

Summer down south...

Queridos hermanos,

Blessings to you all in this season of "in-betweens"; the holidays have passed and spring still seems far off. But it is a good time to remind myself that each day is a great gift from Heaven to live and love here on Earth. We can never know what to expect from this world, but we can know that whatever comes is just one more opportunity to "acercarnos", or grow closer, to our Maker.

January was another fun month for me here in Puerto Supe, but not as busy as December. Aside from being sick for a week, I spent a lot of time outside, which mostly led to sunburns in this blistering heat, but also allowed for more interaction with friends. The beaches have been full and the schools empty for the last month. I organized a trip to the "campiña", which is an outdoor swimming pool with recreation area, and also a sports day for youth. Both were great successes in my eyes, allowing for the teenagers to get used to us and each other with hopes of further involvement with the Comunidad Cristiana. Kyle and I also did one joint study with guys and girls that went really well. We discussed prayer for 2 hours in Spanish, after which I felt extremely capable of anything else I might dream of doing, if I may say so myself.

At the end of January, I travelled to Miami to renew my 90 day visa, and also to visit my better half, Fidel. It was a short but worthwhile break from my life here, and also helped me make the decision to extend my time here an extra 3 months, i.e. until August of this year.

Challenges and prayer requests:

1. The economy of Puerto Supe is so desperately depressed, many families including close friends are in need of work that doesn't exist. It seems our vision for development could never manifest fast enough, but then, it is God's vision and timing, not ours. May we have peace.
2. It can still be frustratingly difficult to solicit participation on behalf of the teenagers. My group of girls has grown to 7, all of which are all good friends, but I know I'll be pressed to find leaders that will push to continue when I'm gone. May we continue to grow.
3. I'm considering doing a Christian Business Development workshop for our friends who run the micro-enterprises. Everyone is behind me, but this is not my area of expertise. I want to contribute knowledge, and also make it a worthwhile effort. May I proceed with wisdom.
4. It's always hard being away from loved ones, but knowing of friends and family who are struggling right now tends to tire me out emotionally, and distracts from my ministry here. May my source of Love run deeper than ever.
5. Thanks to God for a visit from a Wheaton Bible Church group that encouraged, labored, and added to our ministry. I've been skeptical of short term missions (I know, guilty as charged) but this group was truly a blessing to us.
6. Praise Him for the new friends I've been meeting and pray that I'll encounter potential leaders to support my efforts with the youth.

More to come soon, love you all,

Sierra
"Punk"