

## Engage the Nations Internship Update #2

Tijuana, Mexico

Saturday, August 19th, 2017



*Below are a few verses God has highlighted to me for this trip:*

**For our team:** Acts 16:13-15

**For me personally:** 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

Hola Todos!

Thank you so much for your prayers and support during my incredible summer in Tijuana, Mexico. It's hard to imagine that just over a week ago I was saying my goodbyes and packing my bags to head back to Baton Rouge. As I write this letter, I find myself longing to be back with my **Mexican community**, but ultimately thankful for all God did in this past season. As one of my favorite worship songs by United Pursuit says, "Though the seasons change, Your love remains." I am trusting that although my life will look different as I finish my last year of school at LSU, the God I serve is still loving, still working, and still directing my steps. So, as an act of reflection, let me share some of the **amazing testimonies** from the second half of my summer in TJ!



*Ethan, Matt, and myself*

The end of June and beginning of July was filled with outreaches as an intern team. We really stepped in faith as we went to the streets – sharing the gospel of Jesus with people, offering prayer for the sick and broken, and inviting them into a church family at All Peoples Tijuana. On one of these outreaches, we went to a park downtown where we performed a drama that illustrated the story of the gospel. Many people who watched responded and received Jesus as their Savior! One of the women who raised her hand for prayer was named Dyana, and I had the privilege of sitting with her and **hearing her story**. She had just recently been deported from the United States, separated from her husband and children still living in Los Angeles. New to Tijuana, without family or friends, she was desperately trying to get her life back in order so she can return home. After praying with her and asking the Holy Spirit to fill her with peace, I received word that **God was doing a deep work of reconciliation in her life**. But the testimony doesn't stop there. After not hearing from Dyana for about a month, one Sunday morning she walks through the doors of church! She ended up re-dedicating her life to Christ, experiencing freedom from her drug addictions, and finding a full-time job! She is now a vital part of the church body, and her story is **a perfect example of God's timing**. Simple prayer and invitation one month prior resulted in radical life change today. I'm thankful that we are called to plant the seed and God is the one to make it grow!





*Tuesday morning Church Staff Meetings*



*Myself with Yadira's family, the host of one of the new lifegroups*

Another great testimony came from God's work through high school students from Waco, TX on a short term mission trip. It was a busy week full of evangelizing, praying for miracles, building retaining walls, visiting orphanages, and distributing food to an impoverished neighborhood outside the city. With their help, we also hosted a huge party for the Youth Group (REVO), complete with churros and a mechanical bull! One story in particular impacted me deeply. During an outreach on the beach, one of the leaders began a conversation with a young man named Ghyslain. Originally from North Carolina, he had just moved to Tijuana a week earlier for a "fresh start". Ghyslain ended up coming to church the following Sunday, and he **met with Jesus in a powerful way** during the service. I was able to connect with him afterwards, and we became instant friends. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, **Ghyslain began to walk in freedom** from his marijuana addiction, and the "fresh start" he was looking for was found by becoming a part of a church community. For the rest of the summer he became our "honorary intern", doing outreaches with us and tirelessly serving the church each and every week. Praise God for this person of peace!



*Matt, Ghyslain, Ethan, and myself at church Sunday Morning*



The beginning of July was a joyful time as relationships within our team and church began to deepen. For instance, the interns hosted a party at our house for the youth that was full of dancing, food, and **new discipleship relationships**. We also spent numerous evenings worshiping on the beach, thanking God for all he had done this summer. As a rest day, our team went to Los Angeles to enjoy the city together.



*Youth piled into the back of our truck on our way to the party*



*Special worship times on the beach*



*Team time in Los Angeles*

After our Los Angeles trip, the summer truly kicked into high-gear. Our team was tasked with planning and hosting two weeks of **English Classes at the church**. Our vision for the classes was to meet a practical need (learning English), to meet a spiritual need (learning about Jesus), and to connect with people (making disciples). With our vision set, our team crafted curriculum, marketed the classes to the public, and prayed a ton because honestly, **we had no idea what we were doing!** Thankfully we serve a God who does above and beyond what we could hope or think, and He did just that with these classes. They were a huge success, averaging at least 40 people each class, and many of those people had never set foot in our church before. Through relationships formed and conversations during the small group lessons, we saw three people give their lives to Jesus! This made all of the planning, all of the meetings, and all of the invitations worth it. **People experienced the love of God.**





*Small group lessons at our English Classes*

As the English Classes came to a close, our next adventure took us on a mission trip as a church to **Monterrey, Mexico**! 80 people from All Peoples Tijuana and 20 from All Peoples San Diego joined together to share the love of Jesus with the city for a week. I think the most incredible thing about the trip was **the diversity of the team**. We had people ranging from 11 months old to 70 years old, representing different nationalities, languages, and backgrounds. Although messy at times, with 30 of the 100 people being under the age of 12, it was so **beautiful to see the family of God serve together** in such a unified way. I saw mothers holding their children while sharing the gospel. I saw Mexicans and Americans hand in hand praying for people in Jesus' name. Personally, I saw 6 different people accept Jesus which was such a blessing! This mission trip taught me that living radically for Jesus isn't reserved for just my "free college years". Serving Jesus is a lifelong endeavor to be experienced in the context of family.



*Central Plaza of Monterrey, Mexico*



*The village of Santiago, south of Monterrey*





*Myself and Eliseo, the youngest member of our Mission trip*



*Our lovely, messy, slightly chaotic attempt to take a picture as a team*

I would like to close with a final testimony that truly changed my life forever. Back in May, we hosted a Vacation Bible School in a certain neighborhood of the city. On the last day, a fourteen-year-old boy named Cristofer came, and through a conversation with other people on my team he accepted Jesus as his Savior! From that moment on, **Cristofer embarked on a summer of growth** in which I had the privilege of walking alongside of him. He began to go to one of the lifegroups we started in that same neighborhood every week, and eventually he started coming to church on Sundays. Since he didn't have a ride home after the morning services, Cristofer would just hang around the church until youth group in the evenings. **Those afternoons were where our friendship formed.** We read the Bible together, talked about life and family, and would sometimes go to our favorite ice cream place! I saw his life change before my very eyes, growing in love and maturing in faith. During my last week in Tijuana I told Cristofer that I was so proud of the mature young man he had become, and I shared how in the Bible, people whose lives were changed by Jesus would respond by getting baptized. I went further to say that God had already promised to be with him forever, and that **baptism is an opportunity to make that same promise back to God.** After praying about it a few days, Cristofer told me on my last Sunday in town that he wanted to get baptized! So after church, all of the interns along with Cristofer's friends from youth group piled into our trusty big red pickup truck to head to the beach. In one of the most special moments of my life, **I baptized Cristofer in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.** Cristofer was buried with Christ in baptism, and raised with Christ in a new life! Not a bad way to finish the summer!



*Cristofer's baptism*





*Cristofer and I after his baptism*

In conclusion, **I am in awe of all God did in us and through us this summer.** I can honestly say that this was one of the most restful and fulfilling seasons of my life. Every step of faith I took was met by the unconditional love of Jesus. Every yes I said to Him resulted in life-change. Every moment spent with Jesus advanced the Kingdom of God, and for that I am so thankful. If I had to summarize what I learned through this experience in one sentence, it would be this – **I fell in love with the local Church again.**



*The team and I enjoying Ceviche*





*Forming community*



*Team bonding*



*The team in our faithful red pickup truck*

**So thank you.** Thank you for investing in my trip this summer financially and through prayer. I look forward to all God has in store for this next season, and I rejoice for all He did in the lives of Tijuana, Mexico.

Dios te bendiga,

Cristobal