

# Santiago Update January 2009

## news from the Emery family



Happy New Year! First of all, we want to thank you for the great Christmas care package we received! You were so thoughtful to remember us. We (especially the kids) were thrilled with your gifts! Please forgive us for the lack of a report over the past few months. We honestly can't remember a busier or more exciting time since we began our work almost 10 years ago, but we know that we can't afford to become too busy to report on what we're doing! Hope you enjoy this update.

## Church News

Rather than trying to catch you up on everything that has happened since our last report, in this report we've chosen to highlight the most significant event of the last several months. In our next report we'll fill you in on the latest on the university youth group, Holly's training class for women and other news.

## The calling of the first disciples

In years to come, we hope and expect to look back on the events of this past spring (your fall) and say, "That was the best thing we ever did." For years we have attempted to mentor and help grow up in Christ our Chilean brothers and sisters, but we have consistently met with frustration and disappointment. Apparently our timing was not God's timing—until now.

Back in September, two months of prayer and weekly fasting by our team culminated in a retreat to which we invited 10 of the most committed couples in our church family. During this retreat we cast a vision of a Chilean-led church (which has always been our team's goal) and ended with an invitation to join us for a year of intensive discipleship training, in which they would walk alongside us as together we learned to better imitate Christ. We gave them two weeks to think and pray about our invitation and asked them to join us for a dinner on October 4, at which time they would give their answers.

## Retreat photos



A total of 45 adults and kids attended the retreat.



Luís & Verónica share a prayer time with Michel & Juliana.



Cristián reflects during a time of solitude.



Holly's dodge-ball team will not be intimidated.

Following the retreat, we wondered how many might say yes to our invitation. Would any? Would only one or two? Did we dare hope that all 10 might? It seemed far-fetched to expect all the couples to commit to our plan, but we hoped that at least four would, giving each of the team couples a Chilean couple with whom to work more closely over the next year. But on October 4, we gathered for a dinner whose theme was *"Ponte la Camiseta"* (which loosely translates "Suit up") and watched in amazement as one by one, all 10 of the couples stepped forward to say, "Count us in." Three months have passed since then, and it's still hard to write about it without reliving the emotion of that pivotal evening. What a marvelous confirmation of God's presence and direction!



Ten church couples and the four team couples "suited up" in church T-shirts to symbolize our commitment to a year of discipleship training for the future of the church in Santiago.



Cristián reads his and Sandra's response.



Nicolas & Toyita came forward with their answer written on the back of this star, part of our table décor.

By late October four discipleship groups had formed, each led by a mission-team couple and including two or three Chilean couples. We were pleased to be assigned Patricio Navarro and his wife Alicia Cortez as well as Christian Moore and Diana Novoa, the couple from our university group that Scott married last April. You may recall that Patricio and Alicia helped us with pre-marital counseling for Christian and Diana, so we were delighted to stay together as a group.



Patricio & Alicia



Christian & Diana

All four discipleship groups are using a translation of Greg Ogden's curriculum *Discipleship Essentials* (we highly recommend Ogden's book on which the curriculum is based, *Transforming Discipleship*, because of its sensible and practical approach to discipling others). The curriculum comprises 24 weekly lessons featuring Bible study, scripture memorization and a reading, all with questions for personal reflection. Each person completes his/her homework during the week, and our group comes together on Sunday mornings (other groups meet at different times throughout the week) to recite the week's memory verse and share our responses to the questions, discussing the themes presented in each chapter.

It has been encouraging to watch a special brotherhood develop among those of us who are training together this year as disciples. One Sunday a man from one of the groups quoted one of the memory verses during the short talk he was giving prior to the offering. We looked around and began to exchange smiles with others who were mouthing the words along with him, as if we were sharing a private joke.

On January 17 we enjoyed our first quarterly meeting of the disciples, in which all four discipleship groups gathered at the church building to share stories and struggles, pray, encourage one another and enjoy a little healthy competition to see how well everyone is retaining their weekly memory verses! It appears that the bonds of unity and fellowship that began at the retreat back in September continue to grow.



This group was the first to unscramble all their memory verses during our competition.



Veronica Muñoz, from another discipleship group, prays for Holly during a sharing time.

We can't wait to see what God does with and through our 10 discipleship couples over this year and in the years to come. If you will, please take a moment right now and lift these couples before the Lord in prayer:

Patricio & Alicia  
 Christian & Diana  
 Michel & Juliana  
 Francisco & Dragana  
 Nicolas & Toyita

Claudio & Pamela  
 Laurindo & Charlene  
 Aníbal & Natalia  
 Cristián & Sandra  
 Luís & Verónica

## Baptisms



**Katerina Moore** (center) is the younger sister of Christian Moore (top right) from our discipleship group. Kati was formerly an atheist, going so far as to make fun of her brother following his conversion to Christ in October 2006. God changed her heart, however, and during 2008 she began accepting the invitations of her brother and sister-in-law (Diana – bottom right) to come to church and to participate in activities of our church's university youth group. In November 2008, Christian and Diana began studying the Bible with her, and Kati was baptized on December 14.



**Carlii Valle** (left) studied the Bible with Coté Valenzuela (right) from the university youth group and was baptized in January. Carlii was first invited to our church by Coté's brother Manuel, who she dated briefly. Manuel invited her to attend a Christian youth encounter that many of our youth have attended, and after this Coté invited her to study. Although no longer dating Manuel, Carlii has continued to attend church and participate with our youth group.



**Duncan Grant**, 11, who was the only child on our team when we arrived in Chile in 1999, is now our brother in Christ. Duncan was baptized by his proud daddy, Kelley, on January 18.

## Family News

### Summer highlights

The kids got out for summer break in mid-December. We were honored to spend Christmas Eve with a Chilean family, our former neighbors Oscar & Viviana and their son, Oscarito (means 'Little' Oscar), who attends Redland School with our kids. Shortly after Christmas we welcomed Scott's parents, Gary & Linda Emery, for a 10-day visit in which we rented a house on a nearby lake and enjoyed some relaxation. In late January, we welcomed a new member of our family, an 8-week-old Weimaraner puppy we named Tulipán ("Toolie-pahn,") which is Spanish for tulip. We call her Tuli.



Blessings from Chile,  
The Emery family