

Jack & Janine Swanson's "CHILE CONNECTION"

April & May 2006



Iglesia Cristiana "Jesús Es EL CAMINO"
(The "Jesus Is THE WAY" Christian Church)

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MINISTRY EVALUATION 2005/2006

This report summarizes and looks forward at God's ministry through us from the beginning of 2005 through to 2007. Our ministry year begins in March, which corresponds to September in the U.S. We so appreciate and need your partnership and hope that this evaluation helps clarify once again what you are a part of. We wholeheartedly serve to the best of our ability with dedication and desire and gratefulness, and plan on continuing to do so into the foreseeable future. PTL!

1. THE CHURCH

2005

The new Iglesia Cristiana "Jesus es EL CAMINO" (Jesus is THE WAY Christian Church) began Sunday services in February, 2005, attended by a core group made up of approximately fifteen people, and by mid-year, attendance numbered in the low to mid twenties.

One of the church's first "special" weekends was Easter week of 2005. With impacting, well-attended theatre-type presentations on both Good Friday and on Easter Sunday (with special breakfast enjoyed by everyone), a sense of belonging and identity began to form. Aside from other special Sunday morning breakfasts, one especially effective presentation open to the neighborhood and advertised with flyers distributed in the area was the 2005 outdoor Christmas children's musical. It drew roughly seventy neighbors and curiosity seekers.

To the existing children's outreach, English Club, mid-week Bible study and young adults' outreaches, new ministry groups added in 2005 were the teen group (April), men's group (July), and women's group (September)—ministries proving to be fundamental to neighborhood outreach and our corporate life together. Church service attendance at year-end averaged from twenty-five to thirty persons. There were also five baptisms in June of 2005.

A decision was made that the church—not the U.S. mission--would be responsible for its own costs and the costs of its ministries. Thus, the church also started covering the cost of site utilities and also purchased fifty chairs at mid-year at a cost of roughly \$1,000. At the end of the year the church had a positive balance of about \$1,000.

2006

The church, coming into mid-year, has an average attendance of forty. In April, three adults and two teens were baptized—four of the five being new Christians. The mood is positive, with a look toward the future. Both the teen and adult Sunday School classes are studying the book, A PURPOSE-DRIVEN LIFE. The women's group is also studying this book.

A new church-wide prayer team is now in process of formation, and there is an emphasis in the men's, women's, and teen group on visiting and on praying with and helping those in need. Humberto and Jack also continue to meet early each Wed. morning in concentrated prayer for the church. A benevolence ministry has been started to collect and distribute food pantry items to those in need, and a new members' basic Christianity class has been formed and meets weekly.

Cinthya, a young Chilean single from a church in southern Chile, joined the ministry team in April and is due to be with us for the remainder of 2006. She is already proving to be a good help to both Paula (in working to build up the children's ministry) and to Katie, helping establish a discipleship group among teenage girls in the church. The teens are planning some evangelist events to be held at our neighborhood park, and Paula and Cinthya have started to visit homes to draw in more younger children, beginning with those children who have attended events and participated in activities at the site in the past, such as VBS or Kids' Club.

We are blessed to have a good number of male members in the church—in general, not a common trait of Chilean churches—and the prayer is that from among them would develop Spirit-led men to help take the church forward. The goal of the church is to finish the year fifty+ strong. Speaking of, a present challenge that has church members talking is space. How we best meet that challenge remains to be seen, as we as a church are still learning how to take better "maintenance" responsibility for the space we now have.

2. CONSTRUCTION

2005

Construction during 2005 steadily moved forward at an average monthly cost of \$4,000. This, of course, represented a large percentage of total monthly contributions received by the ministry, and **wouldn't have been able to be covered except by monies received through an estate bequest.** Five full-time workers were employed during the majority of the year, and finishing touches were completed on the two-story multi-purpose building, where our church activities are held and visiting groups are housed. The rear duplex (Casas 3 and 4) was worked on most of the time, and Humberto's family moved from the small one bedroom adobe house to Casa 3. The upstairs of Casa 4 is basically finished and currently provides space for our mission offices. In November, 2005, the adobe house situated at the front of the ministry site was razed to make ready that portion of the lot for the construction of the other duplex (Casas 1 and 2), almost identical to the rear duplex. It was great to also get some construction help from visiting churches during the year.

