

## News & Updates from La Iglesia Volviendo A La Senda Antigua

June, 2015

It's amazing how quickly time can pass. Five months has flown since our last communication from La Senda. You may be naturally tempted to think our extended silence stems from a lack of action. Reality is exactly the opposite. So much is happening that there has not been time to sit down and compose a sufficient update. Please forgive our tardiness, strap yourself in and we will do our level best to fill in the highlights.

### A Short Political Spotlight

By now you likely know that on December 17, 2014, President Obama announced a move to normalize political relations between the US and Cuba. Just this week, a major block was removed. Many people have asked questions of us as to what it all this means- for our nations, our ministry, and our future. For perspective, we point you to this link:



<http://wp.gospelrelief.org/whats-ahead-for-the-cuban-church/>



Here, you will land on the website of Gospel Relief Mission and find the thoughts of a Cuban Pastor, interviewed by an American, John Northrup. John's parents were the founders of the Buenas Nuevas Pentecostal Asociación in Cuba in the 1950s. La Senda Antigua is a member church of Buenas Nuevas and Pastor Jose serves as a Superintendent of a large portion of western Cuba. It is through this relationship that we are able to be recognized as an official church in Cuba, and by the work and blessing of Buenas Nuevas that we work to plant more missions and grow the Kingdom in more places on the island. We are blessed to be a part of Buenas Nuevas.

## A Special Celebration

Tonni and our five kids and I made our first ever trip as a whole family arriving on December 27 and spending two weeks visiting and working with our church family in Jovellanos. During that time we gathered with 200+ friends for a special night of worship and celebration of the 4th anniversary of the prayer meeting that has become La Senda Antigua; a thriving congregation and outpost for planting more of the same. It was my privilege to bring a sermon of encouragement and conveyance of the love and grace of God along with the prayers and support of all of our friends in the U.S. God has worked something incredible through these people and through your prayers and support.



## New Mission #1

Last August, after months of hitchhiking several hours in each direction twice a week to serve as mission Pastors, Ricardo & Yakelin (Yamy's sister) packed up their family and moved to the town of Coliseo to commit themselves full-time to the calling. They did so based on their



call and on my word that our partners here would soon have the funds to purchase a



home for the new congregation. This kind of faith, though often astounding to me, is quite the norm for our Cuban brothers and sisters.

God provided for their need, and in late December we delivered the last of the donations and two properties were purchased. The small house church will restore and renew the properties even as they grow themselves to be ready for governmental recognition as a full church of the Buenas Nuevas Association.

## New Mission #2

In August of 2014, Joseito and I were talking of how the farm community in which Yamy was raised was in need of a greater Christian presence and that "someday" her parent's home would make a great location. Weeks later, he wrote me, told me the property was available and I needed to raise the funding (15k). NOW, as in within a week or two. Being in the middle of the Coliseo project, I thought (as I often do) that my brother had gone crazy.

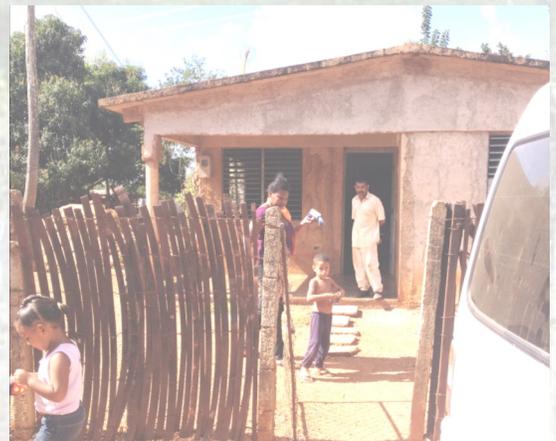
Having seen God work a miracle or two, I took a breath, lifted my petition to the Lord, and sent an email to a handful of partners asking simply that they pray about this issue; was it the right time? Was this God's will, ours, or both? A day before our intercession was to close, one of the partners here called me and offered the full sum. He explained that my email was an answer to his own prayers as to how he and his wife might help the ministry.

As a result, I have now twice visited the new mission outpost in Hoyo Colorado where our dear friends Iraides and Liliana serve as Pastors. In January my family, along with many folks from La Senda attended the first worship gathering. Seven villagers gave their lives to Christ that evening. God is awesome!



