



inTouch

The Voice of Evangelical Action (Brazil)

www.eabrazil.com
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Edition 77

EAB spreads its wings

This being the Christmas issue, maybe our cover picture should have featured a partridge in a pear tree! That's something you won't find in Brazil. You will find, however, this stunning White-naped Xenopsaris (*Xenopsaris albinucha*) captured by missionary turned wildlife photographer John Medcraft at EAB's Green Pastures farm.

Edition 77 has a particular emphasis on evangelism and EAB has really spread its wings this year. An estimated 150,000 people have been touched by the Gospel of Jesus in 2009. You could say things are really taking off.



Photograph by John Medcraft



A typical EAB/ACEV evangelistic impact day at Imaculada - the Church moves out to the streets.

EAB evangelised 150,000 this year.

EAB believes in counting and not guessing when it comes to statistics. The only place where this is not possible is how many are reached through radio so in this case we make conservative estimates based on solid audience research. All EAB/ACEV churches send in four-monthly reports which relate numbers of every single person evangelised and we add these all up annually to produce our yearly report.

Thus when we say that EAB evangelised 148,379 people in the year 2008/2009 we mean just that. 85,000 of these were reached through radio ministries in six towns and the rest heard the Gospel through preaching in churches, open-air services, door-to-door evangelism, and distribution of Christian literature etc.

All this hard work in villages, towns,

cities and rural areas led to an annual growth of the EAB/ACEV churches membership by 5% and to cope with this growth situation EAB runs three Bible Colleges to train leadership at Patos, Campina Grande and Princesa Isabel where we have a total of 115 students.

Thank you for supporting EAB throughout another year. We are a Christian evangelical mission which preaches the Gospel 365 days a year.

We are a mobilised mission which evangelises, from grass roots up, children, teenagers, young people, middle aged people and senior citizens. Nobody is missed and everyone is involved. Nobody is too old to be part of EAB and nobody is too young either. Many of our children evangelise children well before their age reaches double figures.

What EAB believes:

EAB believes that action speaks louder than words and that faith and works are the two legs with which the Christian church must march anywhere in this world. EAB believes in preaching and practicing the Gospel. EAB believes what Jesus said about the most important commandment being to love God with all we are and have, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. EAB believes in saying it and doing it. If you don't do it then don't bother to say it. EAB seeks to follow Jesus who taught and preached constantly but also cared about kids, fed the hungry and healed the sick. Christianity is doing what Christ did and always endeavouring to get the 'say/do' balance right like He did.

Youth and EAB

I don't know what the average age was at this year's EAB Celebration but it wasn't very low. This is not to say that we don't value senior Christians but if youth don't get involved now what will happen to EAB tomorrow?

Please show this to 10 young people and tell us what they say:

EAB works in Brazil where the 2014 World Cup will be held and then two years later the Olympic Games. Doesn't that turn you on as a young person to realise that Brazil is an exciting pulsating country capable of taking on such gigantic challenges? Just think of the tremendous opportunities this will present to us in Brazil as Christians.

What about us forming an EAB team of young Christians for, say, a month with two weeks at the World Cup or Olympic Games and then two weeks working in the interior of north-eastern Brazil with EAB churches and projects. The mind boggles! We await youthful feedback.



EAB Patos Youth Pastor Gersé de Oliveira outside Patos Bible College where he graduated last year.



Missionaries Ben and Miriam Price with children Ana Louisa and Josias.

Anyone for fishing?

“You won't catch a fish unless you go fishing” was a phrase that spent a long time going around Ben Price's head towards the end of last year and provoked him and his wife Miriam to pray more about organised evangelism within the Ibiara region. Once a strategy was planned and put into practice, more fish than were expected swam into their nets!

