

# Jack & Janine Swanson's "CHILE CONNECTION" May through September 2008



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

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## SEPTEMBER MEANS "¡¡FELIZ DIECIOCHO!!"

September 18th, Chile's Independence Day, fell this year on Thursday. The next day, the 19th, is also an official holiday highlighting the value and contribution that the military makes to the defense and good of the country—all commemorated in a huge presentation and parade of sorts and marked by several speeches in a very large park in Santiago. Including the weekend, this meant four days of celebrations, all focused on Chilean culture and identity. As with last year, we received permission from our municipality of La Cisterna to close the street in front of our ministry site. Roughly one hundred neighbors, friends, church members, and others enjoyed an afternoon of viewing and participating in Chilean dance demonstrations (given by two separate Chilean folklore dance troupes), games, visiting, and relaxing. We gave out gospels of John and in general promoted fellowship and neighborhood identity. It was an excellent day in the Lord.



Young people from the church have also visited with neighbors this year, praying with them for needs they have had. It has drawn neighbors closer to us and given the church the opportunity to dialog and highlight Jesus. The Sunday prior our praise band presented Christian music in a neighborhood plaza in La Cisterna as part of an emphasis of the community to offer teens and others alternatives to drugs.

CHILE CULTURE POINT- The *DIECIOCHO* (September 18<sup>th</sup>) is more than a one-day celebration of Chile's gaining independence from Spain—it is by far Chile's biggest, most important holiday. It typically spans roughly one week, with special emphasis on Chilean culture. In schools children dress up, giving demonstrations of dance, small and large communities alike host several day town cultural fiestas, known as *fondas*, and certain foods and a special Chilean wine, known as *chicha*, are consumed in huge quantities. Television news and weekday morning variety show programming all center on different aspects of the festival. Other documentaries and movies and panel discussions highlight the country's condition, challenges, past, and set-backs. Psalm 33 tells us that God's supreme rule over and saving plan for ALL countries, cultures, peoples and kings is unchangeable and unwavering—all a result of his unfailing love for mankind. Paul tells us in 1 Tim. 2 to pray for everyone, including for kings and for all those in authority.

## **FAMILY BLESSINGS**

Julian's May 3 graduation from college (APU) and Jayme's high school graduation in California



on June 18 provided much reason to give God thanks and praise. **Here we are pictured at left at Julian's graduation. From left to right are Jonathan & Christina and their daughter, Bella (2), Jayme, Janine, Julian, Joshua (4), Jack, and Jordan & Rob.** Jayme is off to a good start as a 1<sup>st</sup> year student at APU and Julian is applying to medical schools to begin in the fall of 2009. The time spread between their respective graduations gave us a rare opportunity to enjoy our children and their families, as well as travel to see good friends living out west.

Jack will be traveling to the States at the end of October to represent our mission at this year's Nat'l Missionary Convention (NMC). He will end his U.S. trip early in December, briefly visiting his mother in North Carolina (his dad died in April) on his way back to Chile. Julian will be able to spend time with him as well while Jack is in the States.

We have greatly benefited from our regular participation in the NMC—sponsoring a Chile booth to highlight God's work in the country and to meet prospective future college Chile interns, seeing supporters and fellow missionaries, helping give workshops, praying with teen groups from U.S. churches, dialoging with many people, and being challenged. Please stop by and see him and also see why we are part of this world-focused, annual event. Tulsa may sound "far away" but it's really not. Why not plan on going? It begins the evening of November 20th and ends on Sunday, the 23rd.

## **EVENTS & FOCUS OF RECENT MONTHS**

- The last week of June (upon our return from California) and month of July were non-stop. We moved to another house almost directly across the street from where we had been renting for the last four years. While the move represents a *huge* amount of work in doing needed repairs and renovation of the new rental house, it also gives us more room into the future to carry on the work in which we are involved, including providing an upstairs office space for Jack. We presently have our offices in upstairs of one of the houses at the ministry site. As we finish construction at the site in 2009, our present office space will thus be freed up and made available for bedrooms in the projected work with children. We would like to purchase this house, should the Lord open up a financial source to do so in the coming months.
- In July, Janine hosted at the ministry site the 2008 retreat for women leaders within the Churches of Christ/Christian churches in Chile. It was attended by roughly twenty women from different parts of the country, who met and were housed and fed at the site. It represented a lot of work in finishing the upstairs areas of the two houses of the front duplex, but all went well and the retreat was a big success. Now on to the January 2009 National Retreat for women, being planned by our church and two other churches in La Cisterna. It will be held near Santiago and will include the participation of women of various U.S. supporting churches. All those women with further interest and not yet in contact with Janine about this opportunity should E-mail her at [DcccChileMission@hotmail.com](mailto:DcccChileMission@hotmail.com)

- Also in July, the church hosted a neighborhood winter VBS. As a result, the children's Sunday School has grown from six to fifteen regular attendees. The VBS was comprised of one afternoon of drums, juggling and activities in our neighborhood plaza, one afternoon of puppets, songs, and games in a street closed off near the ministry site, and a closing late afternoon event at the ministry site, attended by almost 80 children, teens and parents.



