this. We were welcomed wholeheartedly. The peasants shared their stories of survival. They gifted us.

Each of us received a portion of their life-sustaining crop—a single, dry, fire burnt cob of corn.

These people have so little. Such startling contrast to what normal is in my world, in my nation of accumulation, a nation that has too much and that continues to take more.

On that day, I walked through the landless community with a post-car accident feeling. I felt like I was there, but not really present. "Breathe," I reminded myself. "Breathe."

And in witnessing all these instances of heartbreaking, absolute poverty, I saw something else that I did not expect. I saw a suffering people's energy, their hopefulness and their joy, their community spirit and their bond to one another. I saw their faith, the faith of people living in such despair and oppression. But how? I really believe that what I was witnessing was God's love alive, God's presence among His most precious and vulnerable people. God does not abandon His children in their crisis. He wraps them in a shroud of His love and carries them through their trials. And for a moment, I stepped into that shroud. I could feel it.

All of this, the despair, the struggle, the suffering, the terrible need, the hope, the courage, the faith and the love, stirs something within. It

has encouraged me to live my life, to teach my children and to remind my neighbour to take less and to give more, to have less and to feel more. It has reminded me to be aware of others, to be conscious of sharing the world's resources, to take only what I truly need, and to treat each person with dignity.

I have been reminded that we are but one single, united family under God, all deserving and all equal. Mother Theresa once said, "Give until it hurts...and then, give even more." If we all tried harder to live by these principles, how much better off would the entire world be? Maybe if we had less, we would feel more? Maybe.

I have returned to my home with renewed conviction, with a purpose. These amazing Brazilian people have planted within me seeds of hopeful possibilities. I will nurture what they have placed in me, and this rural small town prairie girl will be forever changed because of the gift of burnt corn.∞

*Brenda Chaput-Saltel is a busy mother of four boys. She has worked for 15 years with Catholic youth programs in Manitoba, and has recently taken the position of Manitoba Regional Animator for Development and Peace.*



By Kerrianne Ryan

# JUSTICE AND EQUALITY *for all*

We have all heard the phrase “Do as I say not as I do.” It seems hypocritical, but it is difficult at times to practice what you preach. Not only is this true of individuals, but it seems to me that perhaps our society (North American/Western/“Developed”) often falls into this same hypocrisy. In speaking to some members of Brazil’s growing middle class, they have the distinct feeling that we are trying to tell them what to do while we do not follow this advice ourselves. Some even feel that we may be trying to slow down their development because we fear they will overtake our position. We in Canada must strive to improve our practices for the global good if we are to expect other countries to do so, and if we expect them to accept our efforts to promote global sustainability and justice for the poor.

As a first time visitor to a nation of the global South, I had varying and conflicting expectations. Knowing Brazil to be a major player in the global market, I wondered at its need for global assistance to deal with extensive poverty. Spending time in the northeastern state of Pernambuco, it is abundantly evident that there is massive inequality. I can only imagine the level of inequality 25 years ago when the country was just emerging from a dictatorship that promoted the gap between the rich and the poor. Having been born and lived in Canada all my 26 years. I have no concept of the measures required to bring a society to a seemingly stable and relatively equitable

economic position. I have grown up being taught not to repeat the mistakes of the past, always aware of how much of a mess successive generations continue to make through thoughtless exploitation of human and natural resources. Yet, here in Canada I have lived a comfortable life, arguably because of a lot of these so-called “mistakes.”

On my travels and encounters in Pernambuco, I noted many similarities with my typical North American society. There were people jogging along the boardwalk in the mornings and playing games on the beach. I saw business types holding dinner meetings in sushi restaurants. I saw shopping malls, high rise buildings, public transit waiting in rush hour traffic. And I attended a youth orchestra concert at the church near our hotel. I also encountered extreme poverty. I learned of many struggles by indigenous peoples and the poor over land, resources, and services. I was appalled to hear of the inequality within the education system, lack of access to medical care, and the struggle for land rights.

At the same time, I was encouraged to hear of the positive actions by the government including monetary education incentives for fam-

ilies to help keep children in school, investment in public housing, and movement toward land reform legislation, with some strong and innovative initiatives by many organizations including several of our Development and Peace partners. Over and over, I was involved in discussions about how development could and should be happening in a more sustainable way.

Canada is built on a model of exploiting our natural resources to build our economy, a practice that continues today. We live in a country where we use vast amounts of oil, natural gas and/or coal simply to heat our houses. While mistakes were made in the past, the question for Canada, for Brazil, and for the world, is how do we continue the kind of development today that will create a just society for all and protect all life on the planet?

