

Date: August 31, 2003

Location: Lampa, Chile

Subject: Update #5 – *Un Techo Para Chile* y Otras Noticias

Dear Friends and Family,

I hope your past week has been as awesome as mine has been! I'm finding that my updates are coming weekly as things seem to happen on weekends so I update about the events of each week/weekend. =)

Anyway, I want to make this update sweet and short (which I've failed to do in my past updates... hope I succeed this time! =P) as I would like to get to sleep pretty soon. =)



<left> So to begin my fifth update, I'd like to share the following sign I saw while riding in one of Santiago's many micros (buses, for those of you who haven't caught on yet. =P). I'm pretty sure I don't need to translate it for you (but if you need a translation, try: <http://babelfish.altavista.com/>). Anyway, I just smiled and was reminded of how God's been directing my ways from years ago to this very day. =)

One of the highlights of the past week was discovering the GBU meeting at PUC SJ. That's *Grupo Biblico Universitario* at Pontificia Universidad Catolica San Joaquin since most of you wouldn't know my/the acronyms. =P The group meets twice a week on PUC's San Joaquin campus at 1:00PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I'm only able to go for half an hour on Tuesdays because I have class from 11:30-1:00 and from 1:30-4:30 but it was great and really encourage to be joining the 25 or so other believers in a time of bible study. Thursday's meeting was a smaller, more intimate prayer time and I had no classes to worry about. It really was refreshing to spend time praying and fellowshiping with my fellow Chilean brothers and sisters and I hope to be able to grow with them throughout the rest of the semester. I think I'll be getting some Spanish praise CDs as well as song sheets which I've wanted to find for at least the past 6 weeks!

<right> Moving on to the main reason for this update, I had the privilege to spend this past weekend joining Un Techo Para Chile



(www.untechoparachile.cl) in constructing homes in the rural community of Lampa, Chile which is situated about an hour and a half north of Santiago. <left>

The past weekend definitely will be one to remember. It really was an amazing time and I hope and pray that the family with whom we built and spent time with really is blessed by what *Un Techo Para Chile* did for them.

The weekend pretty much started on Friday night when we were supposed to meet at 7:00PM to leave from Santiago... around 9:30PM people were still trickling in and nobody seemed to know what was really going on or who was in charge.



<left> I think things finally were organized and we had a brief orientation and welcome before we left around 10PM. Summed up, we were going to Lampa to not only build houses to combat extreme poverty but also to really show the people that there are people who do care and are willing to spend time with them and help them so that they can get their feet back on the ground. There were 5 different building sites

and the goal for the weekend was to construct 35 homes for families. After we split up into teams, we boarded our buses for the 1.5 hour journey to our respective locations.

<right> Our group arrived at a local elementary school that would serve as our base for the next two days and where we spent the two nights. It was one of those experiences designed to make you grow... having no gear myself, I was borrowing a sleeping bag (for which I am grateful!) and didn't have my \$2 army surplus foam pad that I do so very much miss back



home... =P Nice cold nights spent shivering and waking up constantly because various limbs kept losing circulation. =P

<left> On Saturday morning, my team (Cuadrilla 3: back row left to right: Jorge, Elisa, Pauli, Tere, Dan) went out to meet our family (front row: Julio and Javiera; Betty not pictured) for whom we would be building a house. They were extremely kind and I know that they must have made

tremendous sacrifices because they fed us much better than I believe they would typically do on their own.



<left> One of the first things to be done when we arrived was to decide where the house would be built. Once that was decided, our first task was to clear the brush/weeds that were covering the entire area that we were going to build on.

<right> After clearing the area of



vegetation, we began digging pits to install the 17 base posts that would be the foundations of the house we were building.

<right> By about 3:45PM, we had finished installing most of the base



posts for the foundation.

<below> We posts and placed faded around 6:45



finished installing the base the floor pieces as daylight PM.

It was hard, tiring work and we ended up having to re-dig the same pits over and over because some measurements were slightly off or something or other didn't fit just right.

But it was my first real chance to spend time with Chileans and away from *gringos* (aka foreigners),

working towards bringing a much desired home to a family in a small rural community here in Chile. After returning to base camp, I promptly passed out. =)

<right> On Day 2, we returned to finish our task and to complete one of 35 new homes to be built that day. By noon, we put up the six wall panels that gave shape to the house and worked to complete the home before dark.



Each team member contributed to the construction whether by hammering nails, sawing boards, installing screws/roofing/windows/doors, etc.



<left> Tere installing support beams for the roof.



<right> It was scary sitting up there at first... I'm not really afraid of heights... well, sorta... =P but I was more afraid that the beams wouldn't support my weight. =D One of the next updates will be about food... and the kilos that I'm gaining... kilos! Not pounds! =P



<left> Jorge standing atop the completed roof of the house. Only the door and windows left to finish!

<right/below> We finished construction and held a small inauguration ceremony to celebrate a



new home and a new beginning for Betty, Jorge and Javiera. After blessing their new home in prayer and spending the last few moments sharing bread and tea, we said our farewells and the team headed back to base where we loaded up to head back to Santiago.





<left> Wrapping up, both days that we were there closed with magnificent sunsets into the mountains... all the beautiful sights I've been seeing of nature all around me in my few travels here in Chile constantly remind me of God's fingerprints for all creation to marvel at His works... every sunset a masterpiece that I can't cease to gaze in awe at and take pictures of though it's a daily occurrence.

Hoping that this update finds you well and that God is reminding you of His Awesomeness as well! =)

- Dan