The whole Ibiara church was encouraged to get involved and regular, themed evangelistic meetings were organised. The church PA was 'turbinated' for street outreach and a weekly Bible meditation was added to the Mums & Toddlers group. Everyone was pleasantly surprised when the church was packed out for the first evangelistic meeting. And that's the way it's been ever since. There is now a buzz in the Sunday evening meetings as the church fills up with spiritually hungry visitors.

The Church has now started a mid-week Alpha course, an extra afternoon prayer meeting and a monthly ministry visit to the nearby village of Vazante as a result of the renewal of the Holy Spirit. The number of children coming along to the weekly Bible Club has risen to 50.

The figures speak for themselves. The Ibiara church has 20 members, but nine people have already made decisions for Jesus this year, two teenagers have come back to the Lord and there are two others on the Alpha course who are close to making a decision. Before the end of the year Ben and Miriam hope to have baptised all of these and received them into membership too. If space permitted we would tell you about the renewal in Vazante, where roughly 20% of the village's population are actively involved in our church there.

All in all it's been a good year to go fishing in the Ibiara region!

New projects target the marginalised and exploited

Part 2 of a special feature on EAB's Katriona M Graham Care Centre

KMG Care Centre is at the sharp end of healthcare provision.



HIV/AIDS PROJECT

EAB/ACEV's latest project is to help and support those who have been diagnosed with HIV or AIDS.

In the State of Paraíba, where EAB has its headquarters, a recent report from the Ministry of Health shows a 95.2% increase in AIDS in our State over the past 10 years. The MH says they believe HIV/AIDS is greatly under-reported, and for every one known case there are in fact five more existent. Thus 17,500 people are believed to have AIDS in Paraíba today, and with the complacency and ignorance on the matter, the growth rate for the virus can only be expected to increase.

Sadly the only help available in Patos is a diagnostic test which tells clients if they have the disease. They receive no counselling but are simply

told to go and get the free medication they need at Campina Grande, which involves a three-hour coach journey each way.

Our plan is for the KMG Care Centre to become our co-ordination centre of operations for this new project, so a year ago we started talks with Tearfund to find out how we can mobilise our churches in solidarity and bring awareness to our communities at large.

One meeting was with Dr. Manuel Sierra Santos MD, PhD - Tearfund's Latin America HIV/AIDS Technical Advisor, who held meetings with John Medcraft and two other ACEV leaders. With the Lord's help, and many experts' help, EAB/ACEV hopes to become a model of church mobilisation concerning this great challenge of HIV/AIDS.

Our staff have attended several

training courses, both Christian and secular. One problem that developed was the insistence that we would have to distribute condoms in our churches as part of our project! "No way", replied our representatives, to which those running the event kept on insisting and pressurising our folk. The problem appears to be that the group running the event had very liberal views plus the fact that not being church-based; they do not seem to appreciate the mayhem this would cause. Imagine us giving out condoms with Bibles and hymn books!

We already have our team in place (Social Worker and team co-ordinator Marah Danielle, Nurse Lila Conserva, Márcia Alencar and Jucineide Pereira). EAB/ACEV have defined our aims as follows:-

1 Our HIV/AIDS project aims to contribute towards the prevention and reduction of DST/AIDS in north-eastern Brazil.

2 We want to improve the quality of life for those living with and amidst HIV/AIDS.

3 EAB/ACEV aims to promote the dignity and inclusion of these people in society.

4 During 2009 EAB/ACEV structured and trained the HIV/AIDS team; developed help to those who needed it and worked on prevention; defined a clear HIV/AIDS project policy, and planned stages two and three of the project for 2010/2011.

We greatly value your prayers for this enormous challenge before us. We are already attending 10 people with HIV in Patos and the EAB Food Bank is proving to be indispensable as people cannot take the cocktail of HIV medication without eating properly first.

SUGAR CANE-CUTTERS PROJECT

With funding from the Methodist Church of Ireland, via Tearfund,

Marah Danielle, EAB's Care Centre Social Worker, is working on a project in the county of Manaíra. With the promise of much work (and money) cutting sugar cane in the south of Brazil, many men borrowed money for the fare, left their families and went south in a sort of 'green gold rush'.