As a young person, I am supposed to be hopeful for the future. Certainly, I see many initiatives for sustainable development and global cooperation. At universities all over the country, environmental studies and sustainability programs are being developed and implemented. The news frequently has stories about researchers from a variety of countries work-

“The question for Canada, for Brazil, and for the world, is how do we continue the kind of development today that will create a just society for all and protect all life on the planet?”



After our meeting, Kerrianne presents a gift to Fr. Herminio Canova, head of the northeast region’s Pastoral Land Commission (CPT) for the National Conference of Brazilian Catholic Bishops. At left is Junior who works for the CPT and was our guide during our visit to the Chico Mendes settlements. On the right is our hard working translator, Leo, wearing a T-shirt bearing the flag of Pernambuco. Leo accompanied our group throughout the 14 day trip.

Fr. Canova spoke to us about the issues concerning the landless poor. There is a clear choice for Brazil to make, he said. The country can either support an agricultural model that has people working their own plots of land, or it can choose to have no people in the fields. The option that will chase people from the land and into urban ghettos is the agribusiness model, producing vast quantities of a very few species of crops. Fr. Canova compares the people who work in this model to *bagasse*—the left-over pulp that remains after all the juice has been extracted from the sugarcane. The workers are simply a by-product whose life has been sucked out of them. The model that the CPT promotes is based on community life, collective ownership, respect for the land, diversity of crops and appropriate technology. “A new concept of land is needed,” Fr. Canova says. “Land and culture must come together. From their coming together will emerge traditions, customs, models of production and consumption, and an integrated vision of nature.”

ing together to solve environmental and social problems. Along with the challenges that come with globalization, there is the recognition that we cannot ignore the struggles of other nations.

At the same time I can empathize with the Brazilian government’s position of trying to advance their country within the global community and understand how achieving this task in a short time is certainly easier to do in a less sustainable and thoughtful manner. I also see amazing groups present in places like Brazil fighting to right the wrongs of their country’s history and trying to hold their governments accountable to sustainability so as to bring about a better life for all. These groups are working to create a just society through cooper-

ation, integration and innovation. They are an example to us.

We, as Canadians, must not only be good at charity, but also at transformational change. We must contemplate how we can contribute to a positive global society both in what we can do as individuals, which is more than we think, and in what we can stop doing as individuals in order to promote justice and equality for all.∞

*Kerrianne Ryan is a PhD student studying Neurobiology at Dalhousie University, Halifax. She is involved locally in Development and Peace and plans to extend her involvement within the international aid community based in part on her experience in Brazil.*



## SHARE LENT 2011

Building a world of justice: This is the vision that has sustained Development and Peace for almost 45 years. Fidelity to it has meant walking with partners in the Global South as they work to overcome poverty and systemic injustice, often in the face of great difficulty...

As Caritas Canada, Development and Peace has the capacity to raise funds and to respond immediately with relief assistance to those hit hard by natural disasters...

Development and Peace received almost \$20 million in donations after the Haiti earthquake and is continuing to use those funds to support the efforts of their Haitian partners, including Caritas Haiti, in the long term struggle to recover and to rebuild their communities.

Christ set for us the ultimate example of love, charity, compassion, and justice. In November 2010, Pope Benedict said that lay people, as “free and responsible citizens,” are invested with “the immediate task of working for a just social order.”

This Lent, I invite you to take to heart the example set by Christ and the words of Pope Benedict by giving generously to Share Lent. You are warmly invited to join the community of Development and Peace members and partners in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East as they strive to build a world of justice, a world where all live in dignity and peace.

*From a letter written by Msgr. Pierre Morissette, President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, in the D&P Share Lent Magazine 2011.*

For more information and to order material for a Share Lent campaign in your parish visit [www.devp.org](http://www.devp.org) and go to “Share Lent Campaign - Materials”, or telephone 1-800-494-1401.

# The missing favela

By Danny Gillis

One morning during our early days in Recife we drove downtown to meet the Development and Peace partner FASE (FAHzy). En route, Leo, our guide, intended to show us a notorious slum area that had existed for 20 years less than a mile from our hotel. When we got to the area, Leo was shocked to see that the shantytown had disappeared. All we could see was a park. “The favela,” he said, still looking around, “it was here, right here, just two months ago.”

Coincidentally, on this day, we would visit an organization that planned to tell us what happened to the missing favela.