## New Mission #3

Sofia is a short drive south of Jovellanos and the site of our newest mission outpost. Leonardo, Orlinda & Tania lead a small house church in this farming village which is home to sharecroppers whose ancestors worked as slaves in nearby cane fields.



## Visions For Next Steps

Across the island of Cuba one can find many rural villages of 500-1000 people in which the Gospel has never been preached to the current generation. By virtue of Pastor Jose's service as a District Superintendent, we have not only the territory of the western part of the island, but the encouragement and organization support of the Buenas Nuevas to help reach these previously non-evangelized beloved people of God. As we look at the fields, the harvest is ripe. It is our hope to plant missions in villages such as these in the coming year.

## Next Steps In Jovellanos

Back in Jovellanos, we still have a city to which we minister. Cubans are a very musical people and music has great possibility as a tool for evangelism. At present, we are praying on the possibility of purchasing the home next door to our church for use as a musical training center. Our worship leaders would offer music and praise leadership lessons to our neighbors. We will keep you posted as we have discernment of next steps in this project.

As we reported in late 2014, foundational construction has been going on at the church site in Jovellanos to restore and expand the small house we own there. Support structure is in place to allow for the addition of a second floor and new roof. The second story will give us class space for children and youth that does not currently exist. This work awaits some still needed funding, as well as a place in which we can store a house full of church equipment (everything, including the chairs we sit on) for nearly two months as we do the work.



## Visits in 2015

Already this year, we have welcomed the whole Jobe clan from Cincinnati, friends from Shreve UMC of Shreve, OH, from Lakewood Baptist of Sinclairville, NY, Church of the Saviour UMC of Cincinnati and the Rossi's of Columbus, OH. Next week we will see our friends from Shreve once again as they visit many friends in Jovellanos, and look forward to seeing friends from Flora (MS) UMC, the last week of June. That is 7 visits of varying length in 6 months. God has been so good to us and we thank all of our partners in prayer and ministry for this ongoing outpouring of love and support. Please contact us (see last page) to plan your visit for 2016.

## Regular/Special Financial Gifts to God's Work Through La Senda Antigua

A regular monthly gift will enable day to day operations, hosting capabilities for visiting groups, support for Pastors José & Yamy, and our ability to communicate with them. Special gifts underwrite the cost of every special project we have undertaken to build, sustain, and expand the ministry of La Senda Antigua.

Through partner gifts we have recently finished installation of a water filtration system at the Pastors' home to serve visiting missionary teams. We currently await construction permits to dig a well to provide ongoing plentiful water supply.

We are in the first stages of a hoped-for mission quarters behind the house which will offer our visiting friends a local option for housing during their stay. One of our partner churches has pledged support to this effort and to the installation of water filtration at the La Senda Church location.



On the church site, outdoor work is largely finished, as the walls surrounding the yard are complete and a beautiful mural has been added, along with an area for serving love feasts to the growing number of folks who make up the La Senda community.

## COMING SOON!!! (Really soon.)



Pastors Jose and Yamy return to the US this summer! We are excited to finally make a general announcement. Plans have been underway for time now to plan a month-long visit for both. After making 2 month trips in 2011 & 2013, Pastor Yamy feels the need to be back home with their sons after a single month. She gave me specific instructions as to where she needed to be and I have risen to the challenge of scheduling visits with family & friends from

Florida to Long Island to Ohio to Texas to Ohio and back home to Jovellanos in four weeks. Nearly all of her month with us (**July 22– August 21**) is set. We will let you know very soon where the two of them will be visiting. Pastor Jose will be in the states for another 4.5 weeks following Yamy's return. We currently have openings for Sunday preaching available on the following dates:

**August 23**

**August 20**

**September 6**

**September 13 (possibly)**

**September 20 (possible Florida only)**



We can also make arrangements for Pastor Jose to be in weekday events (church meetings, home groups, mid-week worship, etc.). And we can travel if you can fund us. Both of them are looking forward to bringing the word of God's work in Cuba and spending time with dear friends across the USA. Please let us know if you would like to schedule an event.

### Contributions for La Senda Antigua

Can be sent to/checks made out to:

Church of The Saviour UMC\*

8005 Pfeiffer Rd., Montgomery, OH, 45242

\*La Senda Antigua Ministry in the memo

### US Contact Info/La Senda Visits

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Thanks for you prayers, friendship, and amazing support! **DIOS LOS BENDIGA.**