

# LATIN AMERICA REPORT

SPRING 2018

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## WHY GREAT CITIES?

by Blake Crowell,  
Director of Development



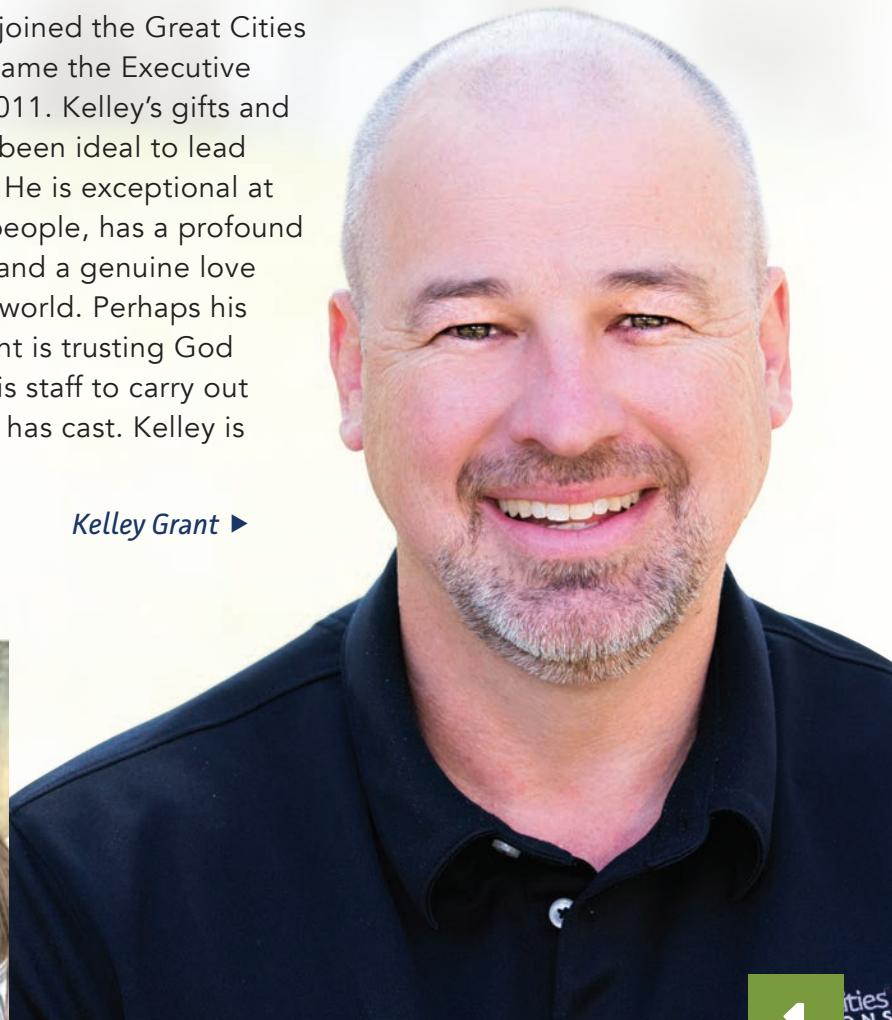
São Luís, Brazil

**FOR OVER FORTY YEARS,** Great Cities Missions has been helping church planting mission teams establish churches in the Latin World. Our staff is our ministry. When you support Great Cities Missions, you support people like **Kelley Grant.**

Kelley joined Great Cities Missions in April 2010, but his involvement with the ministry dates back to 1997. That's when he and his wife Julie were first recruited by Bob Waldron to join a team going to Santiago, Chile. They were missionaries in Santiago for 11 years, helping to

establish the Providencia church- a growing congregation that today is completely led by nationals with a Chilean preacher and elders. Kelley & Julie and their now four children, returned to the States in 2010 when Kelley joined the Great Cities staff and became the Executive Director in 2011. Kelley's gifts and talents have been ideal to lead Great Cities. He is exceptional at connecting people, has a profound faith in God and a genuine love for the Latin world. Perhaps his greatest talent is trusting God by trusting his staff to carry out the vision he has cast. Kelley is

gratefully encouraged and guided by the godly partnership and leadership of twenty-four wise men and women of the Great Cities Missions Board of Trustees. ▼



*Kelley Grant ▶*

*The Grant Family, 2017 ▾*





# Join us on our journey as we...

# Alana

## A LIFE CHANGED

by Bryan Gibbs,  
Director of Church Development

Alana is from Itarema, a small town in one of the poorest states in Brazil, Ceará. She was born in deep poverty, the second child of a 19-year-old unwed mother. For the first 10 years of her life Alana's grandmother was her primary caregiver. Her grandmother was mentally unstable and lived in deep poverty herself. Her life consisted of a series of men passing through offering neither finances nor stability.