2006

Major construction for the rest of 2006 will be centered in putting on the second floor and roof of the front duplex. We expect our construction to be nearly complete at the end of 2007, **meaning that it has another good year and seven months to run before we get to that point!** Our expectations indicate that **the current average construction expenditure of \$3,500 to \$4,000 per month will continue through mid-year 2007**, at which time it should taper off slightly until

the end of that year. At the same time, we have, as of May of this year, used up all available funds for the construction—funds supplied up to this point by the estate bequest, now completely depleted. **That means that we lack approximately \$60,000, with an immediate need for some of that shortfall in mid 2006** for the project to continue. We thus ask each of our supporting churches and individuals with the gift of generosity, able and willing to help, contribute extra to help complete this important project with **a one time gift in the range of \$1,000 to \$3,000 or more.**

We pray that our supporting churches and individuals would be inspired to do so through reports and photos of construction progress we have regularly shared in our newsletters and by the purpose for our completed site. The houses, once completed, are destined to provide a Christian home for abandoned children and for others in need that the Lord directs to us. With regard to abandoned children, we would hope to become a source for adoptions—to families both inside and outside of Chile. The first step, however, is to complete the construction begun roughly four years ago.

3. INTERNS AND OTHER VISITORS

2005

In 2005, the Chile team received three supporting churches and others on short-term mission trips. We, in addition, hosted two two-month interns. Receiving others takes time and energy, but the value and benefit to each of them is huge in terms of personal growth, familiarity with a supported work, and resulting benefit to their church body as a whole. We, the mission team, are encouraged because we experience the personal investment and interest of those that support what we are here to do. We also help fill our kingdom responsibility by furthering the futures of young people. "Come bn DOWN, CHURCHES!! "

2006

Four interns are with us this year. Kenneth Bayless is a committed Christian young man, recently graduated from college with a degree in communications and also unique and gifted in reaching out to "hard-to-reach" teens. He wants to primarily focus on helping build up our teen group and has had courses in teaching English as a second language. He is planning to be with the mission team for roughly three months or longer, and we will evaluate that plan at the end of July.

Our other male intern, David Love, also a university graduate, was a Spanish major in college. He has had experience in working with children, and in preaching and teaching. He, too, has had courses in teaching English as a second language. He will be with us through July.

Lastly, our other two 2006 interns are Mandy and Sarah Kimes, from Deer Creek Christian Church. They are full of enthusiasm, are very directed young ladies, and are attending Jayme's school, in addition to being connected to other activities and ministries of the mission. They came to Chile for the first time in 2005, as part of a youth group mission trip of Deer Creek.

Due to our impending furlough, there are no other groups or visitors expected during 2006. However, several visitors are already expected in 2007, including three churches. God is good!!

4. GRINGO TEAM

2005

Jack was team leader of both the full team and gringo team, along with being the church's pastor, in addition to keeping up with U.S. church relations. He helped start and direct the men's group in 2005 and also continued bi-weekly teaching at Plenitud, the local drug rehabilitation center for men, where Marcelo entered and completed six months before becoming one of our workers and a member in our church.

Janine, too, had a very busy 2005, mostly in the areas of construction/site oversight, financial reports, food/menu preparation and maid supervision. She also helped start and develop both the teen group and women's group. Our family situation with Jayme in Chile and the others in California was extremely blessed and stable. How God could be so good to us is beyond our understanding and certainly speaks to the many regular prayers of our supporters, family and friends.

Both Katie and James were Chile team members for all of 2005. James designed and put into service our good website, www.chilemission.org and he also took on the overall coordination of English Club. Katie helped with English Club, helped coordinate the two-month internship experience we offer, and took on a main role in leading of the new youth group.

2006

Jack's schedule remains much the same, with the exception that he no longer teaches at the Plenitud drug rehab center, as they moved out of the area. He and Humberto meet roughly three hours weekly to discuss issues of the church, and Jack also meets individually with team members.

Janine has withdrawn in 2006 from direct ministry oversight responsibility to allow her to focus more on site construction, and behind the scenes work, such as on the team's finances and on the formation of our statutes to be able to apply to the government to be recognized as a corporation.

