

Santa Cruz, Bolivia - January 2013

As the team and I traveled to Bolivia for the South America Mission (SAM) Mission Conference to serve the youth for the week; We started with a few bumps; to our surprise our flight from Miami to Peru had been cancelled, we managed to reroute and be what we called, "terminal" for some time. Most importantly we arrived on time for the conference! In fact just in time, by hours, a bit tired, hungry, and no luggage other than our carry on bags although, we did have our teaching lessons minus craft and activity materials. (All other luggage arrived-two days later- yah God) Once settled in the assigned cabin, about 20 min. we discovered we needed to move due to mechanical problems after entering the new cabin the smell of varnish was so strong and overpowering that honestly, I could taste it. I collected my lesson for the evening and headed to the meeting room for the conference. Hoping the smell would lessen at my return. I have to say, I was starting to feel some doubt set in and silent questions to the Lord began to arise from within. Then as the Opening session worship began we sang a song w/the words..."to you our hearts our open and nothing here is hidden"...The Lord zeroed in on my focus and every distraction, delay and inconvenience quickly dissolved and melted away!

I knew the Lord was confirming His will for this time and my preparation and seeking that I made before Him, for these youth. I was ready and knew I needed to be dedicated and focused on speaking all that the Lord had put on my heart for the week as well as for my opening session w/the youth, which began after worship, I was teaching on a reference to our physical and spiritual "Heart" as well as sharing my testimony. I had a mix of 12 students most missionary and some from a team that came in from MT and an additional team leader, Kristen, who is staying in Bolivia for 3mon to complete an internship.

These youth were smart, inquisitive and intuitive. Our sessions covered, Learning to Hear God's Voice, Our Identity, Spiritual Gifts and many biblical examples. I shared John 17:3 amplified version, expounding on eternal life and also insights & encouragement from Peter's life and more. The Lord supplied journals for the students, while we were there - they took notes and listen intently, at times asked questions. I shared my best and desired to impart and be a bridge through the generations. (Romans 1:11)

For some, my teaching was new and stretching to others confirming and most appreciated. (See below) As an example, near one of our ending sessions a young lady asked me, if I believe the gifts are for today? I humbly and honestly responded without defense yet with sincerity, in love, yes and that I have seen them myself but we are never to esteem the gift or those persons who carry them but we are to esteem Jesus, and Jesus alone.

Hiram Matos, another team leader and Donavan, the worship leader both shared their testimony with the youth. Donavan, included more about his spiritual gift, as he joined us during this teaching session.

During an evening session I began to talk about our Identity and the masks and perception others may view us as. I included we can limit our own view of ourselves, such as taking on the identity of being an Mk, just as one example. I felt this session went exceptionally well, each person shared and each allowed me to pursue them with some pointed questions and even the quiet ones, who passed at first, I offered another opportunity to share and they stepped up. I passed out "bookmarks" with scriptures of our Identity in Christ and asked them to share a truth that stood out to them, it was inspiring to hear their intent and purpose of their hearts and to speak with confidence being bent towards God's purpose and view of them.

I was also proud as the youth came up with a clever skit for the Talent night titled, "Are you smarter than an MK?" it was fun to see how creative and well they worked to put this together. Kristen and I learned a lot about South America and Bolivia from their questions too.

I was able to join in with the adult women during an afternoon workshop for the Mom's and humbly shared some of my own vulnerabilities and practicalities over the years, being certain to include I don't pretend to fully know the sacrifices and demands one has on them as a missionary, other than I can see, they are high. I did learn during this time that the Lord allowed me to see each woman and their family as one, as I had been working with their children for the week. I consider this a blessing.

Once the conference ended, Friday afternoon, we headed to the SAM base to finish our stay in Bolivia. As we visited the city of Santa Cruz I learned it is far more Metropolitan than I would have expected with a population

of 2 million; while in the city we went to some shops, the plaza, viewed one of the oldest cathedrals, had dinner out and attended a musical cultural event. We also toured SAM school, SAM-Air and got birds eyes view of the city and surrounding areas including waterfalls. Saturday night we attended a service and dinner at a local church as they said goodbye to one of their members heading off to Moody Bible College in Chicago. Small World! Sunday, we attended service at a smaller local church, which includes reaching ministries to unwed mothers and orphans in the area. We also had lunch at this church before heading to the airport as they were raising money for a church member diagnosed with leukemia.

It is with much gratitude, I Thank-you for your generous support, prayers and encouragement for sowing into the next generation and South America without hesitation. Please know, I have prayed for each of you as well and asking our Heavenly Father to bless and multiply grace and peace to you and yours. The scripture in Philipppians 1:6 seems so fitting for me, you and the youth in South America whom the Lord directed; "being confident of this very thing, that He who began a god work in you, will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." along with the prayer, in Philipppians 1 vs.9-11.

I'd like to say, that I didn't know or receive any of these below words of encouragement from the youth until Friday, at the closing of the conference.

Also, on Friday as we were heading out one young women missionary stopped me to say, she was encouraged by my freedom in worship to the Lord and that it allowed her, the freedom, to do the same. I wept as she shared this report. I had a very brief conversation with the Youth Pastor on what I was sharing and he stated, the Lord had prepared me to be there.

Lastly, one of the missionary families thanked us all for coming and that they were thankful to have a week of bible teaching, in English and not only for themselves but for there children. This is something I would not of thought of but appreciated her saying. TO GOD, ALONE, BE THE GLORY!

Words of encouragement from Youth; names withheld

Thanks so much for what you have been teaching us. I have been praying for months about clarity on how to hear God's voice, this is obviously a huge blessing and answer to prayer for me, Thank you for seeking the Lord's wisdom for teaching here, I hope you

enjoy & embrace your time here in Bolivia, I know that we have enjoyed your presence greatly.

Thanks for using this message to influence all us teens, you are a great person and work well with kids.

Thanks for sharing your time with us this week and teaching us. I'm glad you could come down.

It's easy to see God in and through you, keep teaching and serving!

Thanks for being willing to come and teach us and help us think about our talents, spiritually and physically.

THIS WAS A LONG STEP OF FAITH FOR ME, TO TAKE, AT HIS WORD.