

## Everyday Life of a Venezuelan

It is said with irrefutable certainty that in the absence of light comes darkness. The same level of certainty and conviction can be used to say, as a Venezuelan living (I use living very lightly) in Venezuela, no matter the time of day or year, no matter the simplicity of the task, from the wealthiest to the poorest, in these times of darkness - misery awaits all.

A country recognized as the wealthiest in the America's, whose culture gave birth to people of simplicity, love, happiness, and compassion. A country governed by honesty and loyalty to the well-being of its people. A country with an undeniable sense of pride, whose people (like many nations) stood proudly and sang loudly for its flag, symbolizing such positivity, now acts as a mark of pain and suffering.

As the Venezuelan government carries out its new plan – its people are left to suffer at the hands of an unattainable inflation rate that has acted more like a extermination tactic than a financial reconstruction strategy. Simple task such as finding food, has now become the new daily survival challenge. As supplies continue to decrease, prices continue to increase ensuring wages remain ineffective not covering even the basic necessities. Amidst the turmoil, the simplicity of the Venezuelan way of life has spirits kept high with a new sense of nostalgia ‘ we were happy and we didn't know it”, providing hope that if we can one day get back to the old ways we will be happy again.

The story repeats itself when dealing with personal hygiene items such as; soap, deodorant, and tooth paste. Skin diseases once completely eradicated, are now in the highest numbers. With the absence of proper supplies such as disposable diapers and sanitary towels Venezuelans have turned to the use of cloth for dippers and female towels. Thus, creating an environmental concern as city workers are no longer actively removing waste and garbage from neighborhood streets.

A healthy life is now a hope for an answered prayer. Medication, regardless of its use or urgency can only be found at the counters of the black market. With supplies decreasing daily, one is literally forced to put a dollar value on his/her life, which is unobtainable to the majority of people regardless of socioeconomic status. If the hurdle of money becomes the hurdle in between life and death then that hope for an answered prayer is the only hope for life.

Venezuela's crime rate has always been one of the highest in the world, now we stand alone with the highest crime rate worldwide. Typical factors of government corruption, is now accompanied by hunger as a contributing factor to such an increase. The government has managed to place a dollar value on human life, and with the lack of proper supply, has watched its people resort to primitive behavior in order to ensure survival.

The educational system has seen its highest ever dropout rate as a result of hunger, or lack of hygiene creating a total school dropout at any age or grade. These children now find themselves on the streets in a race for survival which includes crime, drug-use and prostitution. Parental care for children is a task that has taken a back seat to the task of individual survival.

For the fortunate ones that once belonged to the now none existent middle or upper class, now have a new fight that brings hope, a fight to leave the country. However, this challenge has proven to be more fantasy than reality based on the increasingly high cost of doing so and the unwilling support of all governing entities. Access to foreign currency, or documentation such as passports and visas which would make the move possible, is heavily monitored/regulated by the government. Everything involves days and nights long line ups to obtain something as simple as an appointment with any of the dozens of entities which regulates the exit of the country...but the hope never dies...more than half of the Venezuelan population has some kind of a relative living in exile...and this is the hope, the hope to one day join them.

In reality for the Venezuelan people this is very disheartening, it is a lost country amongst its crime, sins, misery, corruption and hopeless life... for God's children, us whom have believed in Him, we still have that flame of hope, in fact we have learned that he has been there for us and has extended His hand giving us that message of salvation, love, justice, all food to keep the faith alive.

This is no easy task for anyone here, for many of us is very painful to see each and every day how our lives deteriorates more and more, to watch the news is very depressing, to see the suffering of an entire system from those who still have some recourses to survive, to the lower class worker, the child who still has that naive hope that everything is good until he asks for food at home and there is none to give, and even for the animals that once were able to survive from the scraps of food and now that scrap has become a meal for a child or grown up, is all very disheartening to see.

The writer's family and personal lives is no longer the same, we have experienced plenty of changes in our daily race for survival, we have learned good things amongst the worst of the situations, we have seen God's hand in each end every step we take, we have seen our God's willingness to guide us, protect us, provide...he has provided us with the required strength to keep that faith in Him. As a family we have decided to stay here and soldier this entire system until He guides us otherwise. We have come to the realization that in this beautiful country, in every corner there is a Venezuelan that needs to find Jesus Christ our savior, so they can join us in prayer to strengthen our faith in Him to carry on His word and message...it is His job which has been passed on to us to preach faith for a Venezuela to once again become full of hope and freedom.

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