

Date: August 1, 2003
Location: Santiago, Chile
Subject: Dan's Update from Chile #1 =)

Hola! Quería mandar mis saludos desde Santiago, Chile donde estoy preparando a asistir a clases empezando la próxima semana... =(Pero, voy a continuar en inglés para todos que no entienden español. =)

[Hi! Greetings from Santiago, Chile where I'm preparing to start classes next week... =(But, I'm going to continue in English for those who don't understand Spanish. =P]

Hi! Firstly, my apologies for not having written sooner but it's been a hectic two weeks that I've been here in Chile and it's about to get a bit more hectic in a few days when classes start! =)

Anyway, I'm writing this e-mail and attaching it in Word because I want to include pictures that I've embedded in this document... =)

So starting from the beginning, if I remember correctly, my last e-mail was on a Tuesday morning as I was madly packing before leaving for the airport. I've been meaning to



write ever since but it's been hectic so I get to put it all into this e-mail here. =)

<left> After leaving wonderfully warm summer in Los Angeles on Tuesday morning, I flew down to Mexico and spent a night before continuing to Chile. On Wednesday morning, July 16th, I boarded my Aeromexico flight 010 with a flight time of about 8-9 hours to Santiago at 11:20 AM.

The flight was pretty uneventful and I slept and watched the movies during the loooong duration of the flight. I never realized how far Santiago actually was from the United States until I arrived in Chile and considered that it's about 12-13 hours from the US... about as far as Korea! =)

There are about 60 college kids from all over the US with the Council program. We all had to come here 2 weeks before classes actually start because we had to take this "Contemporary Chile" class that pretty much kept us bored to death in classes the past two weeks. =P

I guess it wasn't all that bad since they took us to eat... once? Twice?... and sight-seeing... just barely. =P

Since I've gotten here, I haven't gotten to meet too many Chileans but have pretty much been hanging out with the Council kids.

<right> Here's a picture that we took at this restaurant called "Divertimiento" (I think) on the first night (Friday, July 18th) that we were here.

(From left to right) First row: Greg, Calvin, Gennette, Jasmine. Second Row: Lise-Anne, Dan (me!), Danielle, Ami.



It wasn't until Saturday night that we got to meet our host families. Talk about being nervous and feeling like puppies at a pet store where you're excitedly anticipating being taken home by a nice family. =P It was a bit nerve-wracking as one by one we were split up and taken away... didn't want to be the last picked, right? Haha =)

<below> So here's our happy family portrait. Do you like? =)



Tomorrow will signal two weeks that I've been here and I'm thankful for an awesome little family. My parents are Jorge and Teresa and they're very nice. Both work so they're up way early in the morning before I get up and they come home late so I see them pretty



much just at night and weekends. Grandma is always home though and she's very kind too.

As for my siblings, my 13 year old brother Jorge is much like my brother back home 'cept smaller. He likes to play online games and stuff. They have DDR here so I get to exercise a bit every once in a while, too. =P

<left> And my little 2-year old sister Camila is like the little sister I never had. =)

She's old enough not to be a whiny, crying little mess. =P I think I like kids between a certain range and she just barely falls into it. Hehe =)

Anyway, like most people here in Chile, my family is Catholic... though we pray at meals

and stuff, I think that's pretty much it. It's a weird country in which the church and state are pretty intertwined and a good majority of the population claims to be Catholic but oftentimes don't reflect it in lifestyle.

This past Sunday, I had the chance to go to a nearby church that I was introduced to... it was a new experience to worship and praise in Spanish and I found myself in conflict between talking to God in English or Spanish as I worshipped... Anyway, I'm pretty sure I'm going to continue going there... it's interesting how God works in my life and how I now miss everything about GCC whereas two years ago I really didn't feel happy/comfortable there at all. =)

I'm still trying to figure out what God wants to teach me while I'm here and I feel like I've already learned quite a lot in the short two weeks that I've been here. I also know that I let a couple opportunities to share my faith slip through my fingers and feel even more determined not to let it happen again. I had a chance to invite one of my Council classmates to church this Sunday and hope I can do the same with some of the other guys with whom I've been hanging out lately.

I've never really known why people like to go out and get drunk and through going bar/club-hopping and drinking with the Council kids, it just shows me a glimpse of how so many people in this world lack meaning in their lives... drinking for the sole purpose of getting drunk even while knowing that it's pointless and meaningless... oh well, I like to stay sober and I guess I need to slow down my consumption of Coca-Cola when I'm

out late at night because otherwise I need to go way too often... =P which reminds me of several interesting things I've found in Santiago...

Coca-Cola has like at least 10 different packaging sizes... bottles come in 237cc, 250cc, 350cc, 500cc, 1L, 1.5L, 2L, 2.5L, 3L, and cans come in 250cc and whatever a normal can size is... that I've seen so far! My dad works for Coca-Cola so we have all kinds of different Coke products for every meal which is cool. I'll provide pics soon! =)

<below> Santiago is an amazingly clean city. Public bathrooms are really clean and the subway system is surprisingly clean and orderly.



The subway system here is quite astounding actually. Compared to the dirty filthy SEPTA subway in Philly, this place is miraculous! No

graffiti or trash everywhere and they have these cool high-tech flat screen TVs everywhere! =)



Also, they have this cool metro-multi-pass thing that is a card which you just need to bring near the vicinity of the card reader and it'll let you pass... so I can keep mine in my wallet and swing my rear at the thing and it lets me pass. =P

Well, I think it's cool anyway. =)

Anyway, my camera became dysfunctional during the first week I was here so I haven't been able to take too many more pictures... hopefully I'll have it fixed/replaced and in my hands to take more pictures by the end of next week... I'll just wrap this up then with two other pictures I was able to take during the first week I was here. =)

<right> First, Santiago is a city that is a mesh of the old and the new. Here you see the ancient Cathedral of Santiago next to a super-modern skyscraper. =)



<left> Next, are some mounted *Carabineros*. Here in Santiago, there aren't police but "carabiners"? =)



<right> Heh, both guys are posing... one guy grins while the other is all serious. =P

Welp, that pretty much wraps up my first two weeks... classes are starting on Monday so things will be pretty hectic while I select classes during the next two weeks.

Hope your last month of summer is going well and that you're living purposefully back in the States or wherever you may be! =)

- Dan