

Santafe Update - The Exciting and Hard Places

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Subject: Santafe Update - The Exciting and Hard Places



The Santafe Family - July 2026 Edition

The Exciting & Hard Places

I know it has been a while since you heard from us, our last update was sent out in March. We even forgot what we said back then and had to go back and read it! Since then so many beautiful opportunities have opened up to serve the Lord and we are humbled to be faithfully used by Him in areas we never expected. There has been some hard things in our lives that has taken place since March as well. This letter will update you with ministry, but also some personal deep things of our heart. Our update will be a little longer this month, so please read all the way through!

Exciting Places

We will start with the exciting places and the exciting things the Lord has allowed us to be part of the past few months. We were able to visit our church planting friends in Armenia, Colombia. This faithful couple invited us to be part of what they are doing in their church planting ministry. Juan and I were able to co-teach at their first couples dinner. Juan preached and did various leadership seminars throughout the weekend. We left encouraged to see the Lord at work in their ministry and how He is using their gifting and faithfulness in the furthering of the gospel.



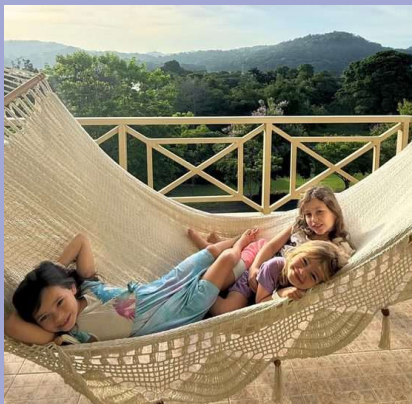


These past few months we have been asked to be part of a ministry to a group of people who have come out of a difficult church split due to pastoral sin. They have been guided and loved on by a pastor virtually in the States, but have not had consistent pastoral care or sermons on Sundays face-to-face (they have been live-streaming sermons). Juan has been asked to preach once a month and give pastoral care as much as he can. This group, La Iglesia Las Valles, is in Medellin and we as a family have committed to giving about 20% of our time to these dear people. We go down as a family once a month to teach, disciple, and train. Melissa leading and teaching the women and Juan the men. Juan preaches once a month and Melissa is committed to training the children's ministry leaders as much as possible. Pray for Las Valles, that God will continue to restore their

hearts and grow in their walk with the Lord.

In Gracia and Verdad Juan continues pressing on in his weekly grind of pastoral care. He is also faithfully taking 2-3 seminary classes a semester to finish his Masters of Divinity at Southwestern Theological Seminary. Melissa has been growing in her women's teaching ministry and pressing forward with her Master's degree at Moody Theological Seminary. She has added multiple women's discipleships throughout the week and has grown in love with caring for the women of the church.





The last part of the exciting places section of this letter is that we had the blessing of spending a week with our beloved Avant family and co-laborers of the harvest field last month in our regional conference in Panama. This time was refreshing to our souls as well as our daughters as we all were cared for so deeply. During our time in Panama, Juan and I began to have some unsettled stirring in our hearts about our future ministry decisions and God's leading as a family. This leads us to the hard places and realities of ministry that follows.

Hard Places

There are four major factors that have led us to some hard places leading to some hard decisions that need to be made in our ministry here in Colombia.

1. In May, within one week from each other we received the news that both our Dad's have cancer. Melissa's father who was in remission from stage 4 cancer has now been diagnosed with blood cell cancer called Multiple Myeloma. Juan's dad also has been diagnosed with prostate cancer. This news has been very hard for both of us and has pulled our hearts to want to spend time Stateside to be present with our families (Texas and New Jersey).

2. Another hard place for us personally is that our ministry projection of planting a new work here in Colombia has taken a turn. Our beloved friends and church planting “team”, Carlos and Yaneth have been led by God to excitedly join the mission field in Quebec, Canada. They will be leaving the mother church of El Redial de Poblado after 25+ years of pastoring and planting churches here in Colombia to train pastors in the church planting movement in Canada. We have a very strong conviction as a couple that planting a new work needs to be within a team context and at this point in time we don’t have one here in Colombia. Juan and I prayed for months regarding whether we want to move back to Medellin to work with Las Valles and dedicate full time to the work of a church re-plant with this group. Throughout these months of prayer we do not see the Lord leading us to transition back to Medellin (1 hr and 30 mins away).
3. Another hard place we have found ourselves in, is our low support and the drastic drop of the value of the dollar in Colombia. This has brought us to a hard place in ministry. We are considering having to take the girls out of school and return to homeschool because of the budget deficit. Melissa will have to pause her masters degree and cut back on her involvement in ministry, teaching, and discipleships.
4. The last hard place, deep deep down in our hearts, we long for permanency. Living a church planting and missionary life gets emotionally difficult at times with constant goodbyes and starting overs. Our hearts, particularly Juan’s pastoral heart, longs for a permanent church ministry that he can call home.

We share these things with you in complete transparency because we need your prayers. We want to follow God’s will for our lives and serve Him faithfully wherever that would be. Please join us in prayer while we are in these hard places! One decision that has been made is that we will remain at Gracia and Verdad and Las Valles for eight more months as we slowly and wisely make these transitions out. If you have been following our updates, you know that Gracia and Verdad has their coordinating pastor now and Juan’s main goal before leaving the church plant is to walk through the process and see that Gracia and Verdad becomes a self-sustained and self-governed church in our last eight months. After talking with our directors and Avant family, we are possibly projecting an HMA around June of 2027. Please continue lifting our family up as we seek God’s will are led by Him in this upcoming year. We are so grateful for you and are blessed by your faithfulness and constant love for our family.



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