



Carolyn in El Salvador

February 2011

Dear Family and Friends,

I hope you had a great month! “Love” was our theme for February. Valentine’s Day provided some great opportunities to share about God’s radical love for us.

Carlos, an Engineering professor on Campus, approached me a few days before Valentine’s Day and invited the Vida Estudiantil Staff team to share with his class about whatever we wanted in English at their Valentine’s Day party. He teaches an English Technical Writing class for freshmen. “Anything, including how God’s love has changed our lives?” I asked. Carlos encouraged us to share about this, as he himself views his job as an opportunity to share Christ’s love with students. So, at 10:30am on Valentine’s Day, we went to spend time with Carlos’ class. Pete and Elise shared how God’s love has changed their life and how Christ’s love is a very radical type of love. After, the students ate pizza, and we spent some time getting to know them. Each one of us had some significant conversations with students about life and God. A few of the freshmen have gotten involved in Vida Estudiantil. The relationships formed that morning have opened up opportunities for further conversations.

Right after our time with Carlos’ class, we headed home to prepare for the Dia de Amistad (Day of Friendship) Lunch that the Community Team had planned. 28 students spent the afternoon at our house, eating, celebrating God’s love for us and the gift of friendship. Then we took time as a group to share why we were thankful for each person. God used the lunch to grow our community in love for one another and in depth. He also used it to welcome in some new students! The outreach team leaders kicked off the love outreach at the lunch and challenged students to be engaging in conversations with students through using a survey about love. Throughout this week, God provided us with many opportunities to share about how God’s love has changed our lives. Additionally, Luchy Leiva, the National Director’s wife, shared about how to have healthy relationships at the weekly meeting and emphasized how only through knowing God’s love for us, and walking with him, can we love others well.

This idea is something I’ve been really struck by this month. One of the student leaders, Fatima, spent the month of February exploring God’s love more in depth in Bible Study. One week, she focused on the 4 different types of love described in Greek. She focused on phileo love: the love that is based on common interest and friendship, and agape love: love that is in the other person’s best interest, and is the unconditional love that God has for us. I’m in awe of how because I have God’s power living in me, it’s possible for me to love like him. Romans 5:5 says “And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his (agape) love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit; whom he has given us.”

Thank you for your prayers this past month for following up with freshmen, forming ministry teams, team unity, and our mid-year retreat. Some of the student leaders have helped us in following up with freshman and it’s been exciting to see them take steps of faith as they reach out to this new group. Many students have signed up to participate on ministry teams and they are underway. Our mid-year retreat was a refreshing and challenging time for my team as we learned how to pursue one another in grace and truth and fight for authentic relationships. We returned to El Salvador more unified and very excited to jump back into work. Spending time with the Dominican Republic STINT team was such a gift. I loved hearing about how God is moving in Santo Domingo and using them on their campus of about 150,000 students!

Thank you for your partnership in reaching the 5% (according to El Salvador’s government statistics) of people who have the opportunity to go to college here! I pray that you are growing in knowledge and understanding of God’s love for you.

Con Amor (With Love),
Carolyn Gardella

Prayer Requests:

*A team of 43 people from Cal Poly will be coming to visit us for their Spring Break, March 19-25. Please pray God uses this team to transform lives here and that God would do a work in each person who is visiting.

*We’re planning to have a conference in El Salvador for students from here, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua...please pray that the Lord will provide financially for each student and God would grow their trust in the process. The Conference will be from April 20-23. Also, pray for preparations for the Conference.

*The students...some are battling some deeply rooted things that are keeping them from experiencing the freedom that we have in Christ. Pray for their strength, an increase in faith, and for their eyes to be fixed on Jesus. A couple students are struggling with severe depression. Pray for an authentic community.



- 1) DR STINT Team with coaches...pray for them!
- 2) Fatima leading Bible Study
- 3) Pete sharing with Carlos’ class
- 4) Meeting freshmen in Carlos’ class

