

by ***Leonard Strydom***

We Arrive

The fatigue of a bad night's sleep couldn't compare with the overwhelming excitement we experienced flying into Brazil from South Africa. Later that first day we jumped off the metro at Avenida Paulista; a popular road in Sao-Paulo known for shopping, hanging out and from what I could observe also passionately smooching in public. I was overwhelmed by the sheer amount of people in this city of high-rise buildings and skyscrapers – just under 12 million people to be exact. In one city. One. City.

That's when I realised; how silly it seemed: We were a team of thirty-two people, who had come from South Africa, the Isle of Man and Mauritius to a city of twelve million people. We came because we, through Four12, are in partnership with three local churches and we believe that through them we can have a great impact on this city and in so doing the rest of Brazil.

Starting Small

Jesus and the apostles, I'm sure, would have had total confidence in this small group of people to reach a city. In fact, starting with a small group is what I believe Jesus prefers. Think about the fact that he spent most of his three and a half years of public ministry with a core group of only twelve disciples. Think about the time Jesus went completely out of his way (and I mean geographically) to reach out to an adulterous woman fetching water at a well. Think about in Acts the time when Paul planted a very significant church in Philippi by leading only three people to Jesus.

Those twelve disciples were instrumental in the spreading of Christianity across the globe, the woman at the well shared the gospel of Christ with an entire city, and the Philippian church is known as one of the healthiest churches we read about in the New Testament. From what I can gather, God oftentimes likes to start small and uses high-quality groups to reach large quantities of people. Although it seems contrary to sound thinking, I believe that in Brazil God wants to start with this small group of committed believers and reach multitudes.

Base Churches

When considering this I can't help thinking of the story of the famous "four-minute mile". For many years it was believed that running a mile (or about 1.6 km's) in under 4 minutes was impossible. Many tried, but everyone failed. Until one man persevered and made it. On the 6th of May 1954, Roger

Bannister finally made it. The fact that he made it was however not what makes this an incredible piece of history. It was rather what came soon after and how his accomplishment changed the way people thought. Accomplishing this incredible feat showed others that it was possible. It broke an unseen barrier set up in the minds of people, which once broken had a ripple effect that we still speak about today. In that same year, only two months later, two other athletes made it and from there the floodgates were open. Since that day, hundreds if not thousands have accomplished the seemingly impossible. All because one man made it.

One church partnering properly with the apostolic, as demonstrated through Four12, and seeing the life of God break out amongst them can have a radical impact on many others.

I believe the same applies to local churches. One church breaking through into more can have a radical impact on the mindsets of so many others. One church partnering properly with the apostolic, as demonstrated through Four12, and seeing the life of God break out amongst them can have a radical impact on many others. Leaders opening up their lives and in turn becoming healthy leaders who lead healthy churches can encourage others to completely lay down their own lives for the call of God. Seasoned leaders sharing the mistakes made in the past can help new church plants succeed from the get go and in turn lead to more healthy churches being planted. Sending in teams like us on this trip and partnering with each other can help small churches become large (and healthy) churches.

Call me an optimist but I'll end by saying: Twelve million people – bring it on!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Leonard studied theology at [TMT Bible School](#) in Wellington, where he lectured for a few years before jumping into the deep end of full-time ministry and becoming a part of the Joshua Generation Church eldership team. He is an avid rock climber and adventure enthusiast. You can follow him on [Facebook](#).

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