Some come home after a year's work with pay by cheques which bounce. Others come home ill. None of the workers have rights as all their legal rights are trodden under foot by corrupt local officials bought by the big land owners where they have been working.

Some who have found employment realise too late that they are virtually slaves while others find no employment at all.

One batch of 300 men left Manaíra having been told there was work available for them in the south. When they all arrived there, having borrowed money to do so, they found there were only five vacancies! This not only leaves the men stranded, homeless and jobless thousands of miles away from home, but their families are destitute, and so there is much suffering and hunger.

Without adequate food they become susceptible to illnesses, and without money they cannot get treatment except through our Care Centre. It is a vicious circle, but one which we want to break and give them the means of survival and hope for the future. Thus EAB's Pastor Francinaldo and Social Worker Marah distribute food and care to the neediest families affected by these serious problems and teach the whole community about workers' rights and the dangers of going on the sugar cane trail.

This project has found many children suffering from severe undernourishment and EAB's Food Bank steps in because good food produces good health.

Best foot forward

By Elizabeth Medcraft, EAB Co Director



EAB Co Director Elizabeth Medcraft celebrates her 60th birthday surrounded by daughters Lynn, Deborah and Sacha (standing rear) and son Philip (seated, front), together with assorted grandchildren. Not so much a family as a dynasty!

Most of our house is falling apart. The termites have eaten the floor, the walls are cracking and the drains have a chronic blockage problem. I am not complaining but stating facts in the hope that if my husband reads this here he might sort it out before it falls in on us!

Anyway it was on one of our (regular) drain blockage days that early in the morning Tarcísio had come in from Green Pastures to help us unblock things and it was time to test by turning on all the taps in the house to see if all was clear. I went down some steps to a little internal garden we have, so as to turn on the tap there, and I slipped on some loose stones and fractured my ankle badly in three places, damaging ligaments, tendons and everything else. I knew it was serious immediately as my foot was left dangling in the wrong direction so I cracked it back into position and called for help.

The Care Centre's Dr Paula was soon on the scene, X-rays and pre-surgical blood and heart tests were done, and by 3 pm I was going into the operating theatre at the Patos General Hospital. Three hours later I was back on the ward and for the first few days all seemed well. However once a post-op infection set in everything went badly wrong. It was a very painful mess which has put me out of action for months.

I want to thank everyone who has prayed for me during this time of trial. It has not been a rest. It has been a time of great pain and considerable frustration, but with everyone's help here I am pulling through and am glad to say that all the infection has now gone and the bones nicely healed. I am starting to put my foot gently to the ground with a crutch and trust I will be walking normally when you see this magazine land on your doormat.



POINTS for PRAISE and PRAYER

◆ Please pray for pioneer evangelistic endeavours by EAB in different States outside its headquarters State of Paraíba. Things are very tough at Ipueira in Rio Grande do Norte State where years of evangelism and attempts to plant a church have only produced one decision by a 90-year-old thus far. In Ceara State a small church with just 10 members has been established and in Pernambuco State the church plant at Flores is developing slowly but others at Santa Terezinha and Santa Cruz are yet to get off the ground.

◆ Veteran 86 year old EAB missionary, Ivy Dyer, is heading back to Brazil on a flight with her grandson Philip after spending 6 months in the UK. Ivy had a serious time of illness with Pancreatitis whilst there but is now much better. Please remember our sister in prayer.

◆ Pray for a child who attends the EAB Action School in Patos who, together with her mother, was severely beaten up by the father using a hosepipe. We reported the matter to social services but little seems to have been done.

◆ Please pray for the EAB vehicle situation with both the Kombi and Corsa needing renewal as they are now costing more to maintain than they are worth, and they lack reliability.

