

# Jack & Janine Swanson's "CHILE CONNECTION" August - October 2009



Iglesia Cristiana "JESÚS es El Camino"  
("JESUS is The Way" Christian Church)

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## ***Beginning with thanks....***

Many of you now use our monthly Prayer Letters as a guide in praying weekly for God's work here in Chile. The prayers of churches and individuals have always been the most important, effective support that you can provide for us and we thank you for them. Together with your steady financial help, you have seen us through "thick & thin". During these past six months in our Prayer Letters we have given thanks for God's responses and requested your prayers for:

- The initiation and development of the church's home groups, begun in March, 2009.
- Specific marriages in the church and marriages, in general.
- A focused, upcoming marriage series, based in the movie & materials of FIREPROOF.
- Holy Week presentations and for the church retreat on Easter Sunday.
- Baptisms within the church.
- Initiation of two new English Club efforts—one in a local public school and the other for adults.
- New Sunday school classes.
- That Jesus would be our church body's undisputed head and leader.
- Spiritual growth and identity of church members & of others participating in the church.
- Health issues.
- Outreaches through our interns & our son Jayme, who was here for his summer vacation.

Supporters will sometimes write asking what they can pray for. Thank you for making our Prayer Letters known in the church.

## **BABIES BORN!!**

Many of you are familiar with Luis and Katie, who have been in ministry in Arica in northern Chile, and of Claudia and Miguel, here in Santiago. Katie met Luis a few years ago, when she was working as a member of our mission team and Luis helping construct our ministry property. They were married here in March, 2007. Claudia's two small children (Ariel & Ghisleine) lived with us for one year between June, 1994 and June, 1995, when she was single and with problems. She has come a long way since then and she and Miguel were married in December, 2007. She was baptized in March, 1996 and Miguel in April of this year. Both couples had baby girls born to them on September 30—Niah Adelle, born in Arica, and Daniela Paz, born in Santiago. Both mothers and daughters (*and husbands, too!*) are doing great. Niah was born at 10:13 p.m. and Daniela at 11:57 p.m.



***Katie, Niah, and Luis***



***Ghisleine (now 15), Daniela, Claudia, & Miguel***

Luis' & Katie's E-mail is: [katielynnhayden@gmail.com](mailto:katielynnhayden@gmail.com)

Miguel's & Claudia's E-mail is: [miguelsanhueza2000@yahoo.com](mailto:miguelsanhueza2000@yahoo.com)

*Not only that...* Christopher, 2 year-old son of church members Richard & Paula, and Sara, 1 year-old daughter of members Freddy & Myriam, are due to have a new brother or sister as well this next year. Paula is due around May and Miriam around June.

***COULD IT BE THE WATER??!!***

## **Janine's time in the States and the 2009 NMC**

Janine is presently in the U.S. to make church visits (as time allows), represent us at this year's National Missionary Convention (NMC) to be held November 19-22 in Peoria, IL, and then fly to Los Angeles to spend Christmas with our children and their families (where I, Jack, will join my family as well, for Christmas). Janine has a cell phone and its number is 949-813-2131.

**A word about the NMC:** We highly encourage you, our supporters (and *especially* our supporting churches in the Midwest), to come to this year's convention. We annually have a ***CHILE! CHILE! CHILE!*** booth, and the convention itself is excellent, with many organizations and missionaries represented. The teen part of the convention is also quite challenging in many ways. Janine would love the opportunity to share with you there, and this year she has a room reserved at noon on Saturday, November 21, to meet with supporters. Mike & Tabi Boyce will also be at the convention. They are due to arrive in Chile as full-time mission partners this December.

**Now a word to you Elders, Deacons, leaders, and Pastors (especially again, those of you in the Midwest):** Pick a day—perhaps Saturday, Nov. 21—and come to the NMC. Show those you lead and teach that you are committed to Jesus' Great Commission. Many of you have been a part of mission trips to one or more missionaries that you support. Many more of you haven't. Please reflect on this and make the trip to Peoria. You'll be blessed and renewed. We as a mission are represented each year by at least one of us, and we live outside of the United States—a work that is both challenging and immensely rewarding. Will the next missionary come from your church, perhaps because of you? ***PTL!!!***

## Janine's U.S. presentation & Children's Home Update

Are you ready for this?? Then "GET OUT OF THE BATHROOM!!" Pretty clever presentation title (Janine's idea) and at the same time apropos to her topic and encouragement she hopes to leave behind in churches she visits. We would like to take this opportunity to review what has been and is one of two main prongs in God's work through us in Chile--Janine's and our work with children at risk.



The Children's home, by Janine Swanson

It's been a long haul, constructing the four houses and multi-purpose building on our ministry property. Thus it's rewarding to finally see the main construction so close to completion and know that God will be taking the houses forward toward their purpose and use. Now the real work is set to begin.

