



Cheryl VanZandbergen <cheryl@cityviewcc.net>

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## May - June Newsletter

1 message

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## May - June Newsletter

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These past two months have been absolutely incredible! We are extremely grateful for all your support and prayers. We have felt covered and strengthened in every step of the way.

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## This is what we've been doing:

- Invited to preach at Iglesia Refugio in Duitama
- Preaching at our church again
- Youth Groups
- Worship Rehearsal
- Service Director's meeting
- Mother's day celebration at church
- The Freedom Manual Course
- House of Prayer
- Planning for families retreat in July
- Ministry leaders breakfast and 2nd semester planning
- Fundraising for our summer trip
- Renewing my passport and drivers license.
- Visiting church members and families
- First outing to share the gospel in the park and public worship.
- Finding a place for us to gather as a church and hauling sound equipment around.
- Basileia (Ministry Training School) end of semester exams.



## Things you can be praying for

- For a place for us to gather as a church permanently, as the place we normally use is under construction and we can't use it during the week.
- For Majo's Visa. We're running out of time and still no answer.
- That during our time in the USA we'd be able to raise the support we need to continue serving full time.
- For the retreat in July, that families would increase in intimacy with the Lord.
- For the new church members, that they would grow and be strengthened in Him.
- For the families of the church that are under the attack of the enemy trying to destroy families.



These past two months, as you have just read, have been incredibly busy. The Lord has been bringing amazing revival to our church and the church grows, so has the amount of work. But this brings amazing joy to our lives because the church we are at right now is completely different to the one we started working at last year. We praise the Lord because the church went from a dying church to a resurrecting church. God has been incredibly faithful to us, and to Him be all the glory and honor.

As I mentioned in the previous newsletter, I got to preach for the first time ever at church, and that opened up doors for me to preach again at our church and also got invited to preach to Sam Killins' (many of you know him) church in Duitama. It's been a blessing to share God's word not only at my local church but also in different cities.



Since there's a lot to tell you, let me break it up into sections.

### **Worship:**

We've only been able to rehearse once, due to many personal issues the members of the worship team has had. Even though we haven't been able to rehearse much, the Lord has continued blessing us constantly. We also praise the Lord because we were able to buy a new wireless microphone and a new keyboard controller. This has been a huge blessing to the church and the House of Prayer, as we are starting to invite new musicians to support us and the church did not have instruments of their own.



**Youth:**

We have done three youth group gatherings in the past couple of months. It has been incredible to see the growth in many of them. We started watching The Chosen and have also met at the park to throw a frisbee around and play board games. We have been speaking about the prophetic ministry and have had amazing conversations as we go out and eat as well.

**Freedom Manual/House of Prayer:**

We are about to finish The Freedom Manual course and we have seen incredible growth and impact in the 8 people taking the course! Our desire is to empower these people to help us teach this course next semester and to guide them into discipling more people. We are now planning on opening up a second discipleship course additional to teaching the Freedom Manual again, so we will be having these simultaneously. This will require a lot more work, as we prepare these classes and make sure they all get recorded and put on YouTube.

**Church Operations:**

This has been the biggest challenge so far! As I told you previously, we currently do not have a place to gather as a church, which has made logistics very complicated. This has been due to the fact that the place we rent out every Sunday is under construction. The Lord has been good and has allowed us to meet at different event venues that neighborhoods rent out, but that has meant loading up the car with all the sound equipment and instruments at least twice a week and set up wherever we are allowed to meet. This has lead us as a church to have 7 days of prayer and fasting specifically for a new place for us to gather, where we don't have to move around and a place that we can use throughout the week. Rent is very expensive in Chia, so it has been a challenge to find the right place that has the characteristics we need and that is within our budget. We have some savings that we want to use to purchase a place, but they are not even half of the down payment we'd need to buy a place in Chía, so please be praying for provision for our church. If you'd like to partner with us to help us purchase a place that we can use as a church, please let us know! As we grow as a church, we have also been holding a lot of meetings with different teams, leaders and servants to make sure all areas of the church improve as well. Our biggest project right now is preparing everything for our families retreat in July! The logistics of these retreat require a lot of time planning and prepping for activities, theme, teachings, kids, etc. Please be praying for us as we prepare for this retreat. Our main goals are to bring more unity and communion to the church as well as to have more people with deep intimacy with the Lord. We also had breakfast with the ministry leaders to plan for the second semester and we had an incredible time to meditate on how we have been doing so far and what are the things that we are doing well and what things need improvement. Overall, we can't believe how much our church has changed in the last year. We are starting to see the fruit of hard work during this past year and a half and this brings so much joy to our hearts and fuels us to persevere.

