

Hello Everyone,

January was a busy month. I participated as one of the interpreters, co-coordinators and teachers for a month-long intensive training for leaders in deaf ministry. There were 31 students — 8 deaf and 23 hearing — who participated from all over Brazil. It was a very comprehensive, albeit quick course. Some of the subjects covered were: theology of missions, history of the bible, systematic theology (very quick overview), discipleship, interpreting, deaf ministry strategies, sign language (for the hearing members of the course), Portuguese grammar (for the deaf participants), communication, leadership, Bible-study methods and the first part of a practical internship (the second part is to be completed by participating in the evangelism projects that will be held in various locations during the year).

It was very stretching for me in several ways. One was interpreting such academic subjects from Portuguese into sign language! Very much more difficult than interpreting a conversation or even the majority of church services here. I also was the teacher for the class on interpreting, the challenge there being the short amount of time allotted for the class (8 hours) and also teaching it all in Portuguese! :) During the second week of class Marilia's mom had a stroke and Marilia went to stay at the hospital with her mom. Praise the Lord, she recovered quickly and within a week left the hospital to live with one of her other children (Marilia's sister).

I spent more time with the deaf students as I was interpreting most of the time, and it was amazing to see God's work in their lives during the course. There were many tears (sometimes of frustration, as the material presented in the classroom was very difficult and sometimes in response to what God was teaching them). I know that each one of the students left with much to think and pray on and much learned. My prayer is for a depth in each student's relationship with God and a dedication, first and foremost, to the glory of His name.

My questions in regards to what I should do this year, 2011, are mainly because I believe that God has called me to missions long-term and I want to be preparing for the next term during the remaining time I have here (before my first home stay — probably in mid-2012). I have been seeking direction as to how I can best serve the deaf of Brazil and how/where God would have me serve. I long for God's name to be exalted and glorified among the deaf people of Brazil, I pray for true heart transformation and deep relationship with God.

This time that I've been in Rio (almost a year now) has been an "internship" of sorts — time for me to observe and learn with Marilia and for me to seek direction for the future. I am praying about returning to Arapiraca to spend more time with Patricia and Flavio, the deaf missionary couple with whom I spent a month in April/May of last year. The goal in spending more time with them would be to disciple/train an interpreter to partner with them in their ministry. As I discovered first-hand in April, their ministry is severely "handicapped" due to the lack of communication that they have with the families of the deaf. They have a strong desire to minister to the families as well as the deaf and feel that this would be remedied with the help of an interpreter. There is a young woman who is part of their church, married to a deaf man, who wants to be involved, but is a new believer and her husband is not yet a believer. Flavio and Patricia are hoping that either this young woman, or another member of the church would be called to partner with them in their ministry.

Pray for continued guidance and direction in this regard. I am so grateful for your continued prayers!

Love you all!

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Ellie Lundquist
Converge Worldwide/BGC missionary
Deaf Ministry—Brazil