

From: Juan and Melissa Santafe <jsantafe@news.avmi.org>

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Subject: March Madness - Santafe Update



March Madness Santafe Family Update



Are there any basketball fans out there? Juan is a sports guy and follows pretty much every sport there is—soccer, American football, and tennis are at the top of the list. Although basketball ranks fourth in our family, we do try to watch a few games here and there. We chuckled the other day, feeling like ministry and all other responsibilities are like basketball: running from one side of the court to the other, fast-paced and determined—in Melissa’s words like crazy maniacs. The fast pace of the sport seems to be our ministry pace at times. We will try to catch you all up on our ministry and family life, hopefully not leaving you winded!"

The Weekly Grind but Most Important



Small Groups



Teaching



Discipleships

Our weekly responsibilities are at the heart of our ministry, which consists of the multiple small groups, discipleships, counseling, and visits that we do. In between the

discipleships and small groups Juan is approaching the final year or two of his Master of Divinity at Southwestern Theological Seminary and Melissa at the start of her Masters at Moody Theological Seminary. The studies we invest in for ministry excellence are a key part of our week. Pray for the people God is entrusting us to invest in on a weekly basis, and that we will continue His kingdom work with endurance.

Ministry Transitions



Melissa Graduating Kiddos of Xtreme Life kids



Juan Washing Juan Felipe's Feet

Melissa graduated the first group of kiddos of Xtreme Life in December and handed the Xtreme Life ministry over to a faithful and dedicated leader of the church in January. She still teaches, but has devoted her time to women's ministry this year. Last year, Juan was overseeing the youth ministry, working on developing leadership in a particular man from the church, Juan Felipe. Although Juan continues to meet with him once a week, we celebrate that he was able to fully hand over the ministry in January.



We celebrate that last month Federico has officially been voted in by the members of El Redil Gracia and Verdad to be their leading pastor of the church. This is a huge milestone of the church plant and one step closer to becoming a self-governed and self-sustained church. Praise the Lord for His work and provision for the church.



Us Praying for Federico and Maribel in Their Pastoral Role at Gracia and Verdad



Garcia and Verdad's Leadership Team

A very big ministry transition comes this year for us as a family, Juan announced to the church members and church leaders this past month that we will be slowly and gradually phasing out of Gracia and Verdad in the 2026-2027 timeframe. As church planters, this is part of the ministry process when the church becomes fully self-sustained and self-governed. This year, Juan aims to lead the leadership team through the legal process of becoming a self-sustained church. He has organized the checklist of needed paperwork and is praying to have a retreat with the leadership team within the coming weeks to start the process.



Carlos and Yaneth Praying Over Us in Upcoming Transitions

We have had the joy of dreaming and praying with Carlos and Yaneth the last few months about our potential future in church planting together once again. This year is the year of exploration, prayer, and seeking the Lord's direction. As many Thursday's our four schedules allow, we try to get together in two different areas called El Carmen de Viboral and El Santuario to pray for these two cities and the potential opportunity to plant a new church together in one of these towns. Each are within a half hour of where we live. Please pray along side of us in this exploration year. We rejoice how God has worked in marvelous ways in our beloved church, Gracia and Verdad. This Sunday we celebrate three years since launching weekly services. It is amazing how God is at work in this country and we are grateful to be part of it. Continuing this basketball analogy,

there is still much work to be done; the 'game' of ministry is far from over. Please pray for us as we seek the Lord in this next 'quarter'.

Support is VERY Low

We are so abundantly grateful for our multiple churches and many financial supporters as yourself. What a blessing you are to our family and ministry! When we were on furlough back in 2024, we spent 95% of our time visiting you and reporting the work and what a gift that time was for our family to be reconnected. The negative side of that is we didn't spend much time in visiting new churches and trying to grow our financial partnership. This has significantly impacted us financially. In the last 12 months, we have only reached our monthly support needs 3 times, leaving us 9 months below our needed support! We are around 2,000 a month low on support and our financial reserve is almost in the negatives. This is causing a tremendous weight on Juan to try to call and connect with new churches on the mission field. If we are unable to raise the support that we need, we will most likely need to leave the field for a mandatory home ministry assignment. Please pray for this! Please consider joining our financial support team! Click the link to our direct missions homepage through Avant. We are eternally grateful for your faithfulness to us through prayer and giving.

Much love,

The Santafe Family



Emma – 8 years old

Loves ballet, her new school, and singing



Megan – 7 years old

Loves crafting, laughing, and imaginative play



Ellie – 4 years old

Loves playing with her sisters, cuddling with her parents, and being read to

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The logo for 'Avant' is written in a red, cursive script font.

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