



‘Dentro das Quatro Paredes’

‘Within These Four Walls’

In this month’s update, theologian and researcher Dr. Vanessa Carvalho de Melo introduces us to a new research initiative in **Brazil**, which is the first step in a process of establishing work to prevent violence within Christian homes.

‘Three out of ten Brazilian women suffer domestic violence at some point in their lives. The country has high rates of violence against women, ranking fifth in the world.... in an environment where many survivors don’t report violence because of shame and fear of retaliation, evangelical churches have the opportunity to be places of shelter and guidance for hurting women.’

(Mariana Albuquerque 2024, in ‘Christianity Today’)

Paz e Esperança (PyE Brazil) started a pioneering work in Brazil in 2018, in response to the increasing need for human rights protection. As the largest country in South America and with a population of 203 million (IBGE 2023), the Paz e Esperança team set out to draw together a movement of Christian professionals and academics across a range of regions to engage with the challenges of injustice and high rates of violence.



The new initiative '*Dentro das Quatro Paredes*' will include research, education and awareness-raising on the particular subject of domestic violence. Dr. Vanessa, who will be leading the baseline research study, explains:

"The research will look in detail at how faith influences attitudes towards violence in Christian homes, and at the incidence of violence in Christian homes".

The research will follow the same approach and methodology already used by Paz y Esperanza in other Latin American countries, in order to provide comparable data. The research questions will be discussed in focus groups in churches across the five state capitals of Brazil.

The first phase of the research is being developed. Participants of the focus groups will be invited from across the different denominations, representing the major groups of historic churches, Pentecostal and new Pentecostal churches. The research will look at participants' attitudes towards, and experiences of domestic violence

The findings from this initial research will be presented back through webinars and a course, in partnership with Instituto DeJanira. The aim is to identify future areas of work for Paz e Esperança as it engages with churches across Brazil and finds ways of strengthening families in positive, healthy and peaceful ways.

This research process will emulate the experience of PyE in Peru and other countries, where similar studies have resulted in sustained work:

'The research results will help us to promote homes where good treatment of men, women and children is a lasting sign of the transforming power of Christ.'

(*'Dentro de las Cuatro Paredes'*, report from Peru 2013)

Please pray for this pioneering research study, and for the necessary resources and expertise to engage and equip churches across Brazil to change attitudes and to prevent violence and abuse.

'If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.'

Romans 12: 18

For further information on the issue of Domestic Violence in Brazil please refer to '*Domestic Violence is Rampant in Brazil. How should Pastors Respond?*', Mariana Albuquerque, '*Christianity Today*' April 2024

Summary copies of the earlier studies in Peru and Ecuador are available (in English) on our website at:

<https://www.pazyesperanza.org/uk/get-involved/>.

Research of this nature across a country the size of Brazil is a considerable expense. Please share in these costs by making a donation on-line at:

<https://www.justgiving.com/pazyesperanza>