While with her grandmother, living conditions included months outdoors under a large shade tree they hung hammocks from to sleep at night and a cardboard squatter's shack built on a lot that flooded when it rained.

Hunger was constant. They regularly begged for food. While living with her grandmother Alana moved every year and never attended school regularly. As she got older she began to attract the attention of men who passed through her grandmother's life suffering both physical and sexual abuse.

God had been working in Alana's mother's life to bring healing and restoration. For years Alana's mother had visited church after church looking for one that spoke a message that would touch her heart. When Alana's mother visited the church of Christ in Itarema she heard about a God who loved her, was ready to forgive her and restore her life. This church was established from an evangelistic effort by a Great Cities sponsored team in Fortaleza.

*"Whatever is true, whatever is noble,  
whatever is right, whatever is pure,  
whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable  
— if anything is excellent or praiseworthy —  
think about such things." Philippians 4:8*

Part of God's restorative work in Alana's mother's life was to soften her heart towards Alana's desperate life circumstances. Against her husband's wishes, she brought Alana back home, reuniting her four children under one

FEED THE HUNGRY. CLOTHE THOSE IN NEED. SHELTER THE POOR.  
BY PLANTING CHURCHES IN THE LATIN WORLD.

*"Growing up like I grew up, I had no future... I want to thank God for all He has given me. My life is all I have to offer Him."*

roof. Though life with her mother and step-father was improved, it was still very difficult.

Despite opposition from her husband, Alana's mother was baptized and took her children with her to worship every Sunday. In the church Alana found security, peace, hope and the family she never had before. She loved attending Sunday school and eagerly learned the Bible stories that were taught. After four years of steady attendance, at 14 years of age, Alana made the decision to be baptized and become a disciple of Jesus.

After finishing high school Alana moved to João Pessoa, Brazil to be part of AME, the Brazilian version of Sunset's AIM program. For nine months, while living in João Pessoa, she prepared for a one-year stay in the mission field. Alana's mission assignment, along with another young lady from the AME program, was to work with the church in Candeias in the state of Pernambuco.

Her dream was to find a place where she could continue to study the scriptures, find emotional and spiritual nourishment and further her education. She didn't know how that would happen, but was convinced God would take care of her.

God did take care of Alana, and chose to use Great Cities as an instrument to bless her life. In May of 2016, while Alana was fulfilling her one-year mission in Pernambuco, Scott Reynolds and I visited João Pessoa to see the AME program first-hand. We were very impressed.

After leaving João Pessoa we traveled to Campo Grande to teach a seminar on evangelism to SerCris students. We spoke to the directors of SerCris urging them to visit AME. We thought it would be beneficial

to both programs if SerCris would invite students who had finished their time at AME to continue their theological and secular educations by enrolling in the SerCris program. The SerCris directors did visit João Pessoa and agreed that graduates of the AME program would make excellent students at SerCris.

In December 2016, when Alana finished her one-year commitment to the field, she received an invitation to study at SerCris. She could not believe how God had blessed her. "Growing up like I grew up I had no future. But God blessed me with two years in the AME program where I had the opportunity to study the scriptures full-time, prepare for the mission field and serve Him in full-time work in a place I never thought I would find myself.

Then He blessed me with the opportunity to study the scriptures for two more years in the SerCris program and to get a college education while I was at it. God has opened the universe up to me and I never thought it would be possible.

When asked why she is considering serving God as a church planter, Alana's response was, "I want to thank God for all He has given me. My life is all I have to offer Him."

We thank God for using this ministry to impact Alana's life. She is a product of this ministry, in more ways than one. And we also thank Him for the possibility of partnering with His beloved daughter Alana as we continue our mission of sharing Jesus with the Latin world.

Alana Araujo (21) is a second year student at the SerCris School of Theology located in Campo Grande, Brazil. She is also an Education major at a local university.

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## Thank you for your support!



\$300,000

## matching gift

Thank you so much for your generosity and overwhelming response in December to our Matching Gift goal of \$300,000.

**Great Cities Missions not only met our goal of \$300,000, but exceeded it by \$75,000.**

When we told the donor about the tremendous response, they were inspired by your generosity and matched the entire \$375,000! It is truly humbling to be on the receiving end of God's grace and provision in such a tangible way.

We praise God for the blessing of donors like you who love this ministry and love the mission of planting churches and spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ!

## SAVE THE DATE

GreatCities  
MISSIONS

2018  
GOLF CLASSIC



Tulsa, OK • Tues., Aug. 28 • The Patriot Golf Club  
Nashville, TN • Tues., Sept. 11 • The Legends  
Dallas, TX • Tues., Sept. 25 • The Tribute