

## Report on Escola Cristã João Calvino – Period June and July 2009

It does sometime that we don't write something about our school. The last report was written about May. June and July was very intense. Below is a brief summary about what happened these months in Escola Cristã João Calvino.

### June

We started this month with our Collective and Devotional Moment. Rev. de Graaf told us the message about Pentecost, focusing the fact that the God's Holy Spirit was sent by our Lord to help us and guide us toward Him.



After that, the month gets more intense, because June was the month to elaborate our proposal for budget 2010. The time to end the proposal was until the end of June, so we had to dedicate exclusive attention to it. Lots of meetings and talking to reach the final proposal to send to the church's board of directors. The brothers from the directorship made some questions about the proposal. A budget may looks like something simple to be made, but when you have to argue about each item that compose the budget, justifying the values, it became something very hard. But we thank to Lord that we, with the church's board of director help, could finish that task.

Besides, June was also the time of tests finishing the second bimester (period) that is the time which antecede the school recess here in Alagoas. After the tests we accomplished a meeting with the parents and on the last day of June, we officially we started our time of recess. It was fifteen days, five of which were dedicated to participate in the First Symposium of Christian Education for teachers, organized to support all the



Christian schools connected to churches in the confederation of Brazilian Reformed Churches. Below you will find more information about that event, because first, our teachers together with the coordinator participated in the Brazilian Congress about Difficulties in Learning and Teaching. Though it wasn't a Christian congress, it was a very important moment to teachers to acquire experience with regards to the various sides that compose the educational process. The event was accomplished right here in Maceio. Our teachers really made good use of that conference, which lasted three days.

## July



Our recess time had started, so we didn't have a Collective and Devotional moment, but we had a very special moment participating in the 1<sup>st</sup> Symposium about Christian Education for Teachers, organized on Aldeia Training Center (Camaragibe-PE). The speakers were: Rev. Adriano Gama (IRB Recife-PE). Teacher Moisés Lins (Principal from Escola Bíblica Cristã, São José da Coroa Grande-PE) and Teacher Ronald de Haan (teacher from Credo Christian High School, Langley-BC, CA). The topics covered in the lectures were very edifying for us. We talked about the school as a means of proclaiming God's Word, indicating that is important that all the staff involving in the process can be aware that, so that we can consider the school as a holy place, separated to the glory of Christ. We also reinforce our knowledge about the need that the teacher who teaches also must be the teacher who practice, in other words, the teachers' live must be a lesson for the students. As well we learned a bit about what must be the fundamental difference between Christian and secular schools. The study showed us briefly that the fundamental difference is that the secular schools have as purpose to prepare the men for their own welfare in the society, while the Christian schools have as purpose to prepare the men to glorify God and consequently, they will become responsible before God and the society, seeking to execute well their part, by loving God and the neighbor. In this point was emphasized the big importance of having Christian schools benefiting mainly the members' children, because taking in consider the context of other schools, is clear that sending our children to certain school, may imply in a very big risk. Below you can find a brief article about this situation, taking in consider our context.

Another very positive fact was that in the conference were present representatives of each school. The brothers who organized the conference grudged no pains to reach that goal and



financed the costs with the trips. Besides the content that we could learn, we had good talks, exchange of experience and advices. The conference was accomplished in such a way that we also could rest of a first semester full of challenges. The environment was pretty proper to this end. All of us could participate in the lectures and relax and reflect about what we had learned. We still had energy to organize a praise night, where lots of brothers and sisters could use their gifts to glorify God through songs and prayer.



On July 20th we return to our normal activities starting the 3<sup>rd</sup> bimester of the school year. All the students return to school with lots of energy, while the teachers came back missing their recess time. But they already adapted again to the rhythm of the lessons.

We thank to Lord to the end of our first part of the school year and for the beginning of the second part, asking also his blessing and protection on all of us.

### **Christian Education – needs and challenges within the context of the reformed churches of Brazil**

This topic is too complex, so that it is impossible to treat it effectively in the few lines wrote below. Therefore, with this brief article, it is our goal only to see some facts, as well as give rise to this so relevant question within the context of our small confederation.

Since long time ago, Christian education was a very important topic to the believers. We can see that not only for the parent's worry in seeking to accomplish their promises to educate their children in the way of the Lord in their homes, but also, the Reformed believers worked hard to establish schools, including university. The need of that is justly because the importance of teaching the children early to walk in Lord's way and to offer them a solid basis about God's will in their lives, both in the church and on the society. With this purpose our sister's churches abroad established their schools and support them, taking in consider the great importance and need of having Christian education to offer mental and spiritual development to their children providing a Christian worldview.

