

Sydni's Prayer Update

January 2010

Private Universities and Opportunity at UNIR



Girls we met for follow-up at URU, the private university by Lake Maracaibo

Classes at LUZ just started on February 1, so there wasn't a whole lot to do in January until the third week or so, when classes started in the private universities. It was a very relaxing time, but also a little boring, so I have been excited to get into our normal routine this week of being on campus. The past couple of weeks we went to a lot of different campuses – 3 private universities and 3 campuses at LUZ.

Normally we go to the different campuses of the public university, LUZ. However, while we were waiting for LUZ to start classes again, we tried out some private universities. The private universities are much nicer than LUZ, but they have higher security with guards at the door of each entrance, so it's hard to get in.

3 private universities

We did a prayer walk around **URBE**, a school that a lot of our friends go to. One of them, Andrea, met up with us and helped us get a visitor pass to get in, where we shared in the cool air conditioned library. We also went to two other private schools.

We weren't able to get into **URU**, which is smaller, but very beautiful – it's located on the water by the park. Kaitlin and I made some friends with three girls, and they were excited to meet with us for a **follow-up**. It was great for someone to meet up with us again, because normally Venezuelans make excuses and it's hard to follow up with them.

The other school we shared at was **UNIR**, which is more like a community college and is in the city. Our friend Gaby just started teaching English there, and she convinced the director to give us permission to speak at a **conference** there the last week of February. *Pray for us as we have to come up with topics and then a speech and present it three times during the week of the conference (Feb. 23-25).* It will give us great publicity with the students, and we will hopefully be starting an **English club** there after the conference. *Praise God for giving us that opportunity and opening a door there, where we have not been able to get in before.*

May God to continue to bless you as you enjoy the new year! ☺

Venezuela

Political Oppression

The situation in Venezuela has worsened this year. First, the President **devalued the currency** in hopes of helping the economy, but so far the only visible effect has been an even higher inflation rate which is driving costs up and hurting the already poor constituents.

On the same day of the devaluation, it was announced that **LUZ might have to close in July** due to insufficient funding. This would be so devastating for the students who have already invested so much time in the school and have to deal with erratic class schedules due to strikes. Even now it is difficult for students to get classes accredited when they change majors, so I can't imagine what would happen if students were not able to finish their degree within LUZ. They would maybe have to start all over in a new school. *Pray for our friend Angelica, who decided to move to Panama in April due to the lack of hope here.*

The other problem affecting everyone is **electricity shortages**. I heard that the problem is that the government hasn't maintained the turbines that generate electricity (only 7 are working out of 40). Every part of Venezuela is affected by varying power outages. In our state, we lose 2 hours of power every day. Fortunately, the schedule changes every two weeks (which is good because our time was originally 9-11pm every night). *Pray for the Venezuelans as they adjust to these changes, that despite their situation, they will be able to trust in Christ. Praise God for this opportunity for us to share His Name in this country while it is still open to foreigners and allows freedom of religion. Pray that the students will learn to share their faith and lead the movement in case we will one day not have access here as missionaries.*

Our team has been feeling heavy from the spiritual darkness symbolized by the physical darkness. Pray against spiritual oppression, and that we may be a light in this dark place.



Survey at outreach on the first day of classes

New Goals

Our team's goals for this semester are:

- Offer an **international mission trip** for students in Maracaibo
- Start an **English club** (we do not yet know where)
- **Share the Gospel** every time we go on campus
- Attempt to **follow up** with 100% of our contacts

The goals of the servant team are to:

- Focus on **evangelism**
- Have a **team of students for each campus** to promote fellowship and evangelism
- Have an **activity each Thursday** to promote Tiempo Libre

Girls at outreach on the first day of classes



- I love our new servant team! I am very excited about leading the new Prayer Team. I'm most excited that we have **two student leaders in charge of the servant team meeting**. That position did not exist last semester, but it is a great role that will enhance sustainability in the movement here. It will also be helpful with the transition of leadership next year as most of our team will not be returning.
- We will be hosting two teams, from Virginia Tech and the University of Pittsburgh, for **spring break** during the second week of March. *Pray for us as we make the schedule, plan, and prepare. Pray for the teams to be excited to come, and pray that God will prepare their hearts.* Spring Break will be a very tiring time for us, but also very encouraging. I'm really looking forward to hosting students because I think it will help me to be excited to be here. I'm also really excited because Whit (my boyfriend) is leading the trip. It will be great for him to get to see what my life is like here, and for us to be able to minister and lead together.
- Our team is currently studying the book **God is the Gospel** by John Piper. It is a great reminder that God is the good news and our reward. *Pray that when we share the Gospel, we won't exclude God when we talk about Heaven, but that we will make Him look great.* Another book I am

Other Praises & Prayer Requests



personally reading is called the **Naked Gospel**, by Andrew Farley. I would recommend both.

- Continue to *pray for students to come to the National Conference (Congreso) in March. Pray that we will think of a lot of creative ideas to help the students raise money, and that the economy won't hinder students raising support.* If you would like to help scholarship a student to go to the conference, please let me know. The cost for one student is about \$100.
- *Pray that God will guide us to which campuses He wants us to be on.* Since we have visited so many recently, we have made contacts in lots of places. We want to be available to the students that we have made contact with so that we can follow up with them, but we don't have enough time to go to all of the campuses on a regular basis.
- Our next **visa renewal trip** is coming up this month. *Pray that it will be relaxing and refreshing.* We will be giving talks at UNIR the day before we leave, and three days after we get back, the spring break teams will arrive, so *pray that we won't be stressed out, and that we will be able to gain energy for spring break.*
- *Pray for my future* as I am planning the next phase. God has continued to lay Virginia Tech on my heart, so I will be applying to intern with Cru there this fall. *Pray that I will follow God's will if that is not His plan for me, and pray that everything will work out if it is.*

Thank you for your continued support and partnership in the ministry in Maracaibo.

Please continue to email me prayer requests. I love hearing from you.

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