

A post from Allie Frazier...

The song "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas" has taken on a new meaning in my life. Yes, I was actually dreaming of a white Christmas, hot cocoa, watching lights twinkle under the falling snow and everything else that Christmas in the States brings. Although I could not have any of the above, I was trying to feel festive despite my fake Christmas tree, 85F, blazing sun and zero snow! It's definitely different to celebrate the holidays in such heat. I did get to celebrate with a Chilean couple on the 24th (Think 10:00pm dinner, talking and hanging out until 1:00am), and with other ABWE missionaries on the 25th (Grill out, pool etc). I can now officially say that I survived a holiday in a foreign country by myself. It wasn't so bad, even though I did miss my family!

Anyway, Summer break has finally come upon us! Our first semester of school at Santiago Christian Academy has come to a close. It flew by - I can't believe it's already been almost 4 months since I started teaching art. I apologize for not sending out any prayer updates/newsletters/blog posts lately. Life has been insanely busy, but oh so good! In today's post, I want to share just a tidbit of how I've been doing lately. I want to be honest with where I'm at, but begin with thanking the Lord for all he has done!

As I write this morning, my heart is overflowing with thankfulness and joy for my Savior. There are times that I don't understand why He picked me to come here. Yet, I am extremely grateful and humbled that He chose me. He called me here and I couldn't say no when I felt that tug on my heart back in February. It is an absolute JOY to be serving at SCA. I love it! The kids make life so fun and entertaining and I enjoy being able to teach them every week. However, I often feel inadequate and undeserving to be a missionary. Couldn't someone else do the job better than me? Isn't there a more skilled Art teacher out there? The answer to both of these questions is probably "Yes". However, that's not the point. After all, if the only missionaries in the world were the "qualified ones", there would be few to none out there sharing the gospel cross-culturally. It's by God's grace and intervention in our lives that we are able to share the greatest Gift with the world. By His grace I was able to say "Yes" to the call, pack up my life, and ship off to another country. I am happy he picked me despite my flaws and shortcomings and stubbornness at times! Those whom God calls he equips, and he's definitely been doing that for me. There's no way I could be doing this without Christ. 2 Corinthians 3:4- 6 *"Such confidence we have through Christ before God. ⁵ Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. ⁶ He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."*

Now, moving on. This whole experience so far has brought much growth to my character and spiritual life. Once I realized that God was up to something, I stopped trying to put things into my own hands and instead just let God mold me as he wanted to. Henry Blackaby has a wonderful quote: *"The fact that God can bring character development and personal growth out of any situation is conditional on people's willingness to submit to God's will. God is sovereign over every life, but those who yield their will to him will be shaped according to his purposes. When God directs a life for his purposes, all of life is a school. No experience, good or bad, is ever wasted (Rom. 8:28). God doesn't squander people's time. He doesn't ignore their pain. He brings not only healing but growth out of even the worst experiences. Every relationship can be God's instrument to mature a person's character."* The Spirit has been transforming my heart and I'm envisioning things for my life that I never thought possible. I'm getting the feeling that I may never place roots down in one place for very long, but that the Lord may use that for good. I'm looking at the world with new eyes and resting in the fact that God has my future planned out; I don't need to worry about where I'll be tomorrow, in 5 months or in 10 years. I'm just taking things day by day (Which is HUGE for those of you that know me since **Futuristic** is one of my top 5 strengths).

Now, I don't want the above quote to make you think this has been a bad experience. It's been quite the opposite - it's been extremely good!! I love this quote because it shows that every situation in life has purpose. Every day brings character development and personal growth. My time here has done just that. Even though I may not be as qualified as others, it doesn't matter to God. He's using my experience as a short-termer to edify and mold me and make me more like Him. I've been stretched and challenged in many, many ways. I've had disagreements with other missionaries; I've wanted to call it quits; I've been disappointed by certain expectations I had; I've cried. But, despite the "down" moments, I am truly grateful to be here. I am growing, I am changing, and I am falling more in love with my Father. I'm getting a true taste for what full-time missions could look like. I'm learning how to work on a ministry team. I'm adapting to a new culture with each passing day. Let's be real...I don't think Paul's missionary journeys were always daisies and roses (In fact, I know they weren't). My life (your life!) is no exception. You will go through ups and downs whether you're living in Africa or working at your desk job in NYC; whether you have \$6,000 in your bank account or \$6. In this growing process I have one desire: to share Christ's love with those around me as I learn more about Him. In summary, that's all I really wanted from this year: To become more like Jesus to the world. To share his love and Father heart for others; to serve and care well; to be salt and light; to see the world through his eyes. It's not about me being happy...it's about me making much of God no matter the circumstance. I've certainly been humbled in the process and had to change my views in different ways, but it's all been sweet!

