

# 40 THE CHANNEL

To Brazil For Christ



How taking bread and coffee to street children, turned into **40 years** of ministry helping thousands of children out of poverty into Christian leadership and success.

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## The Words That Changed My Life— By Marc Marques

In the 1980's children were dying on Brazil's streets. They were overdosing on drugs, being raped, physically beaten, and even shot dead. I knew that God was calling me to do something to help them, but at the time I was enjoying the American dream. I had arrived in the USA from Brazil. I was going to college and I had a job at a recovery program called Youth Challenge.

But God had also surrounded me with role models, Christian men who were making a difference in their community. They took time to get to know me and encouraged me to pursue my passion to help these children. They were wise but I was skeptical. It seemed like an overwhelming task and I doubted that anything could be done without a big bank account.



I went back to Brazil with Troy Collier who had founded Youth Challenge in Virginia. We took bread and coffee to street children and spent time praying and talking with them. As we were leaving I felt like my job was done and I had proved to God that not much could be done with so few resources. Then, one of the children yelled out behind me...  
*"Sir, are you coming back tomorrow?"*



The words stopped me in my tracks. It was as if God was challenging me directly. I paused. Then I said yes, both to that child and to God. The next day I wrote the children's name on pieces of white paper. When Cisero copied the letters onto the sidewalk with charcoal he enthusiastically declared, *"There, now I am someone."*

In the months that followed, I started speaking to churches and groups in the US about the needs of these children. I told people I wanted to start a home for street boys and I used my relationships with church friends in Brazil to rent a house and to employ two staff to look after the boys.

To my surprise people gave funds and trusted me to do the work. I realized that God was being faithful and I started to believe that it could be successful.

At the same time, I was dating Lois who shared my vision for helping children in Brazil. We were married in 1987 and with the support of our friends and family in the US, we moved back to my home city in Brazil as missionaries.

### Marc's 80's Takeaways

- It was not important how I got started but that I started.
- When I shared the vision, other people came along to help.

# Growth In Every Direction

In the 1990's there were many opportunities for CBC. To help give the street boys a sense of purpose and vision for their future, Marc started two businesses, a bakery and a chicken farm. Friends continued to offer support and the first mission teams travelled from the US, to visit the work in Brazil. It was a time of growth and prosperity. The profits raised from the bakery were poured back into the construction of classrooms, employing teachers and buying food and materials. CBC became a part of the local community and gained a reputation for helping people and offering opportunity.

However, working with the poor was no easy task. There was dangerous opposition and some people tried to take advantage of CBC's success. Using the wisdom and experience they had acquired, Marc and Lois decided to change the focus of their work to become more preventative and to help keep families together. God called them to...

*"Train the future  
Christian leaders  
of Brazil."*



This is the construction of the chicken barn which was built to help the street boys living at the orphanage. The eggs were sold for profit and also provided a daily routine for the boys.

Later this barn was transformed with the addition of a stage and music classroom.

Today it serves as CBC's chapel and dining area.

At the same time the bakery taught a trade to the orphans and helped them believe in a brighter future.



## Marc's 1990's Takeaways

- Working in a broken community with poverty and corruption, nearly broke me.
- I suffered because I wanted to do things the right way. I nearly gave up but I was too stubborn to quit. God gave us protection and victory.



## Loss, Purpose and Harvest—2000's

The orphanage was carefully phased out in partnership with other organizations in the city. CBC enrolled children from the local community who were attending local public schools, but due to the short school day, they were still spending over half of the day with no supervision. It was common for children to drop out of school by the age of 12 because they had never learned to read or write. A new classroom building was constructed and the grounds quickly began to look like a school. Teams came from the US to help build, paint, and share ideas. There was a lot to do.

