

The Routs – an introduction

I (Phil) grew up in a Christian family in Reading. I first came to Brazil at the age of 18, with the old South American Mission Society, to work with street children on a project run by a church in the north east of the country. Subsequently I went to the University of Manchester and studied Physiology (Biological Sciences). Whilst there I became strongly involved in the Christian Union. After graduating I spent a year on the UCCF Relay Program, being trained and disciplined by a staff worker whilst serving the local CU group.

The opportunity arose to commit a second year to serving an IFES (International Fellowship of Evangelical Students) movement in another country, and I was keen to do that as I already sensed a calling to long-term cross-cultural service. That was my first involvement with Latin Link, who became my 'sending agency' through the Stride program. I arrived here in January 2004 and stayed for 18 months, working with the ABUB, the Brazilian IFES movement.

Carolina was actually the first person I met when I stepped off the bus in the city of Ribeirão Preto, on the day that I arrived! Her parents had converted from Roman Catholicism when she was a child; in 2004 she was studying for a degree in teaching and was also strongly involved in her CU group. Our meeting was not love at first sight - we took the best part of a year to start 'going out', and when I broached the subject with her, she was taken by surprise! However, by the time I returned to the UK (July 2005) I had managed to get a ring on her finger. :-)

For the next two years I worked alongside the pastor at my home church in Reading, mainly with the youth group, whilst also studying part-time at the Cornhill Training Course in London (two days a week). We got married in 2006, and Carolina spent that first year doing the Relay program at the University of Reading. After this we (re-)applied to Latin Link and then spent one semester at All Nations Christian College before moving to Brazil, at the end of 2007.

We moved initially to Bauru, in the middle of São Paulo state, where I became the only full-time staff worker in a region with 1.5 million university students and over 500 universities! We spent 7 years in Bauru; Carolina got a job at a bilingual school where she worked until Benjamin was almost 2, at which point we took the decision for her to resign and concentrate on family life; my role was quite demanding and required regular travel.

At the end of 2014 I stepped down from my role with ABUB, leaving two full-time regional staff in my place. We decided to move to São Paulo for me to do further theological study. We made this move in 2015. Since then I (Phil) have been focusing on study, but also serving at our local church (which CtK members Andrew and Joan know well) and some other

ministries (e.g. mentoring with ABUB folks). Carolina worked part-time as a teacher for one semester, but no suitable opportunity for ongoing work arose after that, so she has taken the opportunity to do some study too, amongst other things.

Our vision for the future is to serve the church in Brazil through teaching and training. In the long term I, in particular, hope to do that by helping pastors to preach and teach the Bible better. We are also passionate about men's, women's, and family ministries. Our expectation is that I will take up a role as a pastor somewhere in Brazil, presumably next year. I would hope to be having a broader ministry, teaching and training and encouraging pastors in their preaching & teaching, in about ten years.

We are members of the Latin Link Brazil team, which unfortunately has halved in size since our first team conference back in 2008. In 2010 I became an exec member, and in 2012 I was elected as team leader, a role which I held for four years. Carolina has served as team secretary since 2012.