We were involved in a children's home site for over two years (2000 to mid-2002), so we have a good idea of the children we will be serving. With the new houses we feel a real need to specialize in working with abandoned children. In our original children's home we had several children who were totally abandoned, and two of the girls were adopted--one to the US and the other to Italy. In trying to structure a program for the children in the home, we felt a special tug for the abandoned children. Whereas the other children would go out with one or both parents, the abandoned children were often left in the home every weekend, as it was difficult to find "God parents" who would really receive these often unlovable children into their families. We know that all the children's homes here have abandoned children. It is almost impossible to put oneself in their situation—especially of that child who realizes that no family in the whole world claims and loves them. In the end, they must deal with that and simply move ahead, despite the uncertainty in which they find themselves. Some don't know who their father is, some never have gone to school, and some are misdiagnosed as mentally retarded or autistic, etc., etc.

The purchase and development of a ministry property began in the fall of 1998 with the receipt of \$50,000 that arrived from the estate of my godparents who never had children. My godfather, Karl Mathiak, died in 1989 and his wife, Olga, was diagnosed with colon cancer shortly thereafter. The last time we saw her in 1997 (she was nearly 90 years old), she said to me that she thought that she would have been a good mother—what did I think? Little did I know that she would include us, as missionaries, in her will. From there the dream began!! What use of her money would befit the generous gift to our ministry?? At that time, we weren't aware of God's exact plans. In the end, the property was purchased in April, 2001, with money from her estate. An additional \$40,000 estate disbursement was received going into 2001, which enabled construction of houses on the property to keep progressing. Working with children, more specifically through our houses now nearing completion, is one of the main focuses of our work in Chile—a ministry that God brought into being, directs, and continues to take forward.

### SOME BACKGROUND....

I have always loved working with children, knowing the potential children have if only given a stable environment with lots of love. Through the American Association of Chile, a women's ex-patriot group, I came in contact in the mid to late 1990s with a few children's group homes in Chile, including the "gathering" home for children entering the system. I began visiting a children's home with about 80 children near our own home. I loved being with the children and visited the children several times each week, mostly to encourage them, and occasionally to do special projects. Jack went once per week, as well, doing devotionals with the children. "El Hogar El Arca" ('The Ark' Children's Home) was owned and operated by a large Christian Church, arriving in Chile from Europe. I didn't see many Christian values, teaching, or discipline in the home, and the children didn't go to the sponsoring church or even learn the basics of Christianity.

Having spent a lot of time in El Arca, I began to formulate the idea of our own children's home, and through contacts I heard of a children's home in La Cisterna that was experiencing problems with its director. Visits to the home and meetings with the home's owners eventually led to my being named its director in early 2000. Approximately twenty children lived there at that time. I actually lived in the home for about two months because there was no additional help and I had to get control—in other words, the place was in chaos. The former director was a "pastora" (a Chilean term for the wife of a pastor). I learned that she basically stole any donations to the home and either personally used them or sold them. The children were used to doing absolutely whatever pleased them, and the social worker and the cook were the only employees that remained. Within the two months of being there I hired a preschool teacher to take care of the children during the day, a night person, a full time maintenance/construction person (Juan, who still works for us today almost 10 years later), and a person to take care of all the laundry/personal needs of the children. It was a huge undertaking!! The population of the home went down to about 10 children, as I informed many of the parents that we were not a "hotel" for children, serving the pleasure of the parents. It was an uphill battle, trying to work with the parents on one hand, and the staff on the other.

All of the children were so needy, that it was hard to know where to begin. But with a basic schedule, including sending all of the children to school every day, things began to turn around, and it was very gratifying to see big changes begin to take place in the kids themselves. Granted, it is tough for a child not to be at home in a stable situation each day, but we tried our best to duplicate a good copy of a fully-functioning home with everyone doing their part—including the children. They helped with chores, did their homework, etc. By mid-2002, close to thirty children were living in the home.

In 2001 we purchased our present property a block a way, to construct additional housing in our work with children. We decided to construct a multi-purpose building, along with 4 houses of about 1000 square feet each with an additional building to be used for public events, etc. Since that time we have steadily been building the homes.

We no longer are working in the original children's home, but valuable experiences there have helped us define the type of child we feel that we can best serve. Looking back on those years in the original children's home, we saw that many problems evolved from trying to work with the various parents (and their problems) as much as with the children themselves. We were extremely frustrated with a judicial system that returned the children to homes with parents that had not changed a bit and continued with the same behaviors which had originally caused the children to be removed from the parents' home.

