

POPES EN CHILE

Hi all

Two months has passed since we returned to what felt like a more relaxed Chile in terms of Covid-19. But the calm before the storm didn't last too long. Sadly, we have seen a dramatic rise in cases and this time, like other countries, it is now affecting the younger generations. There is a severe shortage of ICU beds and therefore the city is once again under strict lockdown. We also lost a member of our home group to Covid after a short fight of only two weeks, which saw him moving hospitals to access the care he needed. Please pray for his wife, Tania and their two young children. It was encouraging to see the church members supporting them with prayer and messages. The new wave has also slowed down the process around the writing of the new constitution.

For us it means we are back in our house with zoom meetings once again replacing any face-to-face contact. The children managed six mornings in school before our borough locked down. That's two less than the last academic year! Then a thoroughly confusing week where the school tried to accommodate both the children in school and those unable to attend, before the entire city shut down and they moved back to a fully online system. But praise God that the children absolutely threw themselves into those few mornings and have made some new friends, who they are keeping in contact with outside of school hours - as well as it being a much needed boost to their speaking confidence. Having basically maintained a vow of silence during online classes last year, we have noticed that they are much more willing to contribute to classes this year and they both seem a lot more content, despite the emotional roller coaster of uncertainty.

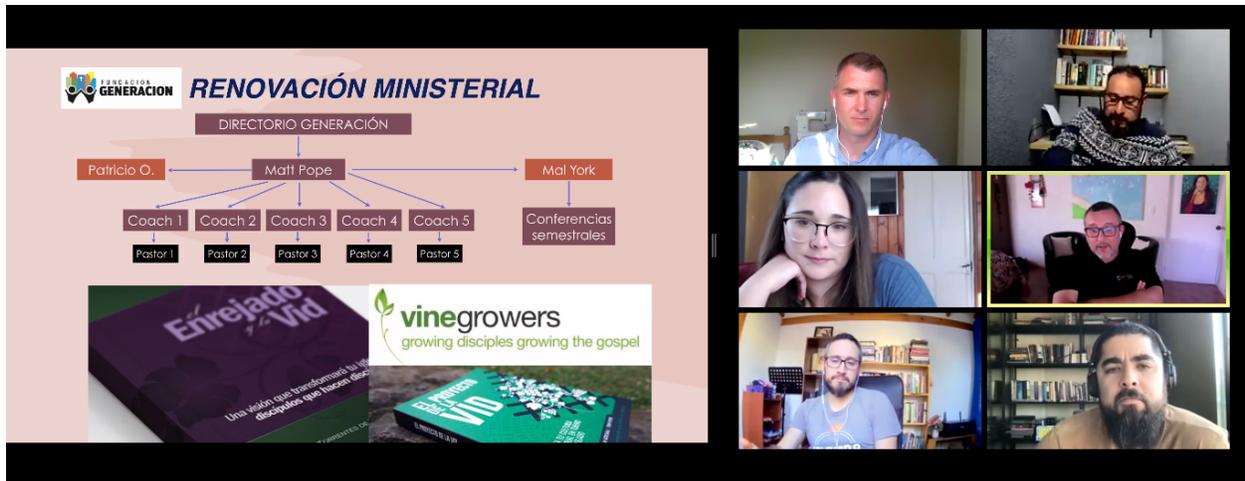


Horses reclaiming the roads in lieu of traffic



Another blessing is that we are now allowed outdoor exercise between 6-9am, which has made such a difference to the feeling of being trapped indoors and we have noticed the difference in our general fitness and energy levels. We still have only two shopping permits per week and the time has been reduced to two hours, door-to-door, which is quite a challenge when there are long queues to enter the shops but it is manageable. And more joy entered our lives this month in the form of a rescue kitten. She is very sweet and has been a lot of fun, as well as helping to use up our shopping permits by chewing through our internet cable (during a lesson, naturally) and needing three vet appointments.

In terms of the ministry here: 'The Vine Project' books have arrived in Chile! I should receive them this week and can then start to distribute them and begin working through the material with several pastors and trainees. Working with Fundación Generación (who seek to fund and promote apprenticeships here), I will try to help pastors implement the tools from this book in their churches and encourage others to do likewise.



Our local church family has started this process with monthly leadership training sessions as well as 1:1 training of leaders. The aim is that the recipients can in turn become trainers - a biblical concept but not so common here. We are praying that people in our church enjoy using the gifts that they have been given.

As well as our relationships with pastors and their families, our church family and parents and teachers from school, please pray for our relationships with our Spanish teachers; Marisol, Pablo and Sebastian. As good teachers they want our Spanish learning to dovetail our lives and work. This means that our clases are full of discussions about the Lord and his good news. They read through and correct sermons and seminars that I prepare in Spanish and they often have interesting questions about our lives and beliefs.

You may remember that at the end of last year our local pastor tragically lost his 3 year-old daughter after a quick and seemingly mild illness. He was a respected and capable pastor with exciting plans for the church but this tragedy obviously rocked him and his wife as well as the wider church in Santiago. After their loss they have decided to take a break from frontline ministry in Chile and take time to recuperate and attend the Simeon's Trust preachers' training course in the US. We would desperately love to see them return restored and ready to serve again here as he is well-loved and understands the ministry model that we are seeking to implement here. I attach their newsletter if you would be able to pray for them and even contribute financially to their restoration project if you feel moved to.

As usual, we love hearing your news - especially now our lives are far from exciting!
Love to you all. Matt, Helen, Eva and Judah.

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