James and Maritza were married in April. They would like to leave for the U.S. once she gets her visa, where they will begin support-raising, as James prepares to work with Team Expansion at their Kentucky headquarters in the area of communications development. In the meantime, James is currently training Katie, Jayme, and Jack on the functioning and updating of the website. He and his coordinating committee have redesigned English Club this year, and attendance now averages close to thirty persons. This year's goal is to attract more English Club members to participate in other groups within the church, which takes a lot of prayer, time, and personal investment in those people!

Katie is doing well in her role as youth group leader, with Luis. Her focus this year is to be out in the homes and settings of the teens, as well as to make real progress, with Cinthya's help, in establishing an on-going discipleship with teen girls from the youth group, an effort already under way. Her coordinating role with our internship ministry has been enlarged and she is doing well with it. She also continues to help with English Club and has a share in helping direct Cinthya's work.

5. FINANCIAL

2005

Incoming support remained stable during 2005, with the main cause for shortfall being construction expenses. Including them, the mission ended 2005 with a financial deficit of ministry and

construction expenses exceeding incoming support by roughly \$2,400 monthly, that deficit covered by gradually depleting the estate trust funds received earlier.

The pesos per dollar exchange rate went from a steady average of 600 pesos per dollar in 2004 to 558 in 2005, representing a 7% decline in purchasing power, in addition to further erosion caused by price increases in construction materials and other goods and services, etc.

2006

The average pesos to dollar rate dropped from an average of 558 in 2005 to 510 toward the end of that year and into 2006, signifying for us an additional 8.6% drop in purchasing power. The forecast is for the rate to remain near its present level. In addition, costs keep going up, such as the price of gasoline for which we pay an equivalent of roughly \$5.00 per gallon. Lastly, we expect to pay over \$3,000 extra for health insurance this year, due to the much higher premium charged while living in the U.S. (while on furlough).

All of these factors together have led us to project a continuing monthly shortfall of between \$2,500 and \$3,000 for these coming twelve months, going into mid 2007. We thus appeal (see the CONSTRUCTION section of this newsletter) to you supporting churches and individuals for special one-time support.

Janine would like to work more with developing the sale of the marble figures—another potentially good future income source for the ministry. They are an excellent product (made by a Chilean family) and we know from the NMC that they are very popular. The problem is making the jump to the open market, with all of the import technicalities, etc. that entails.

CONCLUSION

2005 might best be described as a year of significant new beginnings—a new church and three new ministries came into being. In general, as we mentioned in the Jan/Feb newsletter from last year, it was slated to be a year of increased emphasis on evangelism. In terms of neighborhood exposure and interaction, much was accomplished, leaving much more to do. Relational team and leadership building in a cross-cultural setting takes time. The mere fact that God brought us all together (different cultures, and different educational, economic, and church backgrounds) to form one body, is amazing in itself—especially in Chile, where these types of differences separate people. While it was disappointing to have a few supposedly more mature members not incorporating and serving in a more complete manner, overall, the year marked good progress in the building of a new body of believers and in the planting of a shared vision yet to be realized.

The outlook for 2006 and beyond is very good. The church has been solidly planted and encouraged, its key ministries have real identities and bright futures, and visitors on Sunday mornings are common. Additional neighborhood evangelistic events are being planned and needs are being met. The verses that perhaps best describe the stage we are presently in as a church are found in Ephesians 2: 13, 18-22 and then in 3: 14-21. The Spirit is definitely at work in us, Christ Jesus is our cornerstone, and we are being built up. God has made us and our future possible.

Humberto's leading, contributing role and the development of others will continue to be key, especially during the Swanson's furlough beginning in August. Chileans tend to be set on tradition and influenced by circumstance, rather than being able to set a new course and realize new

potential. It's also commonplace, in general, for Chileans to tear others down rather than lift themselves and others up. Please pray with us that Satan will be unable to use any traps against the church in these crucial coming months. God, his love, prayer and increasing unity in the body are all real ingredients in the work here. What a privilege for us to be a part! We look forward to seeing our supporting churches and to revitalizing in needed ways on furlough this year.

Working together to serve the KING—
Jack & Janine and the Chile Mission Team



Good Friday 2006



Easter morning 2006



Kenny, Sarah, Mandy, Katie, & David

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