

February 21, 2007

Good news is rare these days. We do see it from time to time but it seems that the papers capitalize on the morbid, gruesome, and macabre. But we have some good news to share! We just finished a three-day youth retreat in which we (our team) did virtually nothing!

How is that good news? Well, our goal as church planters is to help our flock see the importance of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In the process we share how to use many different tools to accomplish that purpose (Sunday School, Youth Group, VBS, Retreats, etc.).

Here in Brazil this time of year revolves around Carnaval (Mardi Gras in the States). It is a time that you, as a believer, need to shield your eyes from all that goes on television and in many of the streets. For years we have assisted in putting on a special retreat to help our teens escape the temptations that come with all of the festivities. I personally have never been "in charge" of one of these retreats but have been a part of several of them.

The good news this year is that our retreat was totally Brazilian run! Three recent graduates of our seminary (two of which are members of New Life Baptist here in Sorocaba) organized and ran the entire four-day retreat. Our church (Hope) was invited to participate and our kids had a blast. Yesterday (Tuesday) to end our time there was a special banquet with a slide presentation and unusual awards given to different teens for their individual contribution to the success of the retreat.

For me it was rewarding to see three young people dedicated to Christ and using their talents to help teens see the importance of "Making a Difference" (which was the theme of the retreat). Everyday there was a time of personal devotions, group devotions, and an evening service. All of which were focused to help our teen see the important decisions that they need to make a difference in their world. It was discipleship in action, and that is good news!

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