Here in Brazil, the missionary work brought the biblical message and in spite of having just few churches, we are blessed having a few schools that, with lot of effort and donations, had been maintained. In total we have for schools: one in Unaí-MG,

one in Maceió-AL, other in São José da Coroa Grande-PE and more one in Grande Recife-PE.

Generally speaking, the majority of the Christian schools were build from parent's initiative, who could see the importance of investing in a school to their children. And looking at this kind of example, each church, together with its members, should look to the Christian education of their children with priority in order to effort themselves to create and keep Christian schools for the glory of God. This concept is very important, but also there is a very important detail that must be took in consideration especially in our context of Brazilian reformed churches and that maybe can be applied to other countries where the reformed work continues with lots of efforts.

It is the fact that our confederation is too small and the churches within it have few members. This means that the present challenge that our churches must confront with priority is accomplishing its role as churches, being ecclesiastically and financially self-sufficient. The ecclesiastic part has been developed by the churches, in spite of not having many men as officers. But the financial part, the churches are on their limits of trying to pay the salaries of their own pastors and to maintain their obligations with the confederation. Some churches still receive financial help from sister's churches to do that. Then, how can we think in develop and support a Christian education of quality, while we are still dragging ourselves to maintain basic things within our churches? If we have to talk about efforts and dedication, we have firstly to dedicate ourselves to accomplish our ecclesiastic commitments, since we are or will be instituted churches. This not means that Christian education is not more a priority, but will we sacrifice a church in favour of a school? A Christian school without a Christian church looks like nonsense. Create a school before having a church, but with the goal to establish a church is admissible, but leaving a church without its basic and essential supplies just to guarantee the existence of a school, we cannot consent.

On the other hand, our children need to be taught for all good work, as it is written in 2 Timothy 3.17. This task may be done by the families at home, but also by the school, but what family and what school? The secular school doesn't have condition to preparer our children to serve God and lots of the churches families don't have condition to teach their children to serve God in all aspect of the life. Lots of families in our context are illiterate and many of people who have condition to teach, have to dedicate time to their secular works, from which they support themselves and also the work on the church with their tithe and offering. So, how can we accomplish this purpose? Leave our children without going to school is not possible, neither advisable, because there is a law requiring the registration of children in a regular school when they are 6 years old. So, how will we develop the Christian education of our children if we don't have condition to maintain our schools with our own resources and without escape from the obligatoriness of sending our children to a regular school? Below we will analyze three alternatives that normally are on the discussion about this topic:

## **1) Sending our children to a secular school (public or private) and look for a way to give reinforcement lessons to the children.**

This is a big challenge. The majority of the public schools, as I have written in other article, are destitute from basics elements for a simple lesson. There are cases that teachers have to buy from their pockets chalks and eraser. The classrooms are overcrowded. Many teachers are completely unmotivated. The directorship doesn't accomplish its role. It is true that there are some public schools that are model and better than lots of private schools, but in spite of that, as we learned on the lecture about the difference between secular schools and Christian schools, the ideology behind the teaching don't seek God's glory. With regards to the private schools, although the problem about materials, teachers and space are fewer, there is still the ideology problem and sometimes another bad problem, when you can see that the school allows every kind of behavior within its environment, fearing to lose the client-parents.

Before this reality, it is needed that the parents will pay attention to give a very solid support to their children. In truth, the situation is so serious that such a support must be looked more as a refutation to what they are learning in the schools than a proper reinforcement lesson. Anyway, the student must be prepared to progress in its studies and at the same time prepared to protect itself from the doctrines of the world. One time more, we can see there a difficult with regards to families who don't have condition to follow completely the teaching of its children. Sometimes it is possible to verify and correct the ethic questions, but when it is about the teaching on arts and science area, it is very hard for many. The parents who worry and dedicate themselves to this task, become real tutors of their children, including studying all the children subjects. This is laudable, but not all parents have this ability or time to dedicate to it. To solve this problem, maybe could be set up a group of members who have condition and time to dedicate themselves to this so good work, giving reinforcement lessons to the mind but also to the soul of the children.

## **2) Education Just at home.**

With regards to this kind of education, we must do two basic questions: **first:** is it allowed by the Brazilian law? **Second:** will all the families have condition to teach their children in every area?

