

URBANA 2012

by Samantha Brown

I am so thankful that PCC chose to invest in sending college students to Urbana! Urbana was an awesome experience, and I definitely learned lessons that I will remember for the rest of my life. After going to this conference I feel so blessed to have been able to praise God in seven languages, gain wisdom from teachers of all different backgrounds, and watch hundreds of people really surrender their lives to Christ.



Sam in Nairobi (spring 2012)

One thing that struck me at Urbana was that God has a deep longing not only for the poor and marginalized, but also for the spiritually lost. Through various parts of Luke (specifically the parable of the prodigal son, the parables of the lost coin and the lost sheep, and the story of Zacchaeus) I learned about God's heart for those who do not know Him. I asked myself if my heart really broke for the lost like God's and began examining motivations that had been foundational to my pursuit of missions in the first place. Honestly, I found that many of my major motivations had been based off of a desire for adventure and a passion for a culture I naturally gravitate towards. I believe that my love of Latin American culture and people is God-given, but I also recognize that God's love for the lost needs to be my primary motivation. Through Urbana, God showed me ways that I need to reconcile my passion for Spanish-speaking people with my greater passion for His heart and His message. I need to have enough faith in the power of the Gospel and in the character of God to make that my reason for breathing, and even more so, my reason for serving internationally.

Urbana also hit materialism pretty hard. I found that following Jesus leaves no room for materialism, and it really is as simple as that. As far as Americans go, I had always thought I was on the less materialistic end of the spectrum, but I was wrong. Throughout the course of the week, we studied several passages in Luke that explicitly claimed that we must give everything to follow Jesus. I can't serve both God and money. Or God and comfort. Or God and my appearance.

I remember first reading Luke 18:18-30 where a man who had obeyed God's commandments since birth asked Jesus what he must do to gain eternal life. Jesus answered, *"Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor."* Ouch. The fact that I was holding a \$5 cup of Starbucks coffee in my hand at the time definitely added an extra sting to that remark. I have always had a desire to work with "the poor." In a sense, it's easy to care about them; who wouldn't look at a disturbing World Vision picture without an ounce of sympathy or occasionally donate their clothes to the homeless? I've even had a desire to live among the poor, knowing that I would someday work in areas of low-income for my vocation in public health. But to live like them? Different story. Jesus' simple words cut through my heart at Urbana: *"Sell all that you have...and you will have treasure in heaven...come, follow Me."*