Matthew 5:13-16 MSG: 13 "Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You've lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage."¹⁴⁻¹⁶ "Here's another way to put it: You're here to be

light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

I am thankful because God is working in me, He is using me to be salt and light, and he is changing my heart and others' in the process. This passage has been brought up numerous times since I've been here and I know God is trying to tell me something. I love it because it forces me to do a heart check. Am I losing my saltiness? Am I being light, or is my flame slowly flickering out? Am I humbling myself so that I can be a light-bearer or am I trying to hide away in the shadows? Am I being intentional with my time here or letting each day pass by without much thought? After all, this life - this year in Chile - is not about me. I am only passing through on a journey. As Matthew says, I want to 'bring out the God-flavors of this earth.' I want my life to be about Jesus; His love, his grace and the way he changes lives. The Father's love is something that has been revealed to me in new ways over the last 10 months. The softening that it has brought to my heart is why I so desire to share that with my students and Chilean friends, too.

I thought I would conclude with multiple things that I am thankful for, along with a couple of prayer requests at the end. I am thankful:

- For wonderful staff at SCA. I couldn't ask for better co-workers!
- For my Chilean friends who are constantly watching out for me, calling me, and just checking in to make sure that I'm doing ok!
- For our students. I love these kids so much!! From Prek to 6th...they all have a special little place in my heart :) They are why I am here. My goal is to simply love them with the Father's love. We still have many students that don't know Christ and I hope I can play a small part in leading them to Him.
- For the English class I helped at this past semester at the University of Valparaiso. The 3 of us were able to share the gospel each Tuesday and build friendships with many students. I'm hoping to see a few of the students again even though we won't have classes next semester.
- For Wednesday night Bible study with 3 families from church. We're a diverse group: 2 Chilean families, 2 American single gals and 1 Chinese/Tiwanese family. We had dinner last week and ate sushi, a Chilean asado and seviche. Quite the mixture, but I loved it! We've been studying Ephesians and it's been very helpful for my Spanish. This summer I believe we'll be studying 1 John.
- For the opportunity to be here on my own. It's hard at times -- no family, no best friends. Yet, the Lord has really gotten a grip on my heart and continues to shape me. I believe that it was necessary for me to be on this journey alone to experience that growth.
- For a wonderful church! I have switched churches since my last blog post. My Chilean friends are still doing their church plant (Keep them in your prayers as they continue to grow!).

Unfortunately, I was unable to continue attending there and have switched to a different church. It has been really great so far. The pastor is a very gifted speaker and I am blessed by his sermons! Last week, I was even asked to translate announcements from Spanish to English, so apparently that might become a regular activity now.

- For two recent vacations: One to the north and one to the south. Yes, even missionaries need to have some fun from time to time ;) I got some much needed time away from the crazy city life and was able to rest and recharge. The sights were stunning!

- For YOU! I'm grateful to all of you who take the time to Skype, Facetime, email and call me. Some of us talk more than others, but I appreciate all of our conversations! It does my heart good to hear your voices and see you all from time to time. I do miss family and friends (especially around the holidays), but talking with you all makes it easier to be here. The biggest struggle has definitely been in this area. I am extremely relational (quality time is huge for me), and it's been hard to be so far from people who know me deep down. I have been provided with good friendships here, but nothing compares to having a best friend or family member by your side.

Prayer requests:

-I will be spending half of the Summer by myself in Santiago. Almost everyone decided to go home for Christmas, but I decided from the beginning to stay. Please pray that I would make the most of my Summer and that it would be one of growth! I hope to explore, continue to deepen my relationships with new friends and relax. I will also be helping out more at church since many members will be gone.

-For decisions regarding next year. At this point, I will be returning home for good in July 2016. This has been an extremely difficult decision. The easy and comfortable option would be to stay put and push through another school year. However, through much prayer and discussion with others, I feel that it would be best to return for various reasons, reflect on the last year and move forward in whatever the Lord has for me. I have no set-in-stone plans for next year. I do desire many different things, but I'm not sure where God may take me. My heart is becoming more open to the idea of full-time missions as well, so I would like the time to return home and process all the change going on. As of now, I'll be planting myself back in Minneapolis until the Lord calls me elsewhere. [[Side note, if anyone has any Spanish/bilingual/ESL/teaching related job leads, let me know.]]

Wishing you a Feliz Año Nuevo - Happy New Year! - from the Southern Hemisphere. I love and miss you all!