Favelas are squalid urban slums where 6.5 million Brazilians live a daily existence fraught with poverty and danger. It is an existence that offers few glimpses of opportunity. However, six years before, such an opportunity presented itself. United Nations official Miloon Kothari, Special Rapporteur on Housing, came to Recife to observe and investigate the conditions of the city’s favelas. His visit to the favela that Leo remembered—a warren of narrow laneways, rambleshack housing and open sewers—so embarrassed city and state government that promises were made for the resettlement of the favela’s inhabitants.

Evanildo da Silva, national director of FASE, told us, “The government has money. The issue is how do we make them spend this money on what is important for the poor.”

FASE, created 50 years ago with



“The government has money. The issue is how do we make them spend this money on what is important for the poor.”

*Evanildo da Silva, national director of FASE, a Development and Peace partner in Brazil*



The visit of a UN official, Mr. Kothari (top, centre), Special Rapporteur on Housing, led to the resettlement of favela inhabitants in the city of Recife. FASE was instrumental in bringing Mr. Kothari to Recife in 2004 and helped to develop the two housing projects shown on the facing page. The complex below is named after Dom Helder Câmara, former Archbishop of Recife and champion of the poor.

the help of the Brazilian bishops, is the country’s largest and most important nongovernmental organization. In Pernambuco, FASE’s work revolves around the critical issue of housing. Working with the people, they develop housing policies that are promoted to all levels of government. They support the formation of local leaders and groups that can take part in the progressive “participatory budgeting” process. Participatory budgeting has been in place in Recife since 1993 and has expanded the meaning and practice of citizenship. It allows members of civil society organizations and ordinary citizens to participate in determining how a portion of the municipal budget will be spent.

In the case of the favela in the park, FASE was instrumental in bringing the UN official to visit and in supporting the development of

a grassroots group, the OLMP, that organized the community. After the visit of Mr. Kothari, people of the favela continued to pressure the government to live up to its promises. Finally in 2010, just two months before our visit, the 144 families of the favela were moved to brand new, clean low-rise apartment buildings and the favela was torn down.

Our group had the privilege of visiting the new housing complex and meeting many of the inhabitants. With great pride, the community showed us their homes. Now they have access to running water, sanitation and electricity. Although they were still pressing the government to fulfill certain promises, the people were happy and hopeful. One resident, Claudette, told us: “Now I can say I live on this street. I am a citizen.”

## Measuring change

By Ann Flynn



The truth of the wealth of Brazil is hard to uncover. Brazil is seen as having a strong economy, as prospering and being a wealthy nation. FASE presents us with a different reality. They tell us that close to 400,000 people in Recife live in precarious housing conditions. They tell us that the poor do not have the same rights as the rich. The poor do not have rights to homes, to clean water, to sanitation, to health services, and many of the other social benefits we assume when we come from a country like Canada. FASE works to mobilize citizens to demand these rights. They organize people to lobby government, they write position papers, they organize forums, they provide assistance to grassroots groups in how to change government policies. FASE helps to bring about change... Change is hard to measure until you talk with the parents, the grandparents and the families that now have a place to call home, a place for their children to play safely, a place to plant a garden and hang out the laundry. Then you understand that change is not measured, it is visible in the eyes and smiles of the people.

*Ann and her husband Marty live in Fredericton, New Brunswick, and have two grown children. Ann works for the City of Fredericton in the area of human resource management. She has been involved with the Saint John Development and Peace Diocesan Council for the past six years. Ann enjoys all sorts of sports and activities “that help to keep me moving.”*



# An incredible journey

Our Development and Peace solidarity visit was an opportunity to meet people of courage and generosity despite their difficult lives

By Caroline Dow

Growing up in the 40s and 50s in a Catholic family and taught by nuns in school, we were always reminded of our blessings and we constantly prayed for the poor children in China. So from childhood I had a deep desire to help the poor. Now a grandmother, I had the opportunity to take part in a 15 day Development and Peace solidarity visit to the state of Pernambuco in northeast Brazil. It was an incredible journey.

Though there is so much to write about, I chose to reflect on our visit to the Agreste, the plateau region, to the landless encampment of Fazenda Jabuticaba where the flag of the MST proudly flies. MST stands for Brazil's Movement of Landless Rural Workers (*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*), one of the oldest and most influential social movements in the world. MST is a long-time partner of Development and Peace.

