

Shout Out to My Peeps

Okay, this is my first article....ever. Just as a little warning for all the grammar majors out there, I am a 17 year old who is at the peak of Portuguese language school and has become a moron in two languages.

After about four months here I feel that I am finally starting to get a grasp on my Portuguese speaking skill, unfortunately at the expense of my "refined" English speaking skills. My grammar has become "atrocious" (I had to spell check the word 4 times to get it right by the way) and I struggle with the pronunciation of English words with more than 3 syllables. Meanwhile my Portuguese, while it's getting better, is NOWHERE near fluent or proficient. So talking to people is very very frustrating. Although being a moron in two languages does wonders for your skills at charades (ever try "charading" the cost of fish?)

I run into fellow "Americanos" down here on a semi-regular basis. They all ask if I have had trouble with adapting to the culture. My answer is usually no. The Brazilians are very warm and friendly people that generally are very caring and accepting and I enjoy spending time with them.

One thing that occasionally catches me off guard is all the comments about my nationality (I was adopted from Korea.) Brazilians aren't as culturally sensitive as we are so they just treat everyone like a really good friend. I guess that could be a good thing but I would think it would make International Diplomacy interesting.

As an example- I just came back from a Church Camp with the theme "A Voyage to the Orient". Now being full-blooded Korean I could right now be calling my lawyers filing for an Exploitation of the Korean lawsuit. I was dressed up like a Samurai in paper crochet, forced to walk down to the front of the auditorium dressed like a delivery boy for a Chinese restaurant (ironically I did work for a Chinese restaurant in the States) and walk around with a box of Chinese food and a little oriental hat. Now being a 17 year old who WILL NOT even let his parents sing Happy Birthday to him in a public restaurant this was a stretch for me. I just had to go with the flow and tolerate the weird looks when I couldn't make a swan out of a napkin.

Surprisingly though one of the hardest things here doesn't have anything to do with strange food, weird words, and odd diplomatic policies. It's the basic principle of trusting God. A lot of times I'd like to think that I can do most things under my own steam. Not necessarily wanting to have to fall back on anyone else. However; being here has taught me that if I want to make it....I have to turn myself 100 percent over to God and let him take control of my life.

See some pictures on the next page.



Me and my friends on the beach in Santarém



Me with my friends at church camp



Me and friends on A Voyage to the Orient