The new homes will have a specialized purpose—one involving a much-needed refuge for children that have been abandoned by their families and have no hope to be reunited with anyone from their families—parents, grandparents, or uncles and aunts. As of yet, we don't know where God will take our project. We do know that these children have special needs in their hurt of having no one. Our hope is to provide a family structure for them, as we also facilitate the adoption of the children by Christian families. My heart always breaks for the children who never have experienced the basics of "family"—they don't know what God intends for the family, as their life revolves mostly on having enough food to eat and just getting through the day. Maybe they have never attended school or have not received other special assistance that they need to move forward. The idea of a mother or father-figure is foreign to them, and some have been forced to go to the streets to get money to bring home for the parents' (or other adult's) drugs, etc., etc. So here we are..... arriving at the last steps of the *easy* part of the work (the construction phase) to enter the challenging world of abandoned children and God's hope for them. There is much to develop, some specialized persons to hire, and contacts to make. We are grateful, committed, and hopeful for what the future would hold, given God's blessing—especially for any and all children we are able to work with. We are equally grateful for your steady partnership in all of what we do in serving the Lord in Chile.

### *TODAY'S STEPS & TIMETABLE....*

First, the construction: When the construction phase is complete, we will have four 1,000 square foot homes—each home with four bedrooms to house up to eight children. House 3 has been completed for some time and is currently being lived in by caretakers for the site. House 4 should be completed by the end of this month (October) with the finishing touches being put on the kitchen (all the cabinets have been made

by our workers, Juan and Carlos). House 2 is lacking the finishing of its kitchen and our hope is to have it completed this December or shortly thereafter. The last home, house 1, is lacking the finishing of the complete first floor—living room, dining room, kitchen, and ½ bath. The four upstairs bedrooms and main bath are already done. We have nearly all of the necessary furnishings for the houses--some items will need to be reupholstered, and wood refinished, but that is a detail. The major undone purchases will come in completing the out-fitting of the kitchens with needed appliances.

In addition, we have a multi-purpose building at the rear of the property, used by the church since early 2005. This building, too, however, was built to facilitate the children's ministry, and the church is seeking to find another place to meet as it enters the year 2010. The first floor has a kitchen, two bathrooms, and a large room which will be used during the week as a children's classroom. The second floor will serve as offices for the home.

We are extremely proud of the entire project—everything is built to last and will be a challenge for our destructive kids to destroy!! Juan worked with us in the other children's home and knows how to construct a fortress!!

**\*\*SPECIAL MISSION TRIP ENCOURAGEMENT:** Should any of you with construction skills or serving/helping skills have time available the first half of 2010, why not contact us about coming down to help us finish up final "house" details! One church, Broadway Christian Church in Mattoon, IL, has a team coming to Chile for one week, beginning April 24.

**Staffing:** Number one on the list is to hire a qualified (degreed) person to help me with the set-up of the structure of the homes, with contacts with both corresponding government bodies and children's homes from where we will draw our children, and with the selection of and work with the children themselves. Time-wise, we hope to have this person hired at the very beginning of 2010, and already have a specific person in mind that we think would be good.

At the same time, we will need our first set of house parents (or adults, should the government not allow us to use a foster parent structure). We would like to use young, Christian Chileans as house parents, with the idea of teaching them to form a real family with their group of children. They will be paid a minimal salary, as at least one of them will be free to have outside employment during the day (just like in any family) and they will live rent-free, including utilities. Main weekday meals will be provided by the ministry.

We also anticipate having an educator to work with the children throughout the day to give the house parents a break, and we'll need the services of a social worker and probably a cook.

**Children:** Our hope is to open the first home in January or February 2010 in time for the beginning of school in March. There are no other homes that we know of that work specifically with abandoned children, although as I mentioned, there are abandoned children in every children's home in Chile. We don't know yet where the future will take us, but we do know that God will be leading.

**Financing:** Financing, too, is starting to shape up. We figure it will cost about \$300 per child per month. For the last ten years we have been selling "marble" figures at the National Missionary Convention. Last year we sold \$3,000 in two days, so we know the market is there!! Donn and Cindy Urban, who handle our mission finances, have taken on the humongous task of sorting, etc., etc., the figures and are nearly ready to start selling them on the web. We are hoping that this effort will cover the expenses for the homes, and we will all-too-happily keep everyone informed as to when the website will be up and running. If would like to know more about sponsoring a child, please contact us.

**Prayers:** Please pray for these final steps with the construction, that it would be approved by those in authority; for God's provision of the initial staff needed to begin the program—in order of right priority; for the exact children that God would choose to put with us entering 2010; and for the sale of the marbles to provide much-needed financing. Finally we ask for your prayers of praise to the God that has brought this all about, from the moment we entered into partnership with you to this time and into the future.

**CHILE CULTURE POINT:** There is a social stigma in Chile against the adoption of children, in spite of the inability and many times unwillingness of the direct and extended family to take responsibility for that child. At the same time, the government is unable to commit funds to those children's homes that comply with its norms and thus qualify for help. All of these factors combined make it difficult, if not impossible, for the abandoned child to receive the attention and love that they need or have real hope toward having a better future. There are exceptions and we would be one of them, giving an example of a better way.

*With gratitude and in service alongside you,  
Jack and Janine*

**A story in pictures:**



Ministry property when purchased in 2001



Ministry property today



Jack & Janine, Oct. 2009



Janine, with Carlos & Juan, 'inspecting their work'



Willy & Karina, making marble figures