

# Rosi and Tim Deller

Rua Ipiranga 1280, Vila São Luis, Dourados  
Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil, CEP 79 825 140  
E-mail: [trrdeller@terra.com.br](mailto:trrdeller@terra.com.br)

## Prayer letter November 2007

*Dear partners in mission,*

We apologise that this letter has been a long time in the writing but after the complicated experience of Recife, where we saw our ministries and much of our personal life imploded, we decided that we would wait before putting fingers to keyboard so that what we write would not be based on first impressions. We thank all you for your patience, for your continued prayer for us over this period and for the encouragement we have received through e-mails, letters and the occasional phone call.

We arrived in Dourados in late January after having had a short visit in November to discuss the possibilities of ministry amongst the folks here. The town of Dourados is a small, rural town in south-west Brazil, with a population of around 180,000 people, and in many ways it reminded us of our first ministry with BMS World Mission in Agua Boa in 1991. We were back to farming country, something that was made very clear as we drove down the high street on arrival; the shops had everything for sale that you might need to make your farming enterprise a success, from seeds to combine harvesters.

Another thing that was initially a surprise, but that we have now come to terms with, was that many of the street names, shops and doctor's surgeries had Japanese names. Now after these months here we have discovered that over 30 per cent of the population of Dourados are of Japanese origin, some 15 per cent of the population is composed of Caiuwa Indians – Dourados has the largest Indian urban population in Brazil and the other 50-something per cent is made up of descendents of the various European migrations to Brazil.

It is the second town in size in the State of Mato Grosso do Sul and also the fastest-growing town. This growth is linked to two main factors. Firstly that as this town is in the middle of a rural region with little light and no heavy industry an option was taken a decade ago to make the town a centre of higher education. There are four universities in the town and in the next few years this is expected to double which will inevitably increase the student population which is already around 40,000 strong. Secondly, and more recently, a decision has been taken to open three or four alcohol distilleries for the production of fuel which will in turn bring in the sugar cane harvesters and, along with this migration, many social problems.



We are settling down and coming to terms with living once again in a small, rural town and the only problem we encounter is the distance 450 kilometre round trip to the nearest major centre.

In comparison to Recife all of us are feeling more upbeat about life. Rodrigo, who came with us, took and passed university entrance exams in November. He is really enjoying his physiotherapy course and what with lectures and hands-on experience, he has little free time during the week. Being musically gifted he has also fitted in nicely in the local church scene, is playing regularly in worship and has also made good friends. Richard, who was our major worry in Recife, is slowly rediscovering the pleasure of being part of the church scene and is involved with the young people's group even though he is a lot younger than most of them. At school he has settled down nicely to his fourth school in three years, getting good grades in all subjects last term though needing some extra help with Portuguese grammar. With regards to the boys and young people, we are often pleasantly surprised to encounter the house with around 30 young people in the early hours of Sunday morning when we return from ministry amongst the ex-landless that have now been settled on what is the biggest land reform settlement in South America. Our one concern is that Richard has not made friends his own age to bring home as yet.

Tim is back teaching, being a pastor, and the other dozens of things he enjoys to keep him occupied. This year at the local seminary, which has about 80 students, he is teaching subjects he has never taught before, so that is quite a challenge. He has to produce a brand new lecture on new subjects every 36 hours,

so he is being kept busy reading around new subjects. Hopefully next year he will be given subjects he enjoys more. Perhaps the part of the teaching ministry he is enjoying most is the lay training course he is involved with on the Brazil/Paraguayan border every month. There he is challenged to make systematic theology available to folks who lead cell groups and amongst his students are those who work with the Indian population. Tim is also back in a pastoral role with the people who have been settled on the land reform project and is enjoying the challenge of teaching and preaching regularly to a congregation with little or no schooling. The people he has to dialogue with are the leaders of the trade union movements and this means that he has had to learn a new language to understand and make him understood with his new dialogue partners. One of the high points of this last semester's preaching was at the ecumenical service where on the table not only was his Bible but also the weapons used by the landless to express and impose their demands. Fascinating!

Rosi has begun to settle down to her role of organising the project amongst what are now the folks who have been settled on the Itamaraty settlement. This project has received support from BMS for the last four years, giving grants to two students to work amongst what can only be described as smallholdings. When Rosi arrived, about 25 people were meeting regularly for worship and nothing was really happening. The challenge placed before her was to make the project viable and also bring a more social outlook to the project – no small challenge with nothing budgeted specifically for the project. The first few months were spent taking stock of the situation.

The Itamaraty settlement is the largest in South America with some 4,000 families being settled on what was the largest soya farm of the 1980s. The area that these families have been settled on is more than twice the size of Recife and the distances between the smallholdings is a challenge for house visits.

This second semester saw a change in the team, and we can only say that the new formation has really gelled and it is a pleasure for the five of us to work: Rosi, Tim, Nair, Heber and Livia. The group has grown through recent baptisms and now the numbers are regularly around 50 people and part of the group some 70 or so. Meetings occur regularly on a different smallholding each week and the dedication of these folk is surprising some of them walking two hours to worship, others coming by horse and cart, others by motorbike. Besides worship, Rosi has been able to promote talks on self-esteem, personal hygiene etc. Often the pigs share the same living space as the people.

She has also managed to take groups of young people to promote evangelism – young people from upper middle class churches who had never been beyond the four walls of their local church.

The long-term idea is to plant not only a church but also produce viable social projects that can be copied on other settlements and tomorrow we will be meeting with an American group who have offered to build a chapel on the settlement for July of next year. This has come about through a casual

conversation Rosi had with an American couple at the Baptist Assembly. With this physical space available hopefully other projects will be able to come to fruition like an IT skills centre for the youngsters, language, music and other much-needed incentives. Even without the space in the next few weeks a project to produce arts and crafts from local produce will get underway.

As you can see there is much underway and there is a sense of joy that our ministries are being restored and we pray that the other more personal losses will also be fully restored in the coming years.

### **We have some prayer requests:**

- ◆ For the boys, that they might continue to enjoy life here in Dourados.
- ◆ For the seminary, that there might be a good intake next semester.
- ◆ For Tim, that he might be given the opportunity to teach the subjects he really enjoys.
- ◆ For wisdom for Rosi as she heads the team involved in the Itamaraty Project.
- ◆ For safety on the roads as we are regularly on a precarious road which is also the route by which drugs are smuggled into the country. On this road we drive some 600km weekly as the Itamaraty Project is a 300km round trip from Dourados.
- ◆ That we can continue to keep Rodrigo in university.
- ◆ That the Lord continues to be faithful in restoring our ministries and personal situation.

Once again we thank all of you for your continued care for us.

*Yours in his service,*

*Tim & Rosi, Rodrigo & Richard.*



PO Box 49 129 Broadway  
Didcot Oxfordshire OX11 8XA  
Tel: 01235 517700  
Fax: 01235 517601

E-mail: [prayerletters@bmsworldmission.org](mailto:prayerletters@bmsworldmission.org)  
Website: [www.bmsworldmission.org](http://www.bmsworldmission.org)  
Registered charity number 233782