

Vision as teenager leads to journeyman service as college student

NORTHERN BRAZIL (BP) – When she was 16 years old, Haylee Belcher felt called to serve Christ overseas.

Six years later, God sent Haylee to work in the Amazon. As a student at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Okla., Haylee went on several short-term mission trips to northern Brazil and sensed the Lord leading her to serve there.

In July 2018 she began her Journeyman term, serving in the Amazon through Southern Baptists' International Mission Board (IMB).

Journeyman are college graduates under the age of 30 who are sent by their respective churches as missionaries for a two-year term.

Haylee said her ever-growing closeness to the Lord is one of the most rewarding parts of her experience as a Journeyman.

“At the beginning of my term it was easy to feel lonely or discouraged because I didn't know the language yet and couldn't build community with those around me,” she said. “I really had to lean into the Lord for comfort and encouragement.”

During her time in Brazil, Haylee has seen God at work not only in her life, but in the lives of her Brazilian friends. Ana, a national friend, began to attend Bible study conducted by Haylee and fellow IMB Journeyman Jazz Jones at a neighbor's house.

The more Ana attended the Bible study, the more she asked hard, challenging questions about God and the Bible.

The Bible study focused on Creation to Christ, a Bible storying curriculum that details Bible stories from creation to the Gospels. As Ana heard different stories from the Bible about who Christ is and how He came to save, she asked, "What if I wanted to become a Christian today? What do I do?"

Haylee and Jazz walked Ana through the Bible passage of Acts 2 and shared how those in the story asked the same question of the Apostle Peter.

Although Ana wasn't ready to surrender her life to Christ at that moment, she returned about a month later eager to ask more questions about becoming a Christian.

Less than a week later, Ana met with Haylee and Jazz again. She told them she had prayed, repented of her sins, and surrendered her life to Christ that very morning.

For the past eight months, Haylee and Jazz have been discipling Ana while she grows in her walk with the Lord. They have encouraged Ana to share her faith with others and in turn, they challenged each other to share the Gospel.

Although Haylee grieves the fast-approaching end of her two-year term in Brazil, she said she is encouraged by all she has seen God do during her time there.

"When I came to Brazil my identity was stripped from me. I lost a lot of things that defined me. I had to find my identity in my relationship with Christ," Haylee said.

"As I focused on my identity in Christ, my appreciation for God's Word only grew. The Word of God is alive and still working and the Word of God is sufficient."

To learn more about the Journeyman program visit imb.org/go/options/journeyman.