

Jack & Janine Swanson's "CHILE CONNECTION" June-August 2007



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

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If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete, by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

IN GENERAL

God has brought several good people into the church this past year, including young adults, all of whom who are persons after "God's own heart". He is building his church just as He promises to do when we joyfully and wholly commit ourselves to his will and purposes. We are especially working at helping the church develop in four key areas (prayer, leadership, identity, & ministry design) mentioned in our last newsletter. While it's safe to say that progress in these four key areas will take time, one thing is clear--we can see God at work and we are very encouraged. As one example of this, we highlight prayer each Sunday service via a short, teaching moment to help our members grow in their understanding and use of this important facet of Christian life.

Entering September, we are glad to see these past three months of winter fall behind us, as they have been very cold by Chilean winter standards, with ice and snow in parts of Chile that rarely experience such weather. The have also been months characterized by steeply rising prices with regard to produce, dairy products, bread, utilities, and transportation. We, as North Americans, feel the pinch less, relatively speaking. For the majority of Chileans, however, it's a different matter. The minimum monthly wage here is just under \$300, before deducting roughly 20% for health and retirement benefits.

This entire year has also been an extremely difficult one for Santiago's public transportation system. Partly to combat air pollution and partly in an effort to modernize, the government took the majority of buses off of the streets, creating long lines, time delays and a lot of public unrest and disapproval. *So you think that YOU'VE got problems with your used Ford or Chevy??* Ha ha

SOME HIGHLIGHTS

WOMEN'S STUDY GROUP

In June, Janine began a Wednesday morning women's study group in our home. Studying *"Experiencing God"*, the goal is to provide an opportunity to spiritually grow, while developing friendships and identity. Attendance has been low thus far, and the effort will be evaluated again at the end of the year, but two of the three regular attendees (aside from Janine) do embody in purpose, spirit, and identity what God wants to see in all of us. Please pray for the blessings and fruit that come about as a result. In general, Chileans do not like to read or study on their own, so any regular Bible study is asking a lot!!

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH - TUSCOLA, IL

First Christian Church in Tuscola, IL (our third visiting church group of four this year), arrived for a two-week visit in July, with nine teens, one college student, and three adults. It was an excellent time in the Lord and one week of their time coincided with Chile's mid-year winter school vacation. In addition to the various other blessings that these trips bring, one highlight in particular for us is seeing others come to new understandings of a broader world, of what's really important, and of how Jesus works through personal relationships—something they can take home with them. Our prayer is always that everyone who comes to Chile would leave changed in some significant way. It was Tuscola's second visit to help in what we do, the first one of which was in mid 2003. Way to go, group—we loved having you!! We now look forward to receiving Naperville Christian Church on Sept. 15.



Some of the guys, with Juan.



Mairi, doing "girl" work



Yerko & Roberto, with cast of new friends

"PARENT" DEDICATION

We often hear of baby dedications. Perhaps what we are really doing is presenting a child and dedicating ourselves as parents (the most influential people in that child's life) to raising him or her in love and in the ways of the Lord. We had an opportunity to do specifically that recently, when Richard and Paula Castillo, in a special part of the Sunday service, dedicated themselves to the Christian raising of Christopher, now almost two months old. They're a very special family!



Richard, Paula, & Christopher



Jayme's airport goodbye with friends

PERSONAL

As happened with Jonathan and then Jordan and then Julian, the time came in August to physically part with Jayme, our youngest, as he left to live with Jonathan's family and to attend his senior year of high school in California. Just as we are sure that a part of him will continue to miss Chile, Jayme's friends will continue to miss him. He's been a good friend to many and a steady, humble leader at school and in the church. It's amazing how fifteen years of living outside of the United States went by so quickly, and also how completely in that space of time, a little boy was transformed into a young man. We, as our children's parents, would not like to have the past fifteen years back—*especially* if it would mean making the same mistakes all over again. Rather, it gives us an opportunity to be thankful for the many good moments, and also for the opportunity to take today and keep going forward, wiser and more mature in the Lord.

No matter what one's age or address or state of health or family situation, God always has so much more to show teach each of us and so much more to accomplish through us. His purposes and plans always take precedence in shaping our way forward. In our case, we love our children deeply *and* we also look forward to continue serving the Lord here in Chile in the work He has set for us to do. He **is** the *Master Kingdom Builder*.



With love and appreciation, in a *blossoming* Jesus,

Jack & Janine and the Chile Mission Team & Church