

Date: November 12, 2003
 Location: Santiago, Chile
 Subject: Update #12 – Stuck in Santiago... Silly Studies! =)

Dear Friends and Family,

It's recently come to my attention that I haven't written an update in a really long time and that some concerned folks were wondering what I've been up to since Update #11 on October 26th.

Anyway, I just to take a moment to bring you up to speed on what's been going on in my life here south of the equator.



<left> To begin this update, I thought I'd share some pictures from my latest adventure to *Isla Rapa Nui* which you probably know as Easter Island.

With spring and whatnot in the air, what better way to enjoy the beautiful weather than by relaxing on this tropical Caribbean island and forgetting the hassles of schoolwork and such?

So... I wonder how many of you actually believed anything from my last two paragraphs... other than that it's true that it's spring down here, I pretty much made the rest up. (The image is actually a replica of the Easter Island sculptures that's located on Alameda, downtown Santiago's main street.) =D As you

hopefully gathered from the title of my twelfth update, I've been pretty much stuck in and around Santiago for the past however many days/weeks since Update #11. Just in case you wanted to know, Eastern Island is a Chilean territory from Chile's imperial days and is located in the Pacific a few thousand kilometers west of Chile. =)

Moving on from my customary random intro photo, I just wanted to share another series of photos that I've been meaning to share. =D

<right> The list pictured is the directory of the "casillas correspondencia" which is posted in our Council program office... it pretty much serves to remind us of which mailbox to check when looking for incoming mail...



<right> So if we zoom in a little closer, we can see that my mailbox number is... 45. =)

<below> This is my mailbox. It's sad because it



just sits there always empty week after week after week.

It says, "Please send me something to read!" =)

41. Kurosh Mehran-Hashemi
42. Calvin Mitchell
43. Audra Nemir
44. Kaitlin O'Donnell
45. Daniel Park
46. Rebecca Peacock
47. Sara Ramey
48. Chelsea Riley

I suppose my mailbox will just have to keep being sad because any mail that I've been receiving has been arriving at my host home address at Alberto Magno 1355, Providencia, Santiago, Chile. It really is a much easier address than the ultra-long "c/o CIEE" whatever address that's associated with my

lonely mailbox. =D

Anyway, getting on to the real purpose of this update... I've pretty much been locked up in my room writing papers, pretending to write papers, or sleeping while trying to dream about writing my papers. =)

There apparently is a reason that it's called "Study Abroad" and not "Travel Abroad." =) For those of you who I've misled to think that it's all fun and games down here... I'll try to clear up any misconceptions in this update. =)

While I pretty much had minimal work even while taking 6 courses from July through mid-October, I've had an overwhelming amount of assignments in the past few weeks. Chilean professors seem to misjudge the semester and pile on the work at the very end. I've been lucky though in that I chose 6 classes in which I've only had 2 exams, several papers throughout the term and 6 final papers. However, it turns out that I miscalculated



in Update #11 and in place of 50 pages worth of final papers, my total page count is/was more like 70-80 pages. Yikes! I'm still trying to figure out how I decided to take 6 classes again when I had only meant to take 4 and take this semester really easy... doh!

<left> In response to certain allegations that all my pictures only showed me traveling and not spending time in class, I finally got around to taking one picture in my

Economic and Social Politics course at UChile. I have two classes that are taught in this large seminar format in a huge auditorium like the one pictured but my other four classes are taught in smaller classes in which I couldn't possibly take a discreet picture. =)



<right> My desk where I've been working on updates, writing papers, and making travel plans. =) It's a bit different from my dorm room at Penn but it serves its purpose. If you ever get a chance to study abroad in a non-dorm situation in which you live with a host family, definitely bring your laptop if you have one. There is no possible way I would finish my 70 pages of final papers if I had to rely on university computers or internet cafes which all close relatively early. There's nothing like having the option to stay up all night writing papers and getting to sleep right about when your host family starts getting up to go to work. =D



<left> On a related note, my textbook costs this semester were unbelievable! Well... I don't really have any textbooks. Chile apparently doesn't follow any copyright laws or just chooses not to acknowledge any and 99% of my "texts" are photocopies of selected texts or even of entire books! While I haven't spent anything close to the \$400-500 that it's been costing me for textbooks at Penn the past two years, not having a University bookstore where all the readings are available and having to look all over town for books is definitely annoying. I now have a stack that's about 4 inches thick that represents 6 photocopied books, articles, and other packets. Getting back to having real books will be a pleasant change. =)

<right> One benefit of having 70 pages of papers to write is that I was forced to stay in Santiago which gave me more opportunities to spend with some of my Chilean friends from church.

After bible study last Saturday, we had a surprise birthday celebration for one of the brothers in our group. It's nice having a family in Christ wherever I go. From Los Angeles to Philadelphia to Santiago and even to Buenos Aires.





<left> As I mentioned earlier, it's spring in the lands south of the equator... and the flowers are blooming and the sun is shining! While those of you back home can enjoy the cool and beautiful season of autumn and dread the coming of winter, I finally had a chance to put away my jackets and wander around in shorts and a t-shirt. =)

Not really looking forward to coming back to Philly winter when it'll be warm summer down here.

<right> Another sign of spring... rabbits multiplying and bunnies all over the

place. =P My little host sister and her little bunny this past weekend on a relative's farm. She didn't get to keep the little bunny because it was too little and needed to be with mommy rabbit. Aww. =)



<below> Tomorrow morning is the first of many



scheduled museum outings that's been postponed several times for one of my classes. The Museum is part of the *Iglesia San Francisco* which is the oldest cathedral in Santiago with a history of about 430 years. Anyway, we only have about two weeks left of classes and several of my classes were supposed to have excursions to museums in the city. Oh well. =)

Anyway, my captivity in Santiago will end tomorrow as I finally get a chance to venture out of the city again to head back a bit farther south to Region X.

Amidst all the craziness of these last few weeks of finishing up final papers and figuring out the rest of my travel plans, I have no worries and trust that it'll all work out as long as I do my part. =) If you're stressed out about work or finals or anything else going on in your life right now, just refer to Matthew 6:25-34 as I just did and have peace! =)

Hope this update finds you well and that it's been useful in some way or another. =) Take care, don't forget me, and write back! =P

- Dan