

NEWSLETTER FROM Pastor Daniel Calado, at Paio Pires, Portugal.

May 2001

We hope you are all well, both in the body and spiritually. How wonderful it is to know that the love of Jesus can bind us together in a way that goes throughout the years with the same intensity as in the beginning - if not more so. We thank the Lord for you. We thank Him for having put such special people like you on our path. Our gratitude is immense, for during all these years you have been persevering supporters of our ministry in Portugal, and I know that it has been because of Christian people like you that we have been able to overcome all the difficult barriers to the gospel throughout the years.

Yesterday, Sunday May 13th., was Mother's Day. Therefore we celebrated that day according to our tradition (including the gift of a rose to each one who is blessed by his or her mother being still alive; and a white rose for those whose mother has passed away). By coincidence this year, it was on the same day as one of the greatest events of the Catholic Church. The 13th of May is also one of the greatest celebration days at Fátima, where about half a million people were gathered in that sanctuary of idolatry. Mother's Day amongst the R. C.'s is on the first Sunday of May. The media propaganda in Portugal promoting that Mother's Day is such that many evangelical churches have changed their date of celebration from second Sunday of May to the first ...

I'm most glad and thankful to report that Maria was able to attend our church yesterday for the first time for quite a long period, for she has not been at all well. My mother-in-law and Susana (with her Labrador) have been with us over the weekend. By one o'clock, lunch time, I'll have to take Susana to the train in Barreiro, fifteen kilometres from here, which will take her to Faro, where she is living during her studies of agronomy in the university. Altogether it is a course of seven years, here in Portugal, including what is called the "stage"(which refers to a one year assignment of practical experience, post-graduation). All being well, next year, from March onwards she will be in her "stage" period of studies.

Some people from our small group of Congregational churches had some days out in our Sor Bible Camp at the beginning of this month. We had about 100 people there for 4 days, and we are already preparing the next ones for July and August, our usual three camps, of one week each. Much prayerful preparation is of course essential for these spiritually demanding projects.

Concerning music I'm concentrating on three areas: The choir, our "Sounds of praise" band (comprising four teenagers and myself), and the teaching of music to a group of four or five small children. It is a work of much patience, but I hope it will bear good fruit. In some ways the groups are already being a blessing to the church of Paio Pires.

Concerning the Ukrainian Christian man who has been attending our church, we decided as a church to use part of our premises (where had previously been used for a crèche), to house him and other emigrant Christians that eventually have difficulty in paying a rent for a room in the beginning of their lives in this country, for the maximum of one year. There are many people from eastern countries, Brasilians, from ancient Portuguese colonies, etc., and so we have now amongst us some five or six people altogether, from Angola, Ucraina, São Tomé e Príncipe, and Brasil.

We have been busy painting some parts of our building in Paio Pires and we need to do the same to our small daughter church in Fernão Ferro soon after that.

We continue to have our meetings at Paio Pires for young people with some quite good results. I believe these meetings are a bit peculiar in the sense that the actual ages vary from about 12 to 43, due to the fact we have only a small group of teenagers.

A few years ago we didn't have any, so it isn't all that bad to have only a few now. I try to find imaginative ways of satisfying them all, otherwise the teenagers will tend to spend more time with people of other churches in the area and the end of it is... the story of the wolf and the sheep. It has almost happened here some months ago with one sixteen year old girl. But I managed to discern that situation in time to avoid losing her, from our congregation.

To the pastor and other elders, and to all dear brothers and sisters of Therfield Chapel, we send our special greetings, as well as to Doreen, that is so much in our heart too. We wish you the greatest blessings from heaven.