

Brazil 2011

"God took me on a journey"

This year's Brazil Mission Trip report was written primarily by new team member, Marguerite Overs. It's very exciting to get her fresh perspective on our work in Brazil.

Marguerite began by saying, "God took me on a journey to the southern-most state in Brazil, Rio Grande Do Sul. He showed me beautiful scenery, magnificent waterfalls, and the hearts of the Brazilian people. I met fourth generation Hunsrik families. I met Brazilian Christians worshiping in house churches. I met ten of the most wonderful children who live in the mountain area called Eagles' Nest."

Only God could have called out the gifted and diverse team that flew to Brazil to serve on our church's seventh



Brazil mission team. Whatever skill was needed, God had already provided. This year's team, five of whom were returning team members, was flexible beyond measure, and they willingly did whatever was needed throughout the week.

The Portuguese/Spanish/German language skill of the team was a *huge* help in communicating with the German-Brazilians we met throughout the week.

This year's team was constantly testifying to God's presence in their lives as well as openly showing and sharing God's love. Marguerite says, "I was not afraid to speak to all who came across my path! The few words of Portuguese I did learn were put to good use. I used others to translate for me and when they were not available, I spoke very bad Spanish!"

For three days, we traveled by bus to Eagles' Nest where team members taught Bible stories and creative



Bible activities to ten children, ages 3–14. The children loved playing soccer with their new ball we provided. Tatiane was the stay-at-home mom who cared for these children during the day while their parents work. Marguerite continues, "Her niece Viviane was ten

years old, and we became fast friends. She would correct my bad Portuguese every time I opened my mouth. By the second day, she ran up to me and threw her arms around me and said 'Te amo!' ('I Love you!') God's unconditional love knows no language barrier. By the last day she was showing me all her special places where she liked to play, her house, and where she kept her treasures. I gave her my handkerchief with a map of Texas on it and showed

her where I live. I still see her face every morning when I wake up. Her smile was so beautiful. Two of the girls were twins, Marileia and Sedineia, both six years old. On the first day as we were singing praise and worship songs, Sedineia came and sat on my lap and fell asleep. She trusted me and let me hold her while she slept. We had so much fun learning together and laughing."



As always, attending house church is a highlight of each mission trip to Brazil. Encouraging the believers is a primary goal each time we go. "At the first house church meeting I did not have the opportunity to verbally share my testimony," Marguerite said, "but I handed it out at the end. Neiva, a young mother, after reading my testimony, came to Daniel and asked to speak with me after the evening concluded. Daniel translated for her as she began to share how my testimony had touched her heart.

She began to cry as she poured out the pain in her heart. Her marriage was in trouble, and she told me she didn't love her husband any more. She was separated and felt God was asking her to work it out, but she didn't know how. I shared with her how Mark and I had been separated twice during our 31-year marriage. I encouraged her to seek the Lord and focus on Him and told her she could do anything through Christ...even learn to love her husband again no matter what happened in her marriage. I realized that God loved this woman so much that He brought me 6,000 miles to speak directly to her. I am humbled that God could use me and my marriage, with all its imperfections, to lift up my sister in Christ."



Marguerite boldly shared her testimony to one and all. One person was our bus driver, Silmar. She said, "Silmar was a Hunsrik man who told me his family immigrated to Brazil four generations ago. Through Lillian I talked to Silmar as we drove all over southern Brazil. The Lord spoke to me about Silmar and asked that I share my testimony with him and a letter I wrote in English about the Lord. The last day I asked Lillian to tell him that God had put him in our lives for a purpose and that I wanted to share my heart with him about the Lord. I asked him if he knew anybody that could read English. He said his

daughter could read English so I know that, not only him, but also his family, would be able to share what I wrote. My testimony was about Jesus' faithfulness and love over the last 16 months since my husband Mark died."

After we returned to Texas, Missionary, Daniel Allen, wrote that the owner of the bus company had come to his house and was asking about God. "Silmar must have shared with him about what he had experienced the week he drove us back and forth," Marguerite said. "Glory be to God!"

For the first time, our adult team painted while in Brazil. One of the men whose family attends house church in Travassao built a garage-like structure so their house church would have a place large enough for them to meet. Part of our team went out one morning and, along with the man and his children, painted the building which now just looks more finished.



Another *huge* ministry on this year's mission trip was the Bible story distribution at the Hunsrik festival in Herval. The mayor invited Missionary, Daniel Allen, and our team to come, and, with his blessings, we handed out Hunsrik coffee mugs, T-shirts, and a DVD with 79 Bible stories in Hunsrik. For ten years, Daniel has been working on getting the scriptures translated into the heart language of the German-Brazilians. Seeing this finally come to fruition is a God-sized miracle. This school year the Herval schools have approved teaching Hunsrik to Kindergarten through 4th grade. They will be using materials Daniel and his translation team have completed along with the scripture DVD and printed Bible story translation to teach the children. We know God's Word will not return void!

After the festival, our team went to the house church in Herval. Even for team members who could not speak the language, the love of Christ was so evident as team members greeted "old" friends at house church. There was so much shared joy as, together, the group joined in lifting praises to God through music.

Even with all the ministry going on, our team did find time to improve the economy of the German-Brazilian communities. Marguerite said, "I had a very curious encounter with a shopkeeper named George. I went in to buy some jewelry for my daughters and myself. When I made my selections, he became very excited and told me that he had never sold so much jewelry at once. He was so excited that he couldn't write down the dollars to add them up. I told him that God had brought me to him to bless him. Through his English and Spanish we began a conversation. He told me that his grandfather fled the Nazi invasion of Austria and that he was a Jew. I told him that my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was a Jew also and

that I was a Christian and followed Jesus. I handed him my testimony as we completed the sale. I pray for George every day now."

A final outreach occurred when the team visited the Fire station in Nova Petropolis. Daniel Allen had made this connection when, after the tornado struck over two years ago, Daniel worked with the firemen to distribute Southern Baptist Disaster Relief monies to help families whose houses were torn apart by the destructive weather. Our 2009 team had visited the firemen and delivered gifts to them just to show our appreciation for their sacrificial service for their community. This year, we again went bearing gifts as a Georgetown fireman had given us T-shirts and badges to share with them. In all we do, we keep planting seeds and watering others for the Kingdom.



The mission trip didn't end just because we left southern Brazil. Marguerite said, "On our way home I sat next to a young man on the flight from Porto Alegre to Sao Paulo and began another conversation through Lillian. He was flying to Uruguay on business. I handed him my testimony and after reading it he told me that God had placed me in his life. He had missed his original flight and felt God had put him on our flight next to me. His grandfather had been an Assembly of God pastor. God used me to speak to him about His love for him."

After returning home, the missionaries wrote expressing appreciation to the team, saying "Thank you for bearing the Fruit of the Spirit!! We really enjoyed so much having you guys here with us and being able to serve God together with you all! You are indeed a blessing from God! We are so thankful that He has put you into our lives! Thank you for being the hands and feet of



Jesus. God gave Tatiane a dream when they were going through a really difficult time. In the dream God told her that He was sending people to help them. Tatiane shared the last day on the mountain top that God had fulfilled her dream! You all are a part of all that God is doing here!! Thank-you for all of the sacrifices that each one of you made to come and serve God together with us here in Southern Brazil! Thank you all so much for allowing Jesus to live His life through you. People's hearts and lives are being changed forever for Jesus Christ!"