◆ Praise God that the Patos church extension is nearing completion at long last. The ex-bakery next door to the church is now part of the

EAB/ACEV Patos church and Care Centre complex. There is now a church overflow area accessible through sliding doors, a general projects and an HIV/AIDS project offices, a food bank, a manse flat, and rooms available for Sunday School.

◆ Please pray for EAB's ActionChild School at Imaculada which has been the victim of corruption on the part of the authorities who illegally registered our school as theirs, without our knowledge, and have received considerable sums, over three years, from the federal government for its maintenance without EAB/ACEV seeing a penny! Now that we have denounced this we are subject to a lot of flak from the guilty party.

◆ Praise the Lord for two happy Medcraft family weddings in Patos. Sacha married Biba in August and Lynn married Hutan in October!

◆ Praise the Lord for Liz Medcraft's 60th birthday on September 8th. Despite having to blow the candle out sitting in her wheelchair it was a happy occasion with many demonstrations of love and affection from a variety of our church people, as well as the family of course.

◆ Readers of John's blog will be well aware of EAB's HP Sauce crisis. Perhaps your thoughts could be with John as he suffers from withdrawal symptoms having completely run out of this unique British savoury delicacy!

◆ Praise God for the excellent EAB/ACEV's annual leadership conference held at Green Pastures Farm in September. It was a harmonious and productive event. Praise God too for keeping the leaders from Caroá and Manaira safe who were involved in a crash as they returned home from the Conference.

◆ Pray for Missionary Betânia and the EAB/ACEV/BCLC Uruguay Project which is facing incredible legalism and sad divisions in the small churches the project is seeking to help. Things are quite tough for Betânia.



Gathering of the clans: EAB representative Pastor Michael Rollo, Missionary Ivy Dyer and UK Chairman Roy Dyer at this year's Annual Celebration

Thanks to EAB Fundraisers:

EAB would like to thank people who have used their creativity during this difficult financial year to raise funds for EAB. Forgive us if we forget anyone but those who come to mind are:

- ◆ Pastor Michael Rollo organises an annual Ceilidh event in Scotland.
- ◆ David North raises money through sales on eBay.
- ◆ Marian Rashleigh operates a spinning wheel at the Weyhill Fair and sells woollen items she spins as well as homemade jam.
- ◆ Mary Dyer runs a summer garden party in her majestic New Forest gardens.
- ◆ Jean Shearing and team run a stitch & crafts activity.
- ◆ Sonja Warr sells Teddy Bears.
- ◆ Helen Carter has sold handicraft made by EAB/ACEV folk in Brazil.
- ◆ Denmark Street Dental Practice funds EAB's dentist at our Care Centre.

Not Lord Wellington!

Not Lord Wellington - but Wellington does love the Lord! Wellington is the name of a young man in the EAB/ACEV Patos church who invented a different way to celebrate his birthday by turning it into a thanksgiving service for his three years as a Christian and for actually making it to the ripe old age of 32!

John led the service and gave a word at the end but the main part of the service, held in the open-air outside his house, was taken up by the young man's testimony and then he preached. He used to live an outrageously drunken reckless life and had a string of drunken motorbike accidents in which one man died.

He came to Christ through being convinced to come and hear John preach as they told him he was "an interesting preacher who preached well". He got gloriously converted and his change in life style has been most dramatic. PTL!



Spreading the word

Nobody can say that EAB doesn't do its best to keep supporters aware of all that is going on in the work in north-eastern Brazil. We do this without a specialised communications team as bigger missions have. Our missionaries just have to do this on top of everything else they do! Thus to make the most of all EAB publishes, we appeal for your support as follows:

InTouch Magazine

Produced three times a year. This is edition 77. It is always a quality publication giving an overall view of EAB and is edited by Peter White.

What to do? Please spread the word about this magazine and send us addresses of people who would benefit from receiving it totally free.

Nutshell Updates

Our directors send out fortnightly 'Nutshell Updates' on about the 1st and 15th of every month. This gives a 'sum' of the main news for the period never passing two sheets of A4 in size so is ideal for busy people.

