

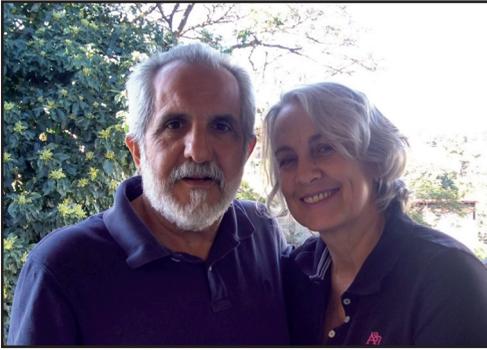
# DOWN to EARTH

Emmanuel International UK News  
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## JULY 2020

### *Fred and Carla Silva, working with EI Brazil*



*Fred and Carla Silva are the EI Brazil leaders. Fred tells us about their journey with EI.*

The first time I heard about Emmanuel International was December 1979. Six years before that God had called me to be a missionary and for some time I didn't know what to do. Slowly it started to be clear to me that I should be involved on a team of doctors, nurses, teachers, and missionaries who would go up and down the rivers in the Amazon area, helping the poor in all their needs, while we'd preach the gospel to them. At that time, the evangelical churches would only preach the gospel because they wanted to keep distance from the liberal theological thinking. But that bunch of young people didn't have any idea about the different approaches to ministry. All we wanted to do was to present Jesus and help poor people with their needs.

After I finished Bible School, my leader at Youth For Christ (YFC) said that it was time for us to start something. A few days after we had that talk, he called me to the YFC office, where I met Ken Decker, a missionary who knew George Middleton and the EI philosophy. He heard there was a youth group that wanted to do missions in a very different way and came to Belo to meet us. When Ken started to talk about Emmanuel International, it was like music to my ears. That was exactly what I had dreamed about. Further contacts were made with EI and Brazil was then approved to be a project country.

After some research and a visit from Costas Demetriades, EI Project Director, we chose Passabém, a very small



**Training School Graduation in December 1980**



**The team, with some Brazilians, at the YFC camp, end of January 1981**



**Jurema, a team member, teaching Bible School for children**



**The 1981 Passabém team, with Ken Decker (standing on the left)**

town in my home state, to be the first EI project in Brazil.

Carla and I were engaged and decided to get married right before we would start our ministry in Passabém. In September 1980 I went to Canada to attend EI

Training School and on January 10<sup>th</sup> 1981 we got married. Twenty days later we, together with a team of other Brazilians and expatriates, were digging the ground to get it flat, so we could put up our tents for the night. I remember Carla's hands, a small children's teacher just a couple of months ago, full of blisters (no, she never thought about quitting marriage and ministry).

In Passabém we did the entire EI package: home visits, Gospel sharing, chicken coops, rabbit cages, latrines, and spring capping. We also helped a small Methodist church and did special activities with children.

For more than three years, we lived in a tent, had a bamboo wall covered with plastic as our kitchen and community center, and shared our landlord's bathroom (and the huge cockroaches). We had Brazilians, Americans, and Canadians in our team. It's great that, after so many years, Carla and I still keep in contact with most of the expatriates, and some of them are faithful supporters. Raquel, our first child, lived in the tent with us for about 2 years.

Living in a community was a great testimony for the families we were called to minister to. People would come for a chat and we were always welcome in their homes with a 'cafezinho', the Brazilian coffee. Sharing the Gospel was just part of our day-to-day relationship.

The 80's saw a greater understanding of sustainable community development practices and EI really got into it. It was not only doing things for people, but working side by side with them, so they would improve their lives, with some help from us.



**Children's Bible school**



**Team reunion in Canada (1986)**

It was a blessing to see people coming to the Lord. Discipleship was an important part of the team ministry, and it was exciting to see the church growth.

Some projects in Passabém did better than others, but in general we were able to help so many families improve their lives. That was easily observed as we continued to visit the project site for a number of years. Gerson's story was a good example. He was about 12 years old when the team started to visit his home and work with the family. A latrine was built, with a good involvement of the whole family. Years later, I visited Gerson's family again and he was building his own house to get married. He took me to see it and proudly showed me the latrine he had built for his house.

Gerson didn't need us anymore. Our little support in the early years was enough to help him take the control of his life.

The four year Passabém Project came to an end and we returned to Belo Horizonte, our hometown. I worked in my home church and, a few months later, I got a phone call from EI. They were inviting me to be the Brazil Representative. And again I joined EI, now to look for Brazilian partner churches that wanted to do wholistic mission work and supervise community development and evangelism projects.

In the next few years we started projects in Botumirim, Salinas, and Águas Formosas. Ken Decker was still a great supporter. From the very beginning, he always talked about Brazil becoming an affiliate, because of the potential he saw in the Brazilian churches. The economic hardships Brazil was going through delayed our plans, but in 1999 EI was incorporated in Brazil. Andy Atkins, the EI General Director, was here to celebrate with us this important event. Brazil was the first EI project country to become an affiliate.

Since then Missão Emanuel do Brasil (EI Brazil) has increased the number of partner churches, including a group of Terena indigenous churches. Projects vary according to the needs seen by the partner churches and their vision to reach out to their own communities.

One of EI Brazil's main goals has been to build the capacity of the Brazilian churches, helping them understand their role to respond to all the needs of the poor, showing God's love for them in practical ways. Brazilian city churches, with better off income, need to raise their

eyes to see and respond to the spiritual and physical needs, not only around them, but also in the countryside and in other needy countries. Countryside churches that directly deal with poverty also need to take their 'call out' in full.

I don't really know why, but that teenager's dream to be a missionary in the Amazon never came true. On the other hand there is no doubt that God had a plan for Carla and I to minister to poor people, helping them reach God's intentions, in all areas of their lives, including the spiritual area. Even before I ever heard about Emmanuel International and its philosophy, He was already working in our hearts and minds, preparing us for the ministry He called us to carry out.

I'm so grateful to Ken Decker, who spent time with a young man to mentor and to show with words and actions how to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. His example and ministry have been a model to so many, including myself. He spent his life serving and encouraging. That is what Emmanuel International has been doing around the world since 1975. Despite all the challenges, Carla and I are still committed to serving people in need and encouraging churches. It's our prayer that God would continue to give us strength and his vision to reach people and churches towards God's intentions.

## COVID-19

Please continue to pray for our projects as we continue to look at the effects of COVID-19 and how we can best respond.

## The Mongers are back in the UK



### Arriving at the airport, with masks and shields!

Tim, Rachel, Amisadai and Louisa Monger have arrived safely back in the UK. After a delay to their return because of COVID-19, some false starts and a few cancelled flights, they are finally back in the UK, having arrived on 10 July 2020.

They have just finished their period of quarantine in Bath. Amisadai and Louisa have been offered places in Monkton Coombe School in Bath (which is highly supportive of returning missionary children). Please pray for the family as they map out their next steps.

### Dates for your diary

**Board Meeting:** 25 September 2020  
(Providing the conditions allow meeting in person.)