These questions are relevant, because we can't forget that the education enclose several sides of the life. In Brazil, there isn't a resolution in favour to this kind of education. On the contrary, we know a case here in Brazil (<http://fantastico.globo.com/Jornalismo/FANT/0,,MUL698724-15605,00.html>), which the parents took out their children from the school and the State is suing them because they broke the Civil code and also the Statute of the Children and Teenagers. They were fined and get a notification to re-enter their children in a regular school, otherwise they have the risk to lose the custody of the children and even being arrested for one month. Some people can name that as persecution, but also we can ask ourselves if the method of immediately take out the children from the regular school is the first step to be done by the parents who want to teach their children at home. Perhaps with this need, the parents could first create a group with parents

interested in the subject, who could enter with a request in the proper organ, looking for the legal course of getting an authorization. This can last lots of time, maybe years, but it seems that it is a reasonable way of treating this topic. And while an authorization is not issued, the parents have to find other forms to educate their children in a Christian manner.

But, even receiving an authorization for home school, probably it will be a big challenge to the families of low income and to that whose members even completed the primary school level. How to buy books? And about the space to teach the children in an appropriate and productive form? And about the supporting material: Internet and multimedia materials, didactic materials, etc? And mainly: who will be the teachers? Who will observe if they are applying the correct didactic in teaching? Because we know that it is not enough having knowledge, but also it is needed to know how to transmit it and the method that works with one, maybe it cannot work with other child. So it is not so simple treat about home school. It is a subject that needs special attention and study, taking in consideration the Brazilian context and our churches' context.

But in spite of all these inquires above, taking in consider our need to teach our children in the way of the Lord, if the home school was allowed, would still be too much better than sending our children to seculars schools. But we can't close our eyes to the fact that only the minority of the families could be benefited fully with this mean of teaching, then, the majority would need others alternatives to teach their children in its several aspects.

### **3) Sending the children to places where there are Christian schools.**

This alternative would also involve several obstacles. Who will be the parents who would leave their 7 years old children go to a distant state to study? In this point, it should take into consideration that separating father and mother, so that one of them could travel to the other state to take care the child, could bring serious risks to spiritual life of the family. Maybe when the child will be going to high school this idea could be more realistic. Even so, it would demand a high investment with moving, residence, costs with studies and regular visitation. And we have to remember that even sending children to a Christian school will not mean that parents will be free from tutor their children.

The family education is the fundamental complement to children who are being taught in the way of the Lord. Even though the State is taking away from the parents the responsibility to educate their children in first place, it is important that we will pay attention in our role in shaping the character of our children. Mainly if we know that our children also inherit the sin and naturally and easily develop their sinful tendency early. If parents will not be diligent to that point, even sending their children to a Christian school, they will not be accomplishing their votes when baptized them.

Looking at those three alternatives above, we can feel how the places where there are Christian schools are blessed by God. Even thus, is good to point out that from the four schools mentioned in the beginning of this article, anyone offers the complete basic education. The Escola Bíblica Cristã in São José is the one that offer more grades, teaching until grade 9. And even thus, the work of establishing Christian

schools here in Brazil, just became reality because the effort of lots of brothers and sisters who had been touched by the Lord to support our schools. The members of our churches are very grateful because they have a Christian school for their children, although being only for the initial grades. If they could work to support their own school they would do, but really, our present situation is that we have a very long way to walk, and the first step that we have to do is to be self-sufficient ecclesiastically and financially, being able to maintain the work in our churches.

Without doubt, having a Christian school to send our children is an enormous satisfaction, even knowing that they will not study all their school time in that environment. The three alternatives above show the great challenge of educating our children, mainly to those families who live in a place without a Christian school.

While the Lord doesn't give us more conditions to develop better our mandate as parents, we will have to work with the legal options within our reach. Nevertheless, those options are very hard to put in practice in a satisfactory way. The parents must, then, pay the double of the attention and participate actively on the school life of their children.

At the same time, we deeply thank to God because He raises people with condition and desire to support projects like ours. We thank for the effort of our brothers and sisters. We want that you have sure that you are contributing for a great work, because you are helping families throughout the education. Have sure that we are always remembering you in our prayers.

May God be glorified in everything that we do.

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This report is available on our website:

[www.irbmaceio.com.br/ecjc/atividades.php](http://www.irbmaceio.com.br/ecjc/atividades.php)

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