

**Santiago Update: August 2011**  
**News from the Emery family**



**Marriage Encounter (*Encuentro Matrimonial Ágape*) #13**



Twenty married couples attended Ágape 13.

Some called it a bad omen when our church's thirteenth Marriage Encounter began on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> of May. However, God worked miracles, as he always does, in the lives of the couples attending the encounter and also immensely blessed all of us who worked to make the retreat possible. Having served in every conceivable role within Marriage Encounter since our church began this ministry in 2005—from carrying suitcases and waiting tables at mealtimes to serving as grunt workers (and eventually supervisors) of the behind-the-scenes *Grupo de Apoyo* (work team)—we took on a new challenge this time: emceeding the weekend as coordinators.

The months leading up to the encounter were spent in almost non-stop preparation for this position. In addition to reviewing and editing the coordinator's notebook of scripts for all 13 sessions of the retreat, we also prepared a 10-page written testimony of our life together, which God used to bless our own marriage beyond measure as well as those of other couples as we shared our struggles and victories with the group during the weekend. To make the experience especially meaningful, some of our closest friends, Francisco and Drágana Lerma, alongside whom we have served countless times in Marriage Encounter, debuted with us the same weekend as a testimony couple. They did a wonderful job sharing their story, and we're thankful to God for seeing them through the long process of preparation (almost two years, counting various breaks due to personal circumstances).



Francisco & Drágana Lerma debuted as a testimony couple as we served for the first time as coordinators.

Since the weekend, we have been heavily involved in follow-up efforts, leading one of several *Grupos de Crecimiento* (Growth Groups) designed to build bonds among encounter couples and reinforce principles learned during the weekend. With our group of four couples, we are going through a Spanish translation of Ed Young's book *The Ten Commandments of Marriage*. In addition to this, because we will be serving as coordinators for at least the next couple of encounters, Scott is focusing most of his energy at this time on tasks related to this role. These include setting the agenda and leading monthly meetings of the ministry's *Directiva* (Board of Directors), maintaining contact with and encouraging the leaders of the other growth groups, and revising protocols to make the ministry run more smoothly and efficiently on a number of levels.

Most importantly, we will be working together in developing a new Growth Group curriculum for our church's Marriage Encounter. While the book we are currently using is very good, having our own material would allow us to photocopy and distribute our material rather than have couples buy books each time, as well as allow us to concentrate on the aspects of marriage that are most relevant to this culture, as identified by Chilean couples themselves through a needs assessment Scott has developed as a first step to this process. The Growth Group curriculum will serve a dual purpose: Not only will it help our church family minister to married couples for years to come, Lord willing, but it will serve as Scott's final project for his master's degree in leadership studies from Asuza Pacific University.

## Meet your new brothers and sisters!

A number of months have passed since we reported on baptisms. Please accept our apologies and enjoy the following photo gallery of the newest members of our church family. We started out writing a paragraph for each of their stories but soon found that we were writing the same story over and over. That's because these new brothers and sisters have the following elements in common:

- All were introduced to our church family when they attended Marriage Encounter;
- Immediately following their weekend encounters, all began serving in the Marriage Encounter ministry in one role or another, where they built relationships with other church couples;
- All eventually began attending church services and were invited to study the Bible by one of our Chilean leaders, who later baptized them. (Not a single one of these studies included a missionary! Seems like a funny thing to brag about until you recall that our goal is to equip Chileans for evangelism and ministry and thereby work ourselves out of a job!)

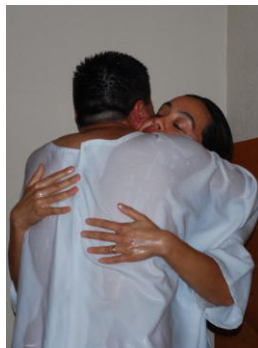
- All are either part of a follow-up study to continue growing into true discipleship or have taken steps to begin the discipleship process. Again, none of these discipleships groups (or groups in the making) includes a missionary.

### Gabriel & Delia Neira



baptized in December 2010 by Claudio Zalaquett

### Luis & Paula Garroz



baptized April 10 by Claudio Zalaquett

You may remember Luis and Paula's faces because they were part of a Growth Group that we led following a Marriage Encounter a couple of years ago. Although it took awhile for them to begin attending church (mostly due to Luis' extreme skepticism of religion), they have been humble servants in the Marriage Encounter ministry from day 1. Because of Luis' work schedule, they were unable to join the behind-the-scenes work group for our next encounter but have still shown up to many of the meetings to volunteer themselves as free childcare workers for the group's many young children.

### Rosy Martínez



Rosy's husband, Paul, has not indicated he is ready to commit to Christ but attends church faithfully and serves alongside his wife in ministry, which is a testimony to the warmth and acceptance he feels from our congregation

baptized April 17 by Marcelo Acevedo

## Sergio & Sabina Valdés



baptized May 1 by Luis Hasbún

Last Sunday we learned that Sergio and Sabina have taken initiative in advancing their spiritual growth. They have approached Cristián and Sandra Rodríguez (another of our Chilean leader couples) about beginning the process of discipleship with them.

## Elders in 2012: progress toward the goal

You may recall from our last report that we have been meeting monthly with a selected group of church members to study, pray, plan and prepare to lead the congregation in selecting its first group of Chilean elders. After setting a goal back in April of naming these shepherds sometime next year, we have spent the past three months wrestling with the particulars of this important decision:

- **What does an elder do?** In May we took a look at the role of a shepherd or elder, focusing on specific biblical texts.
- **What qualities make a good elder?** In June we focused on characteristics of Christian leaders in general and elders in particular, comparing lists of qualifications for elders found in 1 Timothy and Titus with more generalized lists of Christian character traits found in many others New Testament texts.
- **How do we get there from here?** July's meeting was dedicated to a variety of logistics for which biblical guidelines are scarce—How many elders should there be? How should they be appointed? For how long should they serve? Etc. etc. It was interesting to watch the group begin to wrestle with some of these questions—and extremely difficult to keep our mouths shut! As missionaries we have decided to take a back-seat role in these discussions, sharing our opinions but refraining from taking charge of the direction the group is heading. During this month's meeting, we will continue to discuss these issues and strive toward consensus.

## Church celebrates July 4<sup>th</sup>



For the second year in a row, our brothers and sisters organized a celebration for July 4<sup>th</sup>, in honor of their gringo missionaries. This year's event featured an American-style barbecue, the singing of the US national anthem, traditional southern dances such as the Cotton-eyed Joe, and a stand-up comedian (**Remember Rosy from the baptism section above?**) told *gallego* jokes (*Gallego* is slang for Spaniard and jokes about them are similar to Aggie jokes) dressed as a Spaniard, complete with a thick Spanish accent! Our church members prepared for weeks for this special Sunday, holding secret committee meetings and not allowing us to help in any way. You can imagine how much this meant to the three team families who are far from "home" on July 4.

## Family photo gallery

For Haydn's 8<sup>th</sup> birthday, we rented a soccer field at a local sports club, and Haydn invited a group of boys from school and church to celebrate his birthday playing soccer.



Love from Chile,  
The Emerys