

BRAZIL



# The Second Man on the Mission Field

By Ed Johnson

In May 1974 Dan Johnson left the States with his seven month pregnant wife, Gerri, and two-year-old son, Allen, and headed for the country of Brazil. Excited and energetic, they set out to do God's will for their lives. They landed in São Paulo, eager to begin language study so they could plant churches. After one year in language school, they graduated and received their diplomas, printed in Portuguese on the front and in English on the back—I suppose in case they did not understand the Portuguese.

From São Paulo they went to Orlandia to fill in for Missionary Phillip Allen. They stayed one

year while he was on furlough and then went to Jardinópolis to start a church. They worked feverishly for 12 months in this new church plant, but Dan quickly realized the Lord had not given him the gifts of a church planter. Yet, God had called him to Brazil. Was God wrong? No, the Lord had other plans for him and his family.

God wanted them to work as a supporting family for other missionaries in Brazil—effectively multiplying the labor through teamwork. Dan did not realize it then, but God had given him certain gifts that would help complement church planters and He would use him mightily as a *second man* to spread the Gospel throughout Brazil and to foreign countries.

The Lord led Dan and his family to work with Jimmy Rose, the *grandfather* of independent Baptist missionaries in Brazil, to help his ministry become established and effective for the Lord, and to start a Bible institute. With this new vision, they went to the States on a furlough and came back six months later to Ribeirão Preto.

From that day to this day, they have been faithfully serving different *Pauls* as their *Timothys* in Brazil. They have been laboring for 45 years and their impact has been far-reaching and lasting. They helped establish four works—one in Ribeirão Preto, one in Limeira with fellow BIMI missionary Garry Tyler, one in

Londrina with a Brazilian national, and one in Taubaté. They helped those works become strong, vibrant ministries, each with its own Bible institute. Through these works, scores of men and women have been trained for the ministry. These graduates have become church planters, missionaries, pastors, and Christian workers across Brazil and in different countries of the world.

Dan and Gerri Johnson have assisted in whatever was necessary according to their gifts. They have won souls, counseled, taught, trained, mentored, started Bible institutes, and helped develop Christian resources in Brazil. Because of their willingness to help where needed, thousands of people have been influenced for the cause of Christ through the Bible institutes and the ministries that were started because of them. The ministries they have labored in have been able to multiply themselves because of their labors. If they had not been there, those churches would not have thrived as they did and those Bible institutes would not have been established and flourished as they did.

Missionaries often go to a distant land where the true Gospel has never been preached. They go where there are no Christian resources available—no good Bible colleges, no Christian music in the native language, no radio stations, no books, and no Christian fellowship. While there, they live by faith. Many times they need to pray in the money necessary to feed their families and to pay for the ministry expenses.

Oftentimes the church-planting missionary family does this all alone. They must become carpenters, bricklayers, and electricians. They are the secretaries, treasurers, music



leaders, instrumentalists, youth workers, children's workers, nursery workers, school teachers, principals, administrators, janitors, theologians, counsellors, church-planters, and pastors. They venture into the dark spiritual headquarters of evil principalities away from family and friends, learn a new language and a new culture and then they start a church, endeavoring to establish it into an autonomous, indigenous, self-supporting, and self-propagating work.

Moreover, the missionary family must stay in touch with their supporting churches. They travel to the States while leaving their work under-assisted for extended periods of time or simply stay on the field even though a furlough is desperately needed because there is no one to cover for them. The church planters have to be the *Pauls* of missionary work, often without a *Timothy*, *Silas*, *John Mark*, or *Luke*. The *Pauls* are needed but so are the others!

There is a huge need on the mission field, not just for *lead* missionaries but for *second men* as well! Men and women are needed who are willing to give their lives to help the cause of Christ advance on the front lines of the enemy regardless of their positions. There is a great need for more *Timothys* on the mission field. Perhaps you are not a church planter but want to be used of God on the mission field. There is room for you. Team missions is biblical and it is effective! Every laborer is important!

I am honored and thrilled to work with *second men* like Dan Johnson. He is my hero, my mentor, my assistant in the ministry, and he is my dad! 