What to do? Please send us more email addresses of people who we can send this to.

Director's Blog

This started before a lot of people knew what a blog was and has been running non-stop for over five years. This is informal news as it happens and is John Medcraft's online diary. The blog includes photos from time to time. You follow the missionaries' daily lives and work through the blog at: <http://medcraft.blog.uol.com.br>

What to do? Please spread the word about the blog.

Dairy Update

This is all the news from the blog in email form. You don't need this if you read the blog. This is the news in detail so don't ask for this unless you have spare time to read quite a lot! We send this out fortnightly on about the 8th and 22nd of each month. Marian

Rashleigh transforms it all from blog to email for us.

What to do? Please send us emails of non-bloggers who would like to receive this.

Snailmail Update

This is for people who don't have access to internet. It is a monthly résumé of our diary on paper sent by regular post.

What to do? Please send us postal addresses of people who would like to receive this.

Website

This is the place where the anchor information about EAB is together with background music from EAB churches. It is the ideal place to refer people to who are new to EAB.

What to do? Please spread the word about our website at: www.eabrazil.com

DVD

We have produced a DVD this year with a selection of EAB video-clips suitable for a variety of situations. For example, you might be able to show the three-minute video clip with a general overview of EAB's work at your church. Other options are a 10-minute Sky TV report on the conditions in our region of Brazil with short interviews with John Medcraft and Pastor Valdemy included. There's a five-minute report on Christmas food hamper distribution, a short interview with John in Portuguese (with English sub-titles) explaining the ethos of EAB's work, and even a 90 minute TV interview with John which he did on Genesis TV last year.

What to do? Order your free copy of the 2009 EAB DVD from the UK Office or have one sent to somebody interested.

Compreendeu? Yes EAB is communicating but we need your help to communicate more. Please send us all the email addresses you can from your church, family or friends.

EAB/ACEV projects make a lot of difference

Over the past year EAB's 19 schools educated and fed around 700 children and thus showed them God's love and taught them about it too. Over 3,000 children also enjoyed EAB's playground facilities at four different venues.

From EAB's Care Centre hundreds of people in crisis situations and unable to work were fed from the food bank. In the same centre there is a programme which works with senior citizens and another which works with people who are HIV positive.

Then there are dentist, doctor, social worker and pastor, who help the poor, focus on abandoned families caused by the sugar cane 'gold rush' in the south, and minister to the deaf.

EAB/ACEV drilled, dug and equipped nine more wells this past year bringing hope, health and happiness to hundreds more very poor people even

helping them to create income from plantations using water surplus to that needed for drinking. Other income generation courses have taught women to paint on cloth and to crochet.

EAB's Moringa and Neem tree projects also helped thousands and the Four Legs and Two Wings projects continue to fly high.

Thank you for supporting the multi-faceted ministries of EAB throughout another year. Please stick with us in these difficult days, with the pound collapsing in free-fall against the Brazilian currency, so that EAB can keep telling it like it is and doing it like it needs to be done.

We are workers together with Christ, reaching out to the lost, speaking out for those without voice, and ministering to an enormously wide variety of social and spiritual needs in Brazil's poorest region.



We're taking action

What about you?

If you would like to make a donation towards the work of EAB, please send your cheques, made payable to 'Evangelical Action Brazil', to Mrs Beryl Gough, 6 The Glade, Langley, Southampton, SO45 1ZP.

Alternatively, if you want to make a direct payment from your bank, our banking details are:- Lloyds TSB, sort code 30-91-85, account number 02385564. (If you use this option please e-mail eabfinance@googlemail.com giving brief details of the donation). Paypal is also accepted if you log on to www.eabrazil.com. Any gift, no matter how small, is greatly appreciated and will be used to further God's work in Brazil. (If you are a UK tax payer and would like to 'Gift Aid' your donation, please ask Beryl for a form).

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