

Jenna's Journey

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Dear Friends,

Christmas looks a little different in Paraguay. There are no "frosted window panes" or "winter wonderland". I just checked the temperature outside...97 degrees. I can hear the low rumble of my ceiling fan as I am writing this and I think to myself, "Is this Christmas?" Being a snow lover, it is hard to picture Christmas being something different than snowmen, warmth from the woodstove, blankets, warm slippers and a steaming cup of hot cocoa.

So what is Christmas in Paraguay? Let me paint a picture for you. In the mall right next to the Christmas trees there are pool toys. Sunscreen is in the same aisle as the garland. Instead of hot cider or cocoa it is ice water or terere (Paraguayan iced tea). No need for a hoodie or slippers...flips flops and short sleeves are the common dress.

"Open my eyes to see the little things you have given me to make this Christmas special," I pray to the Lord. Oh! How he has answered in a way that just tickles my heart. He gave me watermelon for Christmas! My heart swells with a smile and joy. Watermelon is my favorite fruit in the world and the Lord gave it to me for Christmas...something new to mark the season. Instead of snow and hot cocoa...I have watermelon! It is even Christmassy with the colors green and red!

As I sit in my apartment, eating a slice of watermelon and gazing at my artificial tree, I hear in my inmost heart the Lord saying, "Christmas never was the hot cocoa, or the freshly fallen snow...Christmas is MY love for you." I had been trying so hard to look for new traditions to start and new ways to celebrate Christmas and had forgotten the central message of Christmas. Christ came. He loved. He died. And He lives in me. It does not matter whether we participate in our annual traditions or if we are faced with changes in our Christmas celebrations, Christ is the reason we celebrate. So hot or cold, snow or sunshine, red noses or sunburn...We can celebrate the season because HE never changes!

"The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" Luke 19:10.

I pray that you will take a quiet moment and ask yourself "What is Christmas?" The Lord has opened my eyes to see anew that "He is the reason for the season".

Thank you for your support and prayers! Together we are bringing LIGHT to those who are living in darkness.

Merry Christmas

Jenna

Praises from the past 6 months...



My co-worker, Rebekah and I arrived in Paraguay on June 4th and were greeted with a warm welcome from our church at the airport! What a blessing it was to be received and to feel immediately part of the family! Our host couple, Pedro and Consuelo, have been tremendous blessings in helping us settle into our apartment and adopting us into their family. They call us their “angels”.



Rebekah and I have been involved in our church with many activities throughout the week. In addition to Sunday services, Wednesday night prayer meetings, and Saturday night young adult group, we have the blessing of being a part of a house church meeting on Thursday nights in a neighboring area of Asuncion. We are continuing to build relationships with the believers from our church.

We have had the opportunity to participate in different aspects of the Paraguayan culture. This picture is from the World Cup. Team Paraguay advanced higher than they have in many years and the whole city was bursting with Paraguayan pride!



Paraguay has its own very unique culture. My days have been full with participating in different activities and then writing them up on my computer for further study. The Paraguayan people not only speak a different language but have an entirely different worldview. Language and culture go hand in hand. Language is how culture is expressed.



Rebekah and I have settled into our apartment in the Asuncion, the capital of Paraguay. We live close to our church, the supermarket and a local coffee/bakery. We are thankful for the way the Lord has provided for us with living close to everything we need.



Instead of taking Spanish classes, I am learning through immersion and through practicing with my Paraguayan friends. This is practice for when I will be learning a tribal language because there will be no classes or textbooks to teach me. God has blessed me with different people from my church and community who help me learn and practice my Spanish. I am also meeting weekly with Ithie, an experienced missionary lady, who is my guide and consultant in language and culture study. I am very thankful for the training that I received and for the guidance from Ithie.

- Please pray
 - Diligence in Language study
 - Courage and strength
 - Growth in my trust in the LORD
 - Wisdom for both Rebekah and me as we serve God together in Paraguay.

Giving address
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