



The Gomez Family Newsletter

May 2009

Serving Latin America

Dear Friends,

It is fall in Chile. As we watch the leaves change colors and drop with the temperatures, we are perhaps more aware of other changes in our lives.

For the past 18 months we have been in a relationship building process here in Chile. Pictured above are some of our neighbors whom we count as new friends. We (plus all 10 of our children) were enjoying a "last meal" together before one of the family moves away. We too will be moving soon, as our landlord will be returning to Santiago and needs his home back. Of course, this represents a major change for them and us.

We have also seen changes in our ministry as we have added Church Planting to our list of responsibilities. We are seeing changed lives as a result of that adventure both in Chile but also in the USA (keep reading for more information).

As you will read in this newsletter, you will see that our vision is also changing. These are just a few of many changes in our lives.

The "Change" of Faith

"Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see"
(Hebrews 11:1).

Hillcrest Christian Fellowship in Mount Vernon, Washington took a leap of faith when they gave **Comunidad Cristiana Casa Grande** (the new church plant here in Santiago) \$1,000 toward the church painting project. The rummage sale to raise the funds was scheduled for April 26 but they went ahead and gave the money to us early so that painting could begin.

Jean Ashby called on Sunday to give us a report on the sale. It seems that they filled 3 rooms full of things to sale and employed numerous volunteers to make the event work, from truck drivers to sellers and more. When the sale was over, they sent two-and-a-half truckloads of extra items to another charitable organization that was having a fundraiser sale (Jean said it reminded her of the 12 extra baskets of food after Jesus fed the 5,000).

However, when Jean learned that their sale had only raised \$997.80 she couldn't get over the thought that "God could have done it. We were \$2.20 short of the goal. \$2.20 isn't too much for God," she told us. When she told the Rummage Sale treasurer that the next day at church she was told, "After I called to tell you how much we had raised, a role of nickels fell out of the bag that had not previously been counted. Then, I found another quarter. In total, we raised \$1,000.05 at the Rummage Sale!"

What a faith building story! In these financially-challenged times it is great to be reminded that our wonderful, unchanging, Heavenly Father not only cares about the bigger picture but also about the details!



We are so thankful to Hillcrest Christian Fellowship and other supporting churches and individuals who have continued to give faithfully to support our ministry! May your efforts overflow to help others as well!

Changing Lives

One of the goals at **Comunidad Cristiana Casa Grande** is to create a space where people can belong and then believe. While attendance has fluctuated, it seems to be holding steady now and we are pleased to report that several people have indeed found a place to belong - **Comunidad Cristiana Casa Grande**.



Among those who have found a place to belong are:

Javier, an elderly neighbor who attended for the first time when we had the inauguration of the Construction Zone for Children's Ministry. He wasn't sure he wanted to go to the 3rd floor for the event because "this isn't what church is supposed to be like." He told Pastor Luis as he left that night that he had been challenged. He has been at every service for the past five (5) weeks. (Javier is in the foreground on the right in the Easter picture above. Sorry that it is just the back of his head.)

Marlen and Paulina, a mother and daughter team who came with a friend and are very active regular attenders. They have asked that, in addition to Alpha, we also begin offering Prayer and Praise services.



Yamil, a 14 year-old who comes with his mother and brother. Fellow-missionary, Kay Stotts Godoy, describes him a sponge, anxious to soak up more about God. He is a great addition to our Alpha for Children's program! There are some major problems in his family that might prevent his continued participation. Please pray that he and his family will be able to resolve the problems and continue attending the church.

Vision Changes

It is a fact. As people age their vision changes. Each birthday reminds me of the aging process but, until recently, I wasn't aware of just how quickly and completely our vision really can change!

After the dreariness of several smog-colored Santiago days, I was in for a refreshing surprise as I turned a corner and headed towards town one day last week. Although there was a thin layer of smog hiding what can be a breathtaking view of the Andes Mountains, the city itself was almost completely visible in the valley below me.

As the sun danced from one high-rise building to another and spread its radiance to cover the traffic covered roads, I was mesmerized by the beauty. As I thanked God for the scene before me, I started to laugh. Since when did I think a city landscape was beautiful? Wouldn't I much rather photograph a cascading brook in a flower-laden meadow, or a majestic mountain range, or horses grazing dewy blades of grass? I see beauty in the stillness of God's creation - not in a bustling city of steel and concrete!

Then it hit me. That city represents God's creation! As the sun winked off of office and apartment building windows it was shining upon a mass of God's most precious creation! It is exactly for that part of His creation that we are serving Christ in Chile - and it is beautiful in every sense of the word!

Lord, I pray(ed) please continue to adjust my vision so that I may see what you would have me see. Use me to spread your radiant love in the places where your people live! Amen!



Prayer Changes Things

We appreciate your ongoing prayers for our ministry and lives. A few specific things that you could also pray for include:

Numeric and Spiritual

Growth at Comunidad Cristiana Casa Grande

More children for the program offerings at church. We have a great program, capable teachers, and plenty of space - we just need more kids!

Creative, Sustainable, Effective ministries to reach our cities for Christ

Pastors and leaders throughout Latin America, that they will seek God's guidance

A new home. We have until June 26th to buy or rent a new place to live.

Good health. We spent much of last fall and winter sick. Juliana and Beth have already fallen ill for the first time this season.

Continue to thank God for his many blessings! Thank him for a reliable team of children's workers at Casa Grande - we are ready for the multitudes. Thank him for a great network of pastors in Santiago. Thank Him for the work He is doing through His servants throughout Latin America, North America and the world.

What does not change...

In the midst so much change, it is a relief to know that our God never changes. We can rest in the knowledge that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Many blessings,

Ricardo, Beth, Juliana and Jonathan Gomez

Free Methodist World Missions

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Disclaimer: The picture of Santiago is not one that I took that day because I didn't have camera with me. This one, however, shows how pretty the city can be with the backdrop of the Andes. The snow should be covering the mountains in a week or two.

Our Calendar

Tuesday Mornings - Evaluation and Planning Meetings for Casa Grande Ministries

Wednesday Evenings - Ricardo teaches Seminary Extension Classes

Saturday Evenings - Church at Casa Grande (Alpha program for Adults and Children)

1st Saturday Morning - Santiago Pastoral Prayer Breakfast

3rd Saturday Morning - Prayer & Praise Service at Casa Grande

May 30 - Beth leads a session at the Chilean Pastor's Wives Retreat in Chillan, Chile



Juliana dressed as a book and Jonathan as the Big Bad Wolf when they celebrated National Book Day at School last month.