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Teresina Brasil Week 1

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Queido Familia,

Well this week has been quite eventful, and I don't have too much time to write, well I still have an hour but I won't be able to reply to all the emails I got through snail mail, still getting accustomed to Brasil.

I love Brasil. The country is incredible.

I guess I should first start with the journey there...

We were painting in the Prieto's trailer, getting it ready to sell and then we got calls for Transfers and then after that a call from president saying that I was leaving for Brasil on Wednesday. Boy was that like Christmas! Elder Yorgason and I went on the transfer bus, me for the first time, and we stayed at the apartment of the office elders in the TLM. The following morning, we went on a bus with all the missionaries going home that week and the AP's to the airport. We get to experience that twice, hahaha. So we went to the airport and had an 8 hour lay over in Dallas, where we explored the entire airport, Elder Yorgason and I, and then we got on a gigantic plane with 3 rows of seats, with a total of like 300+ people probably. A lot of which were Brasilians. Each seat had a tv where you could watch movies or see where the plane was and how fast it was going and stuff... oh the temptations of the world. Don't worry, I didn't watch any, even though there was Harry Potter 7, Chronicles of Narnia and other movies. I thought that was funny how we were on a 10 hour plane ride like that. Didn't get too much sleep at all.

Was awake for about 2 days with roughly 2-5 hours of sleep. Fun fun! We arrived in São Paulo airport and went through customs. Boy was that an experience. We were met by the church Brasil Travel agent and when he gave us our papers and led us to our gate an everything, I felt like a secret agent because of the whole thing. One of the handles on my large suitcase, the one that can extend broke which was a bumber but oh well.

We had a 3 hour discussion with a man from Brasil who turned out to be an inactive member. Of course it was in Português. We then had a 3 hour ride to Teresina. This place is amazing.

Upon arriving in Brasil, we instantly felt the humidity, and it is always hot here. We met President Diaz, who turns out to be 6 feet 5 inches tall. I didn't know that, but turns out he is a legend here in Brasil. He worked for the Church Educational System. He's really awesome. We had dinner with him at Subway, (go figure they had one in Brasil!) the cashiers thought it was funny that we couldn't really speak in Português. Ah well... The food was good. We then went to the house of the secretarios. There were about 20 missionaries there because they just had leadership training. We met all the leadership in TLM too.

I've been serving with the AP's the past few weeks, and we'll be serving with them for another week. I don't know where my first area will be but the people here are awesome!

Every day since arriving, I have been sweating. A lot. We work really hard, walk a lot, and talk to a lot of people every day. For the whole past few days I've been speaking in nothing but Português which is really cool because I remember a lot more than I thought I did.

I had the opportunity to teach an elder how to do the Rubix Cube, he's a Brazilian so I had to speak Português which was fun.

Being here is awesome but also very humbling... The state of Piauí is very poor, this is the most poor part of Brasil, and a lot of people don't have too much. There are so many motorcycles here in Teresina. There will be like 3 people on one motorcycle. Lots of busses, and taxi's as well. Lots of little shops, I have eaten a lot of Brazilian food. Its delicious. Seeing the conditions that these people live in, and comparing it to times where I've complained about something not being ideal in my life, or remembering people complain about stuff before is kind of sad to think about. These people are a very happy and humble people. Their hearts are open, everyone has been friendly, even people that are drunk are friendly. First time I met this one person: Jefferson Gomes, he said loudly "We love Americans!" He's a really cool guy (also he said it in English)

I am so grateful for the chance to serve here in Brasil.

A little girl here, when she found out that I can't understand Português that well asked "Ele está doente?" which means "Is he sick?" It was funny. I am already getting better and better with my Português.

Os Brasileiros são ótimo, e o trabalho aqui é muito bom! Eu etive falando no Português lingua pelos quatros dias passado. Já eu amo Brasil, e as pessoas aqui estão muito legal!

Just to sum it all up:

President Diaz is awesome,
the people here are incredibly awesome,
the country is amazing, its so green,
there is more work than we are able to do,
the missionaries here are a lot different than the missionaries in the TLM,
the food here is delicious,
Not so many bugs here.

I'll try to get pictures but I am still getting accustomed to everything. I didn't have too much culture shock but I had really really bad jet lag. I won't be able to reply to emails other people have sent for a little until I get more of a hang of the area and the daily schedule.

Julia, congrats on getting into Concert Choir!!!

I'm glad you're all doing well. I'm doing great. Hopefully I'll get the language down better soon. Speaking all the time and hearing it all the time, and seeing it all the time will be good.

Love you all a lot!

Love,
-Elder Phillip Larsen

P.S. Ask specific questions about Brasil if you want and I'll answer them as best as I can.

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