

**A lot of humbling, a lot of work;
Summer mission changes teacher's perspective**

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Tres Ranchos, Brazil (LAMNS)—For Lissa Crowell, the distance from her home in Thousand Oaks, California to this small vacation town in the heart of Brazil is more than several-thousand miles. It is also an enormous gap in lifestyle and culture.

“I usually have my summers off,” the 26-year-old teacher says. “Last year I just played all summer, but this year I thought I could do more with my summer than just play around.” So, Lissa looked for something that would be totally different, and she found it on the mission field in Brazil, working in a short-term experience through the Latin America Mission (LAM).

“I thought it would be really cool to give myself to the Lord’s work and let Him work through me

out of my comfort zone,” she explains. “I let the Lord be my number one thing, getting me to do things that I would not normally do.”

Lissa spent several weeks working at Estancia Victoria, a large Christian Camp located 200 miles south of the capital, Brasilia. From cooking in the kitchen to preparing the lodging and activity buildings for campers to serving as a counselor for a dozen bubbly Brazilian teenagers, she says that the hard work has taught her some lessons. “I’ve been doing a lot of work that I don’t normally do in the States, and I’ve realized that Americans are very lazy,” she says. “I’ve learned to renew my mind and to search God’s mind instead of mine and to discover that God can do what he wants through me.”

The experience of manual labor and working in a foreign culture has involved “a lot of humbling and a lot of work,” she says.

Estancia Victoria serves as a campground for church groups and Christian organizations and also as a training center for Christian camp directors from all over Brazil. Camp Director, Dinho Pereira, a missionary with the Latin America Mission, says that there is a three-year waiting list for those who want to receive training at the facility.

During her time at the camp, Lissa says that she has learned much from her Brazilian friends. “God has taught me through the people to live a lot simpler,” she explains. “You don’t have to have a lot of stuff to be really, truly happy. People are what matters, like family and other Christians, instead of stuff.”

She reflects that people are similar around the world. “There might be another language, but people have the same problems and the same needs,” she says.

And, she says that her experiences will affect how she teaches science this fall at Chaparral Middle School in Moorpark, California. “My first impression (of Brazil) was that there were going to be a lot of Indians. I also had read that most of Brazil is poor. In the States these people would be considered poor, but to me they are not that at all. They have enough to live and that’s enough for them.”

Lissa says that she also likes the lack of racial tension in Brazil. “There are so many races all mixed together here,” she says. “They don’t have any prejudice that I have seen against any races.”

The short-term missionary says that she wants to share what she has experienced with her church, the Evangelical Free Church of Conejo Valley where she works with Junior High youth. “I want to share this with my youth pastor,” she says. “Maybe we can bring some kids here. There is a great opportunity for ministry here.”

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