

The Lockhart Family

MISSIONARIES TO BRAZIL

May 2011

Dear Praying Friends,

"But let patience have her perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." These words give comfort and strength to our hearts as we look back over the last months of our lives here in Brazil. When we last wrote, we were fully engaged in our Portuguese language studies. We felt that things were finally starting to make more sense, and were quite pleased with our progress. Jeremy was starting to preach in Portuguese, and Esther was starting to be able to converse more and more. However, our studies came to an abrupt stop during the first week of March. Ulcers appeared on Esther's legs. They began to grow and eat holes in her legs, the largest being about the size of a softball and going almost all the way down to the bone.

At first, the doctor here thought that they were tropical ulcers and did some tests; meanwhile, the ulcers continued to grow. By God's grace and protection, a couple of tropical disease specialists from the USA heard about Esther's problem and contacted us. We were able to send pictures of the ulcers, as well as the results of the tests the doctor had done here. The next day, our doctor here, as well as the ones in the States, came to the consensus that these were not tropical ulcers; instead, they were the result of an autoimmune disease called pyoderma gangrenosum. Basically, her body was attacking itself. This disease is often associated with ulcerative colitis, with which Esther has already been struggling. The doctor immediately started her on extremely high dosage of steroid treatment to try to lower her immune system. Meanwhile, especially with the dirty conditions of our part of Brazil, Esther had to stay at home to keep from catching any secondary infections. We both had to set aside our language schooling once again to care for these medical needs.

Since that first week of March, we have gone one to two times per week to get the ulcers checked, cleaned, and wrapped up again. Day by day they have begun to heal and close up. As of today, they are all closed up except for the largest one. Originally, the doctor thought we would need to do a skin graft to help close up the largest ulcer because the wound had gone so deep. Now, though, it looks as if we might make it through without needing the graft. Esther is pretty much back up to full strength again, and we both started back in our language studies again.

We passed our one-year mark here in Brazil during this time as well. This past year has been full of ups and downs. We have had to stop our language studies so many times that, although we have lived here over a year now, we have really only had about 8 months worth of classes. Although we don't understand all that God is doing, we know that God wants us to be perfect and entire, lacking nothing! God has taught us much through this past year, and we know that these trials are necessary and beneficial for the work to which God has called us. Whatever struggles may come our way, we are grateful for the privilege of serving our Lord here in Brazil!

On a more exciting note, we were overjoyed to go last week to the airport to pick up our co-workers, the Schrock family. Originally, we had all planned on arriving together to start our work. The Lord saw otherwise. Their visas were finally approved, and we are now endeavoring to help them get settled in to the new culture and language here in Brazil. We praise the Lord for bringing them here safely, and look forward to the day we all have this language down, and are ready to go out and plant a church together!

Gratefully,
Jeremy and Esther Lockhart



Preaching in Portuguese



Easter Sunday



Esther's Doctor

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