

University of Life

The Mission Bus

Mission

To train and equip the next generation of Christian leaders in Brazil and to give them opportunities to share and develop their faith through missions and discipleship.



Background

Life in the impoverished favela (Brazilian slum) of Aqua Fria, a densely populated, poverty stricken settlement approximately 6 miles from the city center of Fortaleza in northeastern Brazil, is difficult, stressful and often emotionally and spiritually devastating. Basic utilities are inadequate and at best, malfunctioning. Homes are small, privacy rare and living space shared by adults, children and extended family. Violence is widespread and most children are exposed to some form

of abuse, whether physical, emotional, sexual or substance. Economic opportunities are limited or nonexistent so obtaining even the most basic necessities becomes difficult, if not impossible.

With these immense daily pressures, it is not surprising that so many people seek out drugs, alcohol, sexual promiscuity or violence to escape the harsh realities of the favelas. However, we understand that true freedom and fulfillment come from a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Students are taught that once they have received Christ they have something to give to others and need an outlet to share their faith with their community while addressing the physical needs of the favela and injustices faced by the poor.

The Mission Bus

Out of this desire, in 2003, the Mission Bus was born. It is a full size bus customized to become a traveling stage for performances and public events. The bus is used within the program to host community activities and also travels hundreds of miles per year, taking our mission team to needy communities all over the northeast of Brazil. The bus's specific activities include:

- Partnering with and supporting local churches to provide spiritual guidance and support to new Christians
- Performing dance routines, theater and music with Christian messages of hope and healing
- Presenting theatrical performances written by the students that address social issues such as domestic and sexual violence, gang violence, street children, and drug and alcohol use
- Book reading
- Health, nutrition and hygiene education



To learn more about program activities, please contact:

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The Channel is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in 1995. We are a Christian developmental organization with over 25 years of experience working with impoverished children and communities in Brazil.

Our vision is to train and equip the future leaders of Brazil by creating a pathway out of poverty for children through quality education and training. Our project in Fortaleza is CBC (Channel to Brazil for Christ) University of Life and is a non-sectarian institution open to children of any color, race or religion.

The Channel is funded by contributions from individuals and groups who passionately believe that by working together we can improve the lives of children living in poverty, one child at a time.



Results

The Mission Bus has become widely popular, both with the students and the communities they visit and have had impressive results, including:

- Regular excursions where students minister to crowds of thousands
- Connecting large numbers of individuals with churches close to their homes
- In 2006, the team was invited to perform their program in the US



Future Goals and Needs

One of the greatest opportunities for the Mission Bus and the local church in Brazil is to reach into the numerous gaps where the public system is failing. There are opportunities to provide vocational empowerment, health care and education, literacy training, book reading for children, access to the Internet and even basic food and water. Our vision is threefold:

1. To expand the capacity of the program, using our existing partnerships and effectively creating a full time school to train and send young missionaries;
2. To transform the Mission Bus itself into a full time program called "The Caravan of Hope," which could serve as part of the missionary training program and an opportunity to partner with international teams to make a greater impact on the communities we visit. The Caravan would include an expanded health and hygiene component and a focus on creating a network of house churches for more intimate spiritual guidance and support for new Christians and seeking individuals, and;
3. To utilize the network created by the program to establish more local public services and after-school programs like the University of Life.

Together, these components would provide opportunities to reach a broader audience, spend more time with some of the neediest communities in the interior of Brazil and allow the students the opportunity to share their faith in practical, holistic ways. To make this vision a reality, we need:

- At least two full time staff members to be in charge of programming (dance, drama, music, health and hygiene messages, etc.), itinerary planning and coordinating, and networking with local churches and communities
- Classroom facilities and equipment
- On-going funds for travel, communications and programming
- Another bus to serve as the base for the health and hygiene component. This would be available to host volunteer physicians, nurses, nutritionists and dentists who would provide counseling, general health exams for children and adults, obstetrical and gynecological exams and treatment for women, basic dental care, referrals for more complex medical issues, and simple, outpatient procedures.
- A network of health care professionals willing to donate time and supplies
- A network of local churches to help organize house churches and serve as spiritual instructors

How can I help?

Here are some concrete ways that your assistance would benefit the Mission Bus program:



- Support a full time staff member to run and develop the vision of the mission bus. It costs \$850 – \$900 per month to employ one full time staff member (\$10,200 – \$10,800 per year).
- Travel to Brazil to volunteer your time with the Mission Bus team
- Commit to supporting us with daily prayer
- Donate funds to purchase a tank of gas
- Help us fully equip the bus with a sound system, projector, lighting and props
- Donate funds toward the purchase of another bus