*At the plaza.*



*Closing program*

- We were blessed to have three college-age interns with us for six weeks beginning at the end of June—Andrea Kuntz, Jessica Albrecht, and Kendall VandenHeuvel. It was a time blessed in many ways and reinforced once again the value of hosting this type of learning, cultural experience. There are two other students from APU, Janel Hardin and Serena Manzo, here until November, doing a special global studies project, while also being part of the church. They, too, are a blessing to have with us.



*The interns & Jack, after a school presentation*



*The Clinton group singing in front of the church.*

- At the end of July, a group of eleven young adults from First Christian Church in Clinton, IL (Andrea Kuntz's home church) arrived to spend two weeks, helping with ministry site construction and with repairs at the new rental house, and participating in other outreaches of the church and mission.
- In August, Jason & Dana Fought from northern California and their children Anna, Ethan, and Rhyan visited for two weeks. We have been in communication with them this past year about coming to Santiago to be teamed together in the expanding work of the mission and church. Jason will specifically be working in the areas of leadership development, discipleship, small groups, and the training of future Chilean missionaries and, in general, the continued development of the missionary movement within Chilean Christian Churches/Churches of Christ. Dana, as well, brings rich experience in the Bible Study Fellowship ministry, participation in small groups and

working with women, including in pregnancy centers for teens and adults. We know of no Christian pregnancy centers in Santiago, a city of roughly five million people. ([jfought@comcast.net](mailto:jfought@comcast.net))

At the same time, Mike and Tabi Boyce from Ohio are being blessed in their seeking of sending churches that would want to partner with them in Chile kingdom work. Mike has a masters degree in Bible and Tabi, a B.A. in Media Communications. The Boyces have now roughly 35% committed to them of the monthly support funds they will need. ([our.boyceemail@gmail.com](mailto:our.boyceemail@gmail.com))

Please pray for both of these couples/families. They represent a widening of the work of the Chile Mission Team into other areas of needed encouragement and equipping inside of the Chilean churches. Please also contact them if you are interested in helping send and support them or if you know of a church or others that might.

- Entering September, we sent out our first Prayer Letter, designed to highlight one praise of the month and up to three main prayer requests. We will continue to send out this letter once per month to our supporters and ask that those praying pick one day each week to pray (using the letter), eliminating the main, meal on that day of the week as well. We have received back several responses expressing a commit to do that. Keep those responses coming—your prayers are valued and necessary to God’s work through us, as He remains the one source of “success” in what we and all others in his name do!
- In September, Jack attended the annual retreat for pastors of the Churches of Christ/Christian Churches in Chile. These retreats (along with the annual retreat for men) provide fellowship, challenge, and study of God’s Word. In terms of unity and of spiritual leadership, the pastors of Chile remain far apart. These retreats, however, are one of the forums God would use to draw us to him and to each other.
- As mentioned above, our two full-time construction workers, Juan and Carlos, have made good progress in completing the upstairs area of the final duplex. Now remaining are the downstairs areas of both of the houses in that duplex, along with the downstairs area of house #4 of the rear duplex. Thank you for your continued prayer and financial support of the site construction. We hope to complete construction in the beginning months of 2009, at which time we will seek final municipal approval of the project and proceed with all that will need to be submitted to allow us to begin receiving and working with abandoned children.
- At the end of 2007 we sold our vehicle, a 1997 Hyundai station wagon, allowing us this year to buy a new diesel minivan, which has served us quite well in transporting groups of people and construction materials alike. It’s quite difficult to have confidence in late model used vehicles in Chile, as persons and dealers often turn back the odometer and lie about the true condition of the vehicle. This cultural tendency is considered less wrong than smart. We give God thanks and praise for his goodness—it’s important to the work to have a reliable, utilitarian vehicle.



- In September, an additional man in the church, Freddy Mendoza, was asked to be a part of the church's main leadership team. This brings that team up to six men. Freddy and his wife, Myriam, have been members of the church for over one year and are also helping "grow" the church through the upcoming January birth of a baby girl—their first child and the church's fourth baby in attendance. They are solid, joyful Christians. Please pray for the spiritual retreat planned for this leadership team Friday night, October 10, through the next day Saturday.

*Thank you for your prayers and support. We love and appreciate you all!!*

*Jack & Janine, on behalf of the church and our work*