In 2001 Marc's father passed away and in 2003 he lost his wife Lois (right) to breast cancer. It was a devastating and difficult time but God challenged Marc to keep going for the sake of the hundreds of children now enrolled at the project. Each year that they succeeded, Marc added a new class and it was quickly evident that these children were going to become the first in their community to graduate from high school. One student said to Marc...

*"Well, if you said you believed in me to do this, now you have to help me go to college."*

It was very fitting that Marc used a memorial fund in Lois' name to make this happen.



CBC also had a powerful evangelistic theater and dance group called JVC (Youth with the vision of Christ in Portuguese). The group of teens performed in local schools, jails, churches and public squares. In 2006, Lighthouse Community Fellowship led by Pastor Chris Ball in South Butler New York paid for 19 students to do a reverse mission trip to New York and Virginia. It was a battle to get the visa's, but God opened doors and the trip was a huge success.

With former CBC children now going to college, this was a decade of harvest. In 2004, Marc married Ruth who is from England. The dedicated teachers in Brazil and donors in America saw first hand fulfilment of CBC's vision in the lives of young Christian leaders.

*"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think,*



New classrooms were built. The number of students grew and the JVC team ministered in the USA. The photo below is a skit about protecting children from abuse, performed by JVC at Warwick Assembly of God, Virginia in 2006.





## How Is This Still Happening?

Today, internationally organized gangs, on-going corruption, and wide-spread poverty in the slums are the biggest threats to children. Brazil is a nation which despite having great wealth, continues to have many broken systems and broken people.

Urban poverty kills more people in Brazil than a low intensity civil war zone. People die from preventable diseases, hunger, accidents, and deliberate acts of violence. Former CBC students have been among the victims.

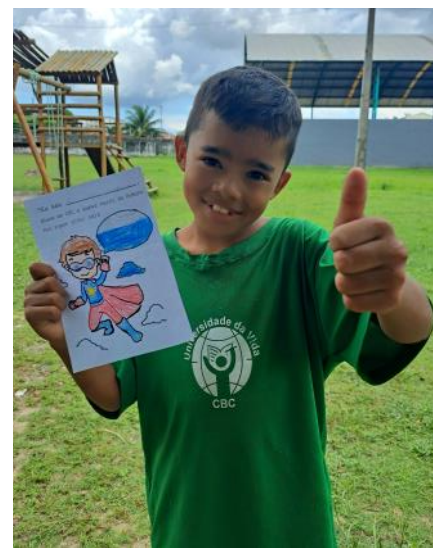
During the COVID pandemic one child lost 5 family members. All our students know someone who has been

shot or killed by gang violence. This is the tragic reality of life in the community around CBC. The needs of families living on less than US\$2 per day are staggering. There is hardship everywhere.

CBC has continued to focus on education as a pathway out of poverty. Since 2010 our students have had role models to look up to. Former students now work as teachers, own their own businesses and have their own families.

*We have invested heavily in providing better quality facilities to communicate the sense of worth and dignity we want each child to feel.*

The capacity and talent of these children never fails to surprise us. In 2022 we taught a basic drone flying course to our 14 year olds. What child in the slums could ever dream of such an opportunity?



## Many Needs



It costs us approximately \$40 a month per child to run CBC. Each day we offer all students hot nutritious food, clean water, a safe space to play, Christian education, and counselling. We also offer extra activities including IT, sports, music, theater, and dance. We want to build one more classroom building on site and we have many on-going maintenance and development needs.

/cbccares



Would you consider a legacy gift to CBC, include the organization as a beneficiary in your Will, or make a commitment to giving every month?

*If you want to learn about working with a troubled community to bring hope and transformation, CBC is an organization you should get to know.*

@channeltobrazil



CBC continues to host short term mission trips not only because they are much needed opportunities to serve but also because they are vital for sharing our vision for the future. Would you consider a trip to Brazil? We are committed to sharing results and relationship with you. Our goal is to bring you right alongside our work with monthly news, stories, videos and testimonies. Please come on board and don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Give \$40 / month

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