

Ross Antonacci  
June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010

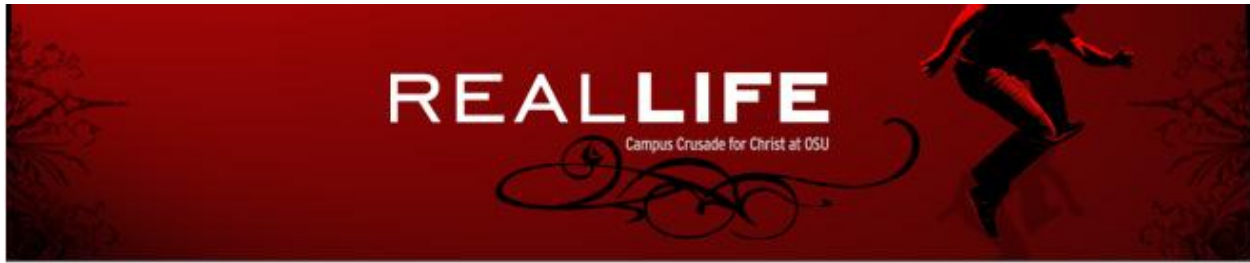
Greetings,

I am sorry that it has taken so long for this update to get out, but I am finally here in Valencia, Venezuela and it has been crazy thus far. Generally, I will try to get these sent out on Sunday afternoons (which are usually free days), but for now, it is Tuesday afternoon in South America (this will also be a fairly long update, but I hope you can force your way through it).

Travel is always an interesting experience and this trip was no different. Simply getting to our briefing in Indianapolis came with its own twists and turns. Most people arrived Saturday (June 12<sup>th</sup>) in the afternoon or evening, but a few of us were going to be late due to a wedding, but we would drive to Dayton, wake up early and get to briefing before the morning meeting. This all went as planned until we realized that some of us had forgotten things back in Columbus (e.g. passport, money and bed sheets) and so, at 11:00 p.m., two of us drove back through the rain to Columbus (approximately 90 minutes) grabbed what we had forgotten and started back to Dayton. By the time we get to the Dayton area, we are both tired and reading the directions to get back to the house we were staying at proved to be more a chore than it should have been and it took us an extra half hour to get back. After all of that and 3-4 hours of sleep later, we finally were on our way to briefing.

Briefing was our opportunity to get to know our teammates better and get a better understanding of what ministry was going to look like once we were in-country. We had all of Sunday and a short time Monday morning for this, but then we were off to the airport. Surprisingly, there was only one major glitch in our plans for air travel. We were all supposed to fly from Indy to Miami, layover for about 4 hours, then fly from Miami to Caracas, Venezuela. However, while we were on the first flight, we discovered that five of us had been placed on a different flight to Caracas and would be sitting in the Caracas airport by themselves for 4 hours before the rest of us arrived (and none of the 5 said that they could speak Spanish). We couldn't get everybody moved to the same flight, but we were at least able to arrange for a Spanish speaker to get onto their flight and we eventually reunited at 11:30 p.m. in Venezuela, before our 3 hour bus ride to get us to Valencia at 2:30 Tuesday morning.

We took Tuesday as an opportunity to lay low and rest from our travels and have one more in-country briefing, but Wednesday we got down to business. Wednesday and Thursday were set aside for touring the campus to familiarize ourselves with the area that we will be doing ministry in for the next several weeks. This was a cool experience for me because I still remember much of the area of the university and the neighborhood in Valencia where we are living from last year and all of the excitement from the past months of preparing and support raising (all of which came in, thanks to God) had finally culminated in getting to see the



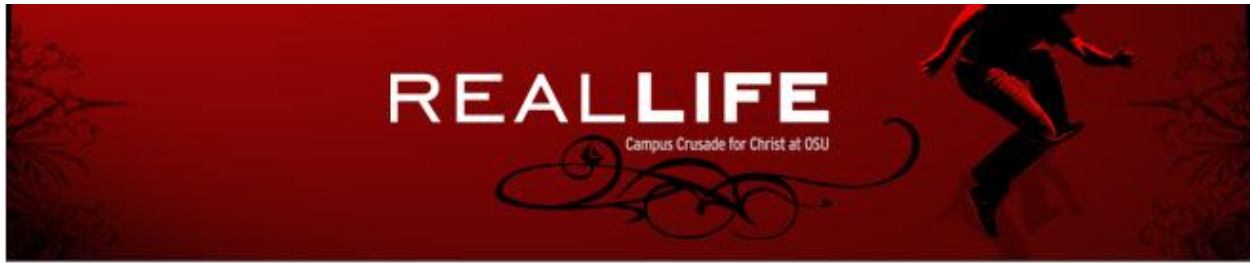
university again. Wednesday we toured FACES (their humanities campus and traditionally the hub of Vida Estudiantil, Campus Crusade for Christ in Venezuela) and Thursday we toured the two other faculties, Ingenieria (Engineering) and Odontologia (Odontology is a combination of dentistry and orthodontics, but the campus also includes all of the medical and health sciences). Finally, on Friday we went back to FACES for the students' weekly meeting, to get our first taste of what ministry looks like at la Universidad de Carabobo.

We all have specific team responsibilities here and we met as teams for the first time on Saturday. For the first time in my three summer projects I am not in charge of the finances, but I get the opportunity to plan two specific outreaches at the University over the course of our time here. We have some great ideas going and I can't wait to see how God brings them to fruition (don't worry, you'll hear more later). Saturday night, the Vida Estudiantil students hosted us for a Welcome Party, which was great to be able to see all of the students that I met last year and hear about all that had been going on in the past few months (as well as have some fun and trip the building's circuit breaker about 3 times). Sunday we got up and went to a church called Génesis which went for about 2 and a half hours (we warned them, but no one else on the team believed us when we said to be ready for 2-3 hours every Sunday morning). After that, we watched some World Cup soccer, I attempted to install a washer and dryer in one of the apartments and some of us went to call our fathers for Father's Day.

Finally, Monday took shape as a "normal" day of ministry on campus as we got up in the morning for a quick devotional as team, travelled to campus and paired off to begin talking to students to try to develop a spiritual conversation centered on the gospel. Before that, however, I was able to contact Argenis, a friend that I had spent most of last summer talking with about the gospel and we met for a few hours. Monday night we had team dinner and a meeting and I went to bed, which brings us finally to the present.

Sorry for this unusually long update, the rest should be shorter and I will try to get them out during our free time on Sunday afternoons. Lastly, though, there are some things that we need a lot of prayer in.

- Ministry in General: That we would continue to receive boldness from God to take steps of faith in sharing the gospel with the students here. Also, that God would be working the hearts and minds of the students at the University and in our community in Valencia, preparing them for His work and granting us opportunities to minister in our everyday lives and our times on campus.
- Ministry this Week: There is a teacher strike today and Wednesday, a national holiday Thursday, and no one usually shows up for classes on the Friday after a Thursday holiday, so we do not know what ministry will look like this week.



- Health: I am well, but at least 7 members of our team have become sick over the past few days with a variety of intestinal maladies, so we would appreciate prayers for speedy recovery and that it is only adjusting to the diet here (everyone but me last year had the same problem and we just had to let it run its course).

Also, if you have anything that you would like me to pray for, I would love to hear from all of you and you can e-mail me at [ross.antonacci@gmail.com](mailto:ross.antonacci@gmail.com) or send me something via Facebook.

Thanks again for all of your support and for joining me as we together come alongside what God is doing here in Valencia, Venezuela!

-Ross Antonacci