

Hello Bethany,

On Friday night our joint Bethany/Culloden soccer team won 5-2 and I was home by 11:30pm. I didn't feel quite as excited about our win, however, when I had to wake up at 3:30am to be at the airport for our *very* early morning flight to Brazil. I'm exhausted. I just got to my hotel and I feel like I have just pulled *two* all-nighters. Rod, Les and Cheryl are on their way to *Chain-of-love* which is about an hour from here.

We had some fun with our trip as our flight from Dallas to Sao Paulo left two hours late, meaning we had a 9 hour layover in Dallas instead of a 7 hour one. By the time we got to Sao Paulo we had missed out flight to Porto Alegre so American Airlines gave us tickets for another flight that left 3 hours later for Porto Alegre. The problem was that when we went to use those tickets we discovered that American Airline hadn't checked with Latam Airlines to see if they actually had room on this flight, which they didn't. American Airlines was probably hoping someone would cancel or something, but that didn't happen. That led to a lot of back and forth between the two airlines until Latin Airline somehow found us seats. When I received my tickets I got fairly excited to see my seat number, 1B. I was in the front row. Maybe this meant they found a seat for me in first class! But alas, it was not to be. It was a small aircraft with no distinction in the seats and all I got for a snack was a glass of water. ☹️ When we got off the plane Brazil was currently playing a world cup game and so very few stores were open and everyone was watching it on their phones. Was I really just playing soccer myself just thirty some hours ago.

On Monday I taught my first class. There are about 20 in my class. I say *about* because a few more may show up on Tuesday. It is a good mix of ages with people in their 20s and people in their 60s. There are also men and women in the class. We spend the first three hours talking about "reading large" and understanding context and how we should almost never preach and/or build ideas on only one verse. Some of the same themes we have been emphasizing at Bethany with our Bible reading challenges. I love the teaching and Lyndell is a great interpreter/translator as she has a good command of both languages and so we are able to get into a good teaching rhythm. What I find the most difficult is that during the breaks and after class I cannot connect with the students as I do in Cameroon because of the language difference.

I've also been in contact with our team at *Chain of Love* and asked them about their first night, telling them how wonderful it was for me to finally crash on a nice soft bed in a warm hotel. Here is Les' reply in blue:

Well....lucky you !!! Between the barking dogs and the freezing temps....we slept great. 😊

Yes...it's cold here in the dorm. We are borrowing some heaters from the office which we will return in the morning, then borrow again after 5 pm. Not much hot water for showers either.....But.....there's lots of food.....and good fellowship.

We had a 2 hour visit/discussion with Telmo (director of *Chain-of-Love*). We have arranged some special activities for the staff and with the kids. We are meeting every morning at a

different house for breakfast, then every evening around 7:30 we will meet at each house for fellowship of some kind.

We walked the neighborhood a bit. Every house has at least 2 dogs and barbed wire or electric fencing.....to keep out the bad guys.

We are trying to ween ourselves from our coats, but All is Good here....especially with heated rooms !!

We plan to get pass on the church donations tomorrow.

Have fun teaching.

And here is another *Chain of Love* update from Cheryl

Just got back home. We went to the city with Telmo and the psychologist and 2 of the children...a brother 12 and sister 14. They were going before a judge as the biological parents want them back. Their backgrounds include major abuse esp. for the girl. It was like sheep being lead to the slaughter in my mind. They didn't tell us the outcome but the kids were as quiet on the way home as there. We stopped to get them an ice cream. I am 2 for 2 days with tears in my eyes. How will we ever convey to Bethany the reality here? And the need for our support? Our hearts are full but also heavy. We can't wait to share everything with all of you. Also, right now we need Bethany to pray without ceasing. This Thursday the federal government here will make a ruling that will greatly impact Chain of Love and especially the families.

Please pray with us that this ruling will not succeed. That Satan's attack will not succeed but we rest in God's sovereign will.

The 3 Amigos at Chain of Love!

Pastor Stef

Cheryl with some of the *Chain of Love* Kids



Les and Rod sorting clothes in the *Chain of Love* donation center



Bethany donations we brought to Chain of Love



Rod doing his photography



One of the *Chain of Love* house families



Pastor Stef with a few of his students holding up the textbook we gifted them

