



## 2009 In Review

Dear Ones,

I just walked in from a long, hot walk after paying bills and the rent for our project studio. In front of the building where we work, the rows of flowering trees that line the avenue are all in bloom and the outside thermometer is registering 34C. Quite a contrast from some of you who live in the northern hemisphere, facing record cold and unprecedented volumes of snow! Whether this letter finds you hibernating from the cold or seeking shade from the heat, I trust that you are well, no matter what the circumstances around you may be.

### *Busiest year*

After such a long time without hearing from me, some of you have asked me if you'd been dropped from my mailing list. The answer is, no, you are simply feeling the effects of the busiest year of my life! I really admire those of you who keep in touch so faithfully while maintaining grueling schedules... I still have much to learn from you about graciously wearing several hats. In my younger days I had the idea that advancing years brought dwindling activity, but as many of you can attest, that is not always the case.

### *Best year*

The translation project has had a memorable year. It has also been one of the best years of my entire life, personally; a year in which I've been honored to see some long-time dreams come together. See the good hand of our God at work.

### *Biblical Signs Retreat*

In March we co-hosted a small retreat for deaf pastors and leaders from different parts of Brazil to begin discussing key Biblical signs and which ones to use in our videos. After spending two days of enthusiastic debate about the best sign for "temple" versus "synagogue" the consensus was that one weekend is not enough time for such important, stimulating dialogue. We hope to help host more of this kind of gathering in the future. Can you imagine the excitement when we tackle "redemption", "atonement", and suchlike?

### *Results Based Management*

In May, two of our team members were sponsored to attend a management seminar in Paraguay offered by SIL. The training stimulated lots of serious thinking about our direction during the next five years, and has prompted us to seek a godly balance between big dreams and solid, practical reality.

### *New organization*

August brought closure to a process that began over one year before – the legalization of our project as a not-for-profit organization with a business ID recognized by the government. With all the red tape involved, this was no small feat, impossible without the good hand of our God. Our official name is now Instituto Expressao Surda (IES), or in English, Deaf Expression Institute. This status allows us to open a bank account and partner with other entities.

### *New member*

In September, we welcomed our newest team member, Eliana Neves from the northeastern city of Fortaleza. She brings an enthusiastic desire to learn new skills and has a unique role in keeping our signs compatible with what the Deaf from that region understand more clearly.

### *Fellowship in Bogota*

The same week that Eliana arrived, we traveled to a conference held in Bogota, Colombia. For the first time in history, during a full joyous week, 14 Sign Language translation teams working in the Americas met to learn from each other and to build bonds of fellowship and encouragement. Our team now feels like a vital part of a much larger whole, able to help and be helped.

The conference was held in a beautiful Catholic retreat center and the local Christian Deaf community in Bogota did a superb job of making it a very memorable time. Story after story from the different countries touched us deeply. One team in particular inspired us to not take our privileges for granted and to persevere – a threesome from Paraguay has been working on a signed translation of the Bible with no sponsorship at all, filming the stories with a cell phone! There is no way to measure the eternal value of such interaction.