

HOWe THINGS ARE...

December 2004

Feliz Natal!: Merry Christmas!

See, I picked up a Portuguese word or two in Brazil. I can also say, "I don't speak Portuguese" and "He/she doesn't live here": phone answering phrases...

As I'm writing this, my time in Brazil is almost up. It's been very eventful (crime-free, but eventful nonetheless):

- I went fishing for the very first time in my life and learned I like it. I caught piranha (although somebody else was responsible for whacking them once caught so they're out of commission and can't bite you).
- I traveled to Brasília, the capital of Brazil, to work on the computers in the office there. Brasília is a super cool city ---really enjoyed it.
- I had the most fun playing the "I recognize that Portuguese word" game visiting churches. You wouldn't think this would be as fun as it is. There's no chance I'm actually going to get any sort of meaning out of a sermon with my 30 word Portuguese vocabulary. Portuguese sermons sound more or less like the adults in Charlie Brown cartoon specials, except interspersed in the meaningless babble are recognizable words. I wait and listen for a word I know and sometimes I recognize a whole phrase (like "God's Word says"). It's like being on safari and looking for animals, except you're listening and you're looking for words.
- After several unsuccessful trials, I managed to cook edible food.

And the coolest thing happened while I was in Brasília. I'm working on this belief I claim I have: God is in control regardless of the outcome and therefore, my happiness/sense of self-worth/general well-being doesn't depend on circumstances. It's true of course so it would be logical to acknowledge truth by my behavior. However, I tend toward behavior that would suggest I'm not firmly convinced of the truth. My happiness is very much dependent on my perceived success (I mostly measure success by my own, not God's, definition) plus I behave as though I'm in control of the situation.

So there was this Brasília project and I asked God for success for this particular job and added the "even if He does not" part. ---"Even if He does not" from Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego: "Our God is able to save us from the fire and even if he does not, our faith isn't shaken".--- Even if the project doesn't go the way I'd hope, still the project will have gone the way God intended because this is God's, not my, work. In the past, I often remember to pray "even if He does not", but generally, still get agitated if He doesn't. I am so excited about the work I did in Brasília and it wasn't a smashing success by the way I would've measured things had I not been doing the whole attempting to acknowledge the truth -- that God has a plan and it's his deal, not mine. I'm just so pleased (forward progress, such a good thing).

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