On a rainy day we set out in our van with our driver Andre, our translator Leo, and two MST staff. Along the uphill drive to the encamp-

ment we became stuck in the mud. We thought we would never get to our destination. I prayed hard and thought positively because I felt it was important that we reach this encampment. The people were expecting us. Soon, along came a small four-wheel-drive truck. The driver allowed all of us to pile in, four in the cab and the rest in the back.

Inside the encampment, a large gong hung from a tree. The gong was hit with a big axe to call the community together. It is also used in times of danger. For me, seeing men, women, and children come in from the fields or emerge from their stark, black plastic tents to greet us was a sight that took my breath away and swelled my heart. Tomorrow, we would later learn, the gong would bring this struggling community together for a far less happy reason.

A hundred families live in the encampment, though on the day of our visit many people

were at the market selling their produce. We gathered in a dark meeting room where the people stood along the walls or sat on benches, anxious to tell their story. We heard of a people who were proud to be self-sufficient, working the land, sending their kids to school, but all against great odds. They have been threatened by thugs with guns and clubs, abused by authorities, evicted 11 times in six years from the land they occupy. In fact, the very next day they were to be evicted once more.

After hearing their stories I was overwhelmed with the simple lunch that they offered to us—a single cob of corn roasted in its husk—quite a contrast to the 12-dish spread that we ate at the previous village we visited. To me it was the most blessed



João da Silva (photo left), a member of the Fazenda Jabuticaba landless community, became emotional while speaking of their efforts to gain land.



Maria de Socorro welcomed us into her home. "Please don't mind the appearance inside," she said, "we were told that they will come again tomorrow to evict us and I have been preparing for that."

food I would ever eat. We also knew that the people of the other village once lived in a similar tent encampment before acquiring their own land. This gave us hope that, with the help of the MST, surely the people of Fazenda Jabuticaba would one day also own the land.

Before the community came to be supported by the MST, the visits by thugs and the evictions took a greater toll. Evictions were accompanied by the destruction of their tents and crops, and resulted in the children being unable to go to school. When the community returned to their land, the bulldozers had done their work and the planting and building had to be started all over again. Now, the lawyers for the MST negotiate with the judge so that the people's homes and lands are not touched during these evictions. Three days after our visit we heard that while the eviction did indeed happen, the people were safe, encamped upon the land of the local bishop and set to return to their still-standing homes and crops.

As we prepared to leave the community, my eyes fell on a beautiful woman with the blackest hair, the

greenest eyes, the friendliest dimpled smile, and dressed in four shades of pink. She came and took my hand, hugged me and welcomed me into her home. She introduced me to many of her nine children, all as beautiful as she. I will say that never have I had as much respect for anyone as I did for this woman, Maria de Socorro.

I have put a picture of Maria and her family on my mantle alongside our family photos as a reminder of her courage, joy, and generosity despite her difficult journey, and I pray that one day she and her community will have peace. I find it amazing how a single person can touch your heart and never ever know it, as Maria has touched mine.∞

*Caroline has three sons and three grandchildren. Originally from Grand Falls, Newfoundland, she has lived in Rockland, New Brunswick, since 1979. For the past six years she has been a Development & Peace representative at her parish of St. Gertrude's, with an active team of 14 devoted D&P members, especially her husband Ron.*



*"I am a person who moves when the light turns green. So now I will speak." With these words, Hernando (above) of the Chico Mendes settlement (see story on page 10) shares his thoughts about the people's victory and the massive support they received. This new life on land that is legally theirs "is the fruit of our union," he says. A poet among the people, he offers his comments in verse (as translated to us):*

**All together with giving hands  
We will be a happy people  
We only depend on our union to  
change this country**

**But we will only change if together  
we struggle  
And plant the seed in the ground  
And teach our youth to face the  
future**

**The ants are very small  
But they do a big action  
By the power of their union they  
receive the blessing of Our Father**

**Youth, men, women, children  
And even our old  
Together in one faith for the peace  
of our nation**

**I want to see this beautiful country  
Again starting to shine  
With its people living happily and  
the child joyfully singing**

A woman and a young boy are walking away from the camera on a dirt path in Malawi. The woman is on the left, wearing a light-colored short-sleeved shirt and a long skirt. The boy is on the right, wearing a blue and red backpack with the number '58' on it, and carrying a blue book. They are walking along a brick wall on the left side of the path. The path is lined with trees and the sun is shining brightly in the background, creating a warm, golden light.

# Walk with us

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Scarboro missionary Barbara Michie, Mzuzu, Malawi.  
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