

# POPES EN CHILE

Hola todos,

Thank you for all of your messages, prayers and support. I waited until today to write this prayer letter because yesterday was a historic day in Chile. There have been strong calls over the last year to change the constitution written during the Pinochet dictatorship. Yesterday there was a plebiscite and 80% voted in favour of the change. It was such a big day that the 'Google Doodle' marked the vote on their homepage!



It feels a relief because over the past few weeks the rioting has been increasing in anticipation of this vote. Two churches were burnt. Only three of the 364 boroughs of Chile voted to keep the old constitution. They happen to be the three most affluent areas. It has been a very hard year to live here but for future ministry it is good to have lived this shared experience that has shaken Chileans as much as it has us. Please pray with us that the new constitution preserves the rights and freedoms Christians had enjoyed before and also addresses the many inequalities.

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Today also marks us moving slowly out of an incredibly long Covid19 lockdown. From 5am this morning we moved into a new phase with more freedoms. We are unlikely to be able to meet as a church until March but it feels like God has been using this time in different ways. One of the persistent problems with ministry here was the sheer busyness meaning pastors struggled to get everything done, leaving little time for strategic or long-term planning. It has been great to have the opportunity to meet with various pastors in this time when the whole of church life has been thrown up the air. We have been able to discuss the need to not just react to situations that present themselves, but to pray, think and develop a vision and a plan for their churches and ministries. Three big areas I feel could be improved here are: 1) Churches having a every member ministry model, 2) Intentional, planned evangelism and 3) Encouraging people into ministry.

I have a good number of weekly or biweekly meetings with pastors, trying to help them in their faiths and ministries and pushing them to think through the above areas. Praise God that over the last couple of months, there seems to have been a couple of exciting steps. The first is the publication of The Vine Project into Spanish. Due to Covid and the normal Chilean postal system the copies I will order won't arrive for a few months. Please pray for pastors to be open to reading it and talking about it with me.



The second is that, with a couple of pastors here, we are making steps towards starting a church-based student ministry in Santiago. It is an obvious gap here, that we take for granted in the UK (and other countries). There is an excellent seminary (CEP) and a great apprenticeship scheme but a lack of people attending them. Almost all of the pastors I know in the UK felt called into ministry during their student years and then went on to an apprenticeship and seminary. Praise God for an ideal church to do this, an obvious pastor to lead it and the kind offer of money to fund it. Please pray for the successful set-up of this conduit into having more apprentices, then pastors and churches here to reach out to this wonderful country.

Lastly...us!

We are very thankful to God for this time of lockdown. I feel that I have been refined in the fires of lockdown! It has been a hard time for Eva and Judah, with no real friends or face-to-face contact with anyone other than us two. School in Spanish via ZOOM is a daunting challenge, even after months of doing it. Now they are allowed out and to have visitors, please pray that we can facilitate opportunities for friendships. We praise God for some older women in the UK (probably reading this) who have become real christian auntie figures for Eva. It is wonderful to hear her talking about these women and how she has been praying for them.

Please also pray for Helen and her Dad. He has become ill over the past few months and ended up in hospital three weeks ago. Praise God for Helen's wonderful sister and auntie, who have been able to help but please also pray for us feeling useless and feeling the distance between Chile and the UK. With this in mind, we have flights booked to the UK and long to come for Christmas. Our flights have been changed once already but we pray that we will be able to return and even see some of you reading this letter. Quarantine and the rule of 6 may make everything much more complicated so please pray that we are patient and are able to manage the children's expectations, along with our own.

Here's us at a socially-distanced homegroup social and enjoying a nearby wood.

As always please get in touch and tell us how we can be praying for you. Love and best wishes

Matt, Helen, Eva and Judah. +56 9 4751 8887

