

Dec. 24th, 2015

Mele Kalikimaka Grace Bible Church!

First of all let us say a huge thank you for the beautiful card you sent to us. We wanted to write sooner, but Matias and I have been taking turns being sick these past 3 weeks and a lot of things were dropped. (Winter in Hawaii may be different but it is still the cold and flu season!) Thank you for the gift cards as well. I cannot tell you how much of a help they are. Truly, the best blessing we could have received.

It's Christmas Eve and I can hardly believe how fast these past two months have flown by. I'm sure it's the same for most married couples but I find it difficult to remind myself that life has not always been this way; yet I still have moments where I suddenly remember how much has changed. It's incredible how God has blessed us this year.

Here's a quick recap of the amazing miracles and adventures God started us on in 2015

- In January, I went to Chile to meet Matias' family for the first time. We were even given miles to buy the ticket to make the trip possible. I was so excited for my first time in the southern hemisphere and it was an amazing two months being in Matias' home country and getting to know his family.
- At the end of May we flew out to Hawaii to join our ministry mentors Jim and Janice Rogers and the School of Writing team. They informed us of their desire to hand over the leadership to us and after praying, God revealed that it was indeed our next step.
- Soon after, Matias proposed and I accepted!
- I can't begin to go over all of the individual amazing things God has done since we arrived to Hawaii, but he has made incredible connections and provided for us constantly. Most notably we got to know the assistant of YWAM's founder, who asked us to cover her position while she went on maternity leave. It was a busy time but full unexpected blessings.
- Matias and I both celebrated our 25th birthdays in August and started his immigration process.
- In October we had the biggest blessing of all. Our families and friends came from over 4 different countries for our special day. We had so little to spend and yet God provided a place, cake, decorations, flowers, and help all through the amazing people we met here.
- And then the most recent miracle which I have to give you the amazing account of.

Dec. 24th, 2015

Just before Thanksgiving Matias and I flew to Honolulu for our Green Card interview. I want to thank everyone who prayed for us during this time because God truly prepared everything. Our interview lasted at most 25 minutes and was with a very welcoming and friendly woman. Our lawyer had told us to expect Matias to receive the majority of the questions and for them to ignore me, but it was not the case.

From the moment we stepped into the office and signed an unknown paper, the conversation seemed to center around me. What my father did for a living, where my sister lived, and how I had come to be involved with Youth with a Mission in the first place. (As I explained how I had discovered YWAM and researched it before joining, the woman actually told ME that YWAM was a legitimate organization and I had no reason to worry... my mind figuratively exploded!)

Matias was included in the conversation as we talked about my passion for cooking, the best way to deal with cockroaches on the island (because my dad works for Orkin) and other small topics. She did review his medical papers and asked if he had any previous criminal activity but that was it.

After what I truly thought was just the warm up to an intense interview she told us that we were approved (hence the little “unknown” paper we had signed at the beginning), that Matias’ permanent residence card would arrive within 2 weeks, and to have a happy Thanksgiving. I think we both sat there for a second with our mouths open before she escorted us out of the office and reminded us that we would need to apply in 2017 for a 10 year residence.

We literally jumped for joy once outside, unable to contain our amazement. It went against everything we had been told to expect from friends, lawyers, other couples and the only explanation was God!

The card arrived a week later and what an amazing Christmas present. Though we had both been adamant that we would be approved, the tiny worry about what we would do if we weren’t was finally banished. So thank you all once again for your love, your support, and your prayers. We may not always understand why God puts us in a certain place, but we can’t argue with the blessings and confirmation he pours out. I hope you all have a very Merry Christmas surrounded by the love of our Savior.

Love and God Bless,

Matias and Samantha Arredondo

