

**Here is a look back at 2007.**

God bless you all,  
Zane



## *Iglesia de Cristo: Congregación Providencia 2007*

### **Beginning the year**

At the beginning of 2007, the Perkins found themselves covered in snow and in wintry conditions in Texas. They were on the regular furlough which occurs every other year. After leaving Texas they spent a month in California with the Canyon View church of Christ. The Perkins returned from the USA renewed and ready to work hard in service to the Lord.

### **Summer months**

January and February are the summer months in Chile and bring with them a relaxed atmosphere in Santiago and the church. There are not a lot of activities during the summer months. The biggest event in the summer of 2007 was the youth and university group's "Mission Trip VBS to Melipilla." Melipilla is a small town about 1 hour to the west of Santiago. The youth group planned and executed the entire trip with the goal of encouraging some members of the church that live in that community. The VBS was a one day event in the main plaza of the town. They had a lot of kids from the community participate in the activities, i.e. pottery, bread making, being a scribe, and carpentry. There was no direct fruit from the VBS but the young people commitment to the church grew. Praise God for their initiative and energy.

### **Renewed focus**

March begins every year with a bang. The year always kicks off with the anniversary service around the middle of March. This March was different from other years because there was a change in the direction of the church. The plan for the year was to become a church of disciples of Jesus. Evangelism was not the most important topic for the year but coming to know Jesus and understanding his teachings was the focus. It has been a great year. The preaching concentrated on the character of Jesus Christ. Looking at Jesus and becoming like him was the message that flowed through the year's preaching. Also the missionaries took discipleship serious and began personal discipleship and accountability for among each other. Becoming true disciples has changed the team and the church. Discipleship remained the push for the year and the church ended the year with almost 40 people in an active discipleship relationship.

### New births

Since the thrust for the year was discipleship it produced in the congregation an increase in maturity of many members that brought about some baptisms. This was not the best year as far as the number of baptisms but unlike previous years the retention rate for new converts has increased. The baptisms seen this year are the result of evangelistic Bible studies. There is a high rate of conversion from the Bible studies. Please continue to pray for new contacts and more Bible studies.

Here are a few faces...



**Anibal (left)** studied with one of our members and obeyed the gospel in June. **David (below)** was converted by his father. **Isabel (right)** is the mother of a Christian in the south of Chile.

### Outreach

The church is located on two major avenues that intersect one block from the church building. Across the street from the building is a park that fills up in the evening with parents and their children. The church's location is one of the major ways that people come to church. Many people live in the area around the church building. However, the main outreach the church has for reaching the lost of Santiago is through Marriage Encounter. Marriage Encounter is a weekend retreat designed to help and strengthen marriages. The retreat in and of itself is not religious but those giving their testimony are Christians and speak of their conversion as the element that saved their marriage. Followed by the weekend the church holds a 4-7 week follow-up study that helps build relationships that lead to personal Bible studies. The weekend retreat is held twice a year and 20 couples go through each time. Most of those couples are nonchristians. This year alone there have been 30 nonchristian couples go through the retreat and about five Bible studies started with participants. Since the church began Marriage Encounter there have been 10 families added to the church. This evangelism tool has been helpful to break into the families of the middle to upper class in Santiago. The Marriage Encounter ministry is almost completely run by Chilean Christians.

### Participation

A common fact among churches in Santiago is that participation in activities, especially Sunday morning worship is very cyclical. If all the members of the church showed up on a given Sunday there would be a 130 people, but most of the members don't seem to value their attendance and the average on Sundays is between 80-100 people. The church finds itself at the 100 barrier. Church growth specialists say it is one of the hardest barriers to get over and the Providencia congregation has been there about 2 years now. In past years the number of baptisms was higher but they were counter acted by people falling away. This is possibly going to change because as more families come to the church and to the Lord stability is added to the congregation. As congregational stability increases the numbers are going to rise.

### Small Groups

Small groups are a constant in the church in Santiago. The quantity of groups has varied over the years but this year was a year of multiplication. In July the church responded to the preaching on “Christian community” by growing in their relationships with one another. God used that series of lessons to start four new groups of which one is still growing strong. They call themselves “Dios entre nosotros” which means “God among us” because the group found deep meaningful relationships in Christ. Zane and Tamara work with the leaders of that group to provide guidance as they mature together.

Another aspect of small group is marriage encounter groups. This year alone there have been 6-8 groups that lasted 5-8 weeks to help marriages. Currently there are 25 couples that have participated in community building small groups designed to help marital growth. Groups are constantly starting and ending because the Chilean people commit to small groups if they function in blocks of 4-6 weeks.

### Currently in the life of the Perkins

Zane

1. Weekly discipling time with three couples. Each week Zane (Tamara when she can) spends about 2 to 2.5 hours with three different couples guiding them in Bible study, family vision statements, interpersonal relationship skills, learning to share their faith, parenting, etc.
  - a. **Anibal and Natalia:** a young newly converted couple. They are studying a survey of the New Testament and learning about the different aspects of how to study the Bible.
  - b. **Luis and Veronica:** Zane and Tamara have been working with them for a couple of years since they were married. Currently they are studying Old Testament survey.
  - c. **Michel and Juliana:** They are young family that had their first child a few months back. The direction of their discipleship is family vision planning from a Biblical perspective.
2. Regular preaching and teaching schedule. In the last year Zane did about 70% of the preaching and teaching on Sunday morning. Some of the topics addressed were Christian community, Evangelism, 1 John, Wisdom Literature, James and Ephesians.
3. Conducting evangelistic studies when they occur. Zane usually has at least one evangelistic study going on at any given time.
4. Planning of different activities and events such as Annual church retreat, independence celebration, marriage encounter, anniversary Sunday, etc.

Tamara

1. She spends most of her time being a mom. It is a challenge balancing 4 children, house, wife, and missionary.
2. She also is a room mom for Isaac's class at school. She has meeting with parents and teachers for school events and outings.
3. Tamara also holds evangelistic and discipleship studies. Currently she is evangelizing Julieta a contact she developed from aerobics class. Ruby is a single woman who has been a Christian about 10 years but was never discipled.

2007 was a year of lots of movement and activity and God was glorified in many ways. The Perkins family is excited about what God has in store for the church in Santiago in 2008.

God bless you all, The Chileperks – Zane, Tamara, Naomi, Isaac, Simeon and Enoch