**Personal Life:**

As you have read in our previous newsletters and reports we have been raising funds to go to the USA to visit our supporters and to attend my brother Pablo's wedding. During this process we found out both my passport and driver's license were expired, which meant a lot of errand-running to get those renewed as we prepare for the trip. We have also been praying non-stop for Majo's Visa. We are 20 days away from traveling and she still doesn't have a Visa. Please help us pray for a miracle, so that an appointment opens up in the next few days so she gets her Passport and Visa on time for us to travel together. We are also praying for provision in two areas: That we'd be able to raise the remaining US \$800 that we need to pay for our travel expenses, and that during our time there we'd be able to raise the support we need to continue working for Him.

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I apologize for the length of this newsletter, but there's just so much to tell you and I'd also like to share with you some statistics of the current economic situation that we are living in Colombia as well as some numbers on how we are doing as a church.

#### **Church Numbers:**

- In the last meeting we had to plan for second semester we evidenced that the percentage of executed activities went from 15% to 95% over the last year!
- Offerings and tithes went from \$3.000.000 pesos to \$22.000.000 pesos.
- Members went from about 50 to 60 people.

#### **Current Situation in Colombia**

- Inflation has gone up 13%
- Gas price has gone from about US \$2.00 to \$3.00 dollars/gallon, and its expected to go up to \$4.00 by the end of the year.
- Last year 1USD was about \$5.000 COP, now it has gone down to about \$4.000.

#### **Personal Finances:**

Our current monthly budget to cover our basic monthly expenses is approximately

COP \$4,500,000 (with current exchange rate aprox. US \$1.100) and we are currently receiving about US \$770. This is only our basic expenses with no room for us to save up or get away to rest occasionally, and this already includes the US \$220.00 we get from our church here to pay for our social security and health insurance plan. We were also affected negatively by the USD price drop this year. As the price drops, we receive substantially less money every month.

The Lord has been good to us and He has provided everything we've needed so far. We trust He will continue to faithfully provide everything we need. We are hoping by second semester we are fully funded after we meet with more families in churches during the summer. For our trip we have already raised US \$2,200 out of the \$3,000 we need! Please keep praying that we'd raise the rest that we need for our trip, as well as placing the right people in our way to support us!

**\$2.200/\$3.000 USD**

## **SPECIAL PRAYER REQUEST AND FUNDRAISER!**

From now till July please join us in constant prayer, as we are aiming to raise \$3,000 USD for us to go to the U.S. in the summer with 3 main purposes: My brother Pablo's wedding in August, to visit our supporters, and to raise support for the second semester and coming year. These \$3,000 dollars are mainly for plane tickets and expenses for the 4 weeks we plan to be there. It has been quite a challenge to live with only half of the support we need and our prayer is that we have full support by the end of this year. *If you know a church or family that would be willing to support us with the fundraiser, on a monthly basis, or both, please reply to this newsletter and let us know so we can arrange meeting them when we are there or even schedule a zoom call.* For this purpose, we are also in constant prayer, as Majo does not have a Visa yet. She was supposed to get an appointment in May, but still no answer, so please pray that she does get the appointment and her Visa is approved in time for us to travel. *If you'd like to make a special donation towards this purpose, you can send it as usual to L.E.M. in a transfer or check, or to my account using Zelle with a comment or message saying "summer trip".*

**We are always thankful for your prayers, they are greatly needed and appreciated. If you also want to partner with us to support what the Lord is doing in Colombia, there are several ways you can donate.**

- If you wish to receive a tax-deductible receipt you can send your donation to L.E.M. (Latino Evangelistic Ministries), which is my mission and the organization that processes the donations in the US. Whichever option you choose please send Angela Loudon ([LEM.Angela@gmail.com](mailto:LEM.Angela@gmail.com)) a note specifying that the gift is for Juan Felipe Avila and include your name and address to which we can mail the receipt.

- Account number: 000527708934
- Routing number: 121000358
- The other option is to send a paper check:

made out to "Latino Evangelistic Ministries" to the following address:

L.E.M.

P.O. Box 8305

Long Beach, CA 90808

- You can make a transfer through **Zelle** to my email ([juanfe.avila95@gmail.com](mailto:juanfe.avila95@gmail.com))

- If you are in Colombia you can make a transfer or deposit to my Bancolombia Account

- Savings Account Number: 03921393937

CC. 1019105387

Juan Felipe Avila Rubio

**Nequi:** 3123720021

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“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”

**James 1:17**

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