

The Vineyard's Costa Rica Mission Trip

Saturday's Update

Buenos noches, Vineyard Friends, Family, and Supporters!

First, thank you so much for all of your prayers so far for our journey. They mean the world to us, so please continue fighting for us.

Today was beyond what I could have imagined. We start out each morning with an hour of devotions-Lindsey shared yesterday how Delynn shared a thought with us in the morning. Today, he shared thoughts (about 20 minutes) on Luke 14:26 and 14:33 ("So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.") He explained that to be a follower of Christ, we must daily deny ourselves, take up our cross (die to ourselves), and follow him. Verse 26 describes how our love for Jesus must make every other relationship that we have look like hate. After that, we spent the rest of the hour in Quiet Time with God. I think that this is a new thing for some of our students to do on a daily basis, and it has been very exciting to see the fruit of the time they spend with God in the morning and how that affects the rest of their day.

After breakfast, we headed back to the church to put a few finishing touches on the work we started and to spread the word about the amazing concert that we were going to have that afternoon featuring Tapon (more on him later)! We finished anchoring the new "tents of meeting" (see what I did there?) for the church as the permanent structure in which La Viñill meet regularly. Some students also finished up painting in the park. The rest of us took a walk throughout the community (each with a Pura Vida Missions staff member) to hand out flyers with the information about the totally free concert.

By that time, we had finished up the God-inspired mural in the park. The mural itself is an artistic rendition of La Viñill signage (photos are on Facebook, "like" Vineyard Student Ministries). It is quite beautiful. After lunch, we set up a makeshift stage for the concert, including sound equipment, musical instruments, stands, etc. During this, the rest of the students went back in to the community to hand out free Coca-cola to more people in the community. At around 3:00, the concert started.

Around 100-150 people came out for the concert! And Pastor



The finished mural.



McKenzie & Chelsea giving away free Coca-cola.



A group heading out to pick up trash.

Pablo's family is an incredible worship team! (It helps that he's a music teacher). They started off by leading some worship songs for everyone. There were a few that we knew in English, and it was really powerful to hear both languages singing the same thing to the same God. We also had the privilege of stepping on stage and leading a worship song. We played "How Great is Our God," a song with special spiritual significance to my walk, and it was amazing to see the response of everyone. They may not have known all of the words we were saying, but they were in agreement with our hearts towards God. There was also a young gentleman who had come the day before and was very grateful for what we were doing. He came back, and Matt said that he was so touched by what we were doing that he was moved to tears. *The Holy Spirit is moving among this community.*

After the worship, Tapon came on stage! Short and sweet, Tapon is a was-secular-turned-spiritual-only reggae artist who is known world-wide, and is especially popular in Costa Rica (his home). He shared his testimony, preached the Gospel, and entertained with enthusiasm and passion like I've never seen before. It was so inspiring. I was jazzed to say the least. He is also good friends with Delynn, so after we had cleaned everything up, he came and visited Casa Vida to spend some time with us. Talk about a humbling experience-this man, who has ties to the president of Costa Rica, presidents of major businesses in the country, and is the only Christian artist who is given 30 minutes on each Tuesday every week to share the hope that he has in Christ on a completely secular radio station, came to spend a couple hours with the 16 of us. This man of God is truly inspiring, and he takes not one ounce of credit for himself-it's all for the glory of his Heavenly Father.

After that, we met in small groups and just got to spend some time verbalizing what's been going on in our hearts and heads and what God's been teaching us and stretching is in. Personally, I've been crazy impressed with each and every one of the students! Speaking of my small group specifically, even after I needed to leave to go write this message to you, they wanted to stay in group an extra hour just to talk about what God is doing in their lives, to encourage one another, and to pray for one another. This is what true community, what true fellowship really is. With all of your heart, you should be so proud of your students, so proud of your child, that they are grasping what it means to follow Christ. I am truly blessed and humbled that God has allowed me to lead these maturing and selfless students as they go about His work.

On a personal note, I have been spending some time in Oswald Chambers' book "My Utmost for His Highest." The insight found in those words is beyond me. Today's devotion was titled "Continuous Conversion," and so I'll sum it up very briefly. He said that slowly but surely, we can claim our entire beings for the Spirit of God. I know that it's something God has been working in my heart, the complete surrender of every aspect of my being to His



Pastor Pablo's family leading worship.



A young man moved to tears during worship.



Tapon praying for salvation during the concert.

will, and I can see our students making great leaps forward during this trip in surrendering more of their lives to Him. Please continue to pray that each and every one of us would continue to deny ourselves, pick up our crosses, and follow Him in every aspect of our lives this week and beyond.

Thank you again so much for all of your support and blessings you have poured out on us. I am so excited to see what God has in store for us in the morning. It will surely bring us more in love with Him and more intimate with His plans for our week and for our lives.

Shine on,

Mark Brown



The team brought a laptop for Pastor Pablo to use on Sunday's. He previously set up and tore down his desktop computer from home each week to use at the church.



Some of the students dancing with Tapon during the concert.

