

SANTA CRUZ CHURCH PLANT



THE SKIPERS HAVE BEEN
MISSIONARIES IN BOLIVIA
SINCE 1996!

Before We Begin... An Introduction to the Skippers

As I begin this proposal, I (*Jason*) have to look back and laugh about how God works in our lives. Studying Business Management in college, I was taught to plan ahead and to not live life by the seat of my pants. Making a one, five, ten year and even a life plan is important. I took that advice, and really thought that

I had it all figured out. I had a date when I would start building my own house, and was to start my own business after college. I guess that God had other plans because in 1996 He took me to Bolivia for two weeks to help build a seminary. Eight months later I returned planning to stay for a

year. Then I met Norah. Need I say more? We married in 1998 and have dedicated our lives to God's work. It seems ironic that 14 years ago I was "the man with a plan" and now here I am writing this proposal to plant our fifth church in a place that I never imagined going in my life!



GOD IS CHANGING LIVES!



ONLY HE CAN DO THIS!



...AND WE'RE LOVING IT!

There's no better way to live life than in the center of God's will!

Our Call To Plant

In January 2003 we started what has now become one of the most important churches in the city of Sucre, MCC (*Movimiento Cristiano Celular*). Starting with just 12 people, we grew to over 150 people in six months, and now actively pastor close to 1,000 people.

One of our goals has always been to make sure that the churches we start are not dependent on us as missionaries. In 2007, we felt that the time had come for us to pull out of the Sucre church and head back to the USA to plant a church. We loved the idea but not long after announcing our return (*bad move*), God made it clear to us that he still had more plans for us in Bolivia. We were a little

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disappointed, but if there is something that I've learned throughout the years, it is that being in the center of God's will is the only way to be truly happy.

God surprised us last August, giving us a specific word, showing us that he wanted us to extend our work to Santa Cruz.

After months of prayer, Norah and I took the step of faith to believe God and do it. We returned home during Christmas & New Years to announce our next step, and then in late January we began traveling from Sucre to Santa Cruz weekly to raise up a team to launch the new church. We moved there permanently on June 11. After nine months of continuous travel, and assuring ourselves that the church in Sucre will progress without us, we positioned Joel & Veronica Cuellar as pastors of the Sucre church so that we can concentrate on the new work in Santa Cruz. We will continue to pastor and supervise Joel & Vero as that church continues forward.



THE GANG



JASON & NORAH



ERYNN (9 YEARS)



JORDAN (5 YEARS)



DERRICK (23 MONTHS)

Passion for the Lost

Since the day Norah and I met on an evangelistic drama team in Sucre, we've held one thing in common; passion for the lost. I remember talking for hours on our honeymoon about starting a church, and we did just that four months later. We rented a small garage with our tithes and started inviting the neighborhood to the meetings! We had almost no experience, but that didn't matter. We've always been quite venturesome in proclaiming the Gospel! Granted, all of our evangelistic endeavors didn't go that well, but we did learn a lot through those first years in ministry.

"I BROUGHT YOU HERE FOR A REASON, AND I WILL DO GREAT THINGS THROUGH YOUR LIVES IN THIS COUNTRY..."

An Encounter With God

In 2002, after planting three churches, and having seen few fruits from our labor, we almost gave it up. It seemed that we had tried everything, and the only "fruits" that we had seen were sour ones, having been let down and taken advantage of from numerous pastors and seekers alike.

In a moment of intense skepticism and depression, I had an encounter with God. He spoke to me during a weekend retreat saying... "*I brought you here for a reason, and I will do great things through your lives in this country. You will not leave here until I tell you to.*" Honestly we both wanted clearer answers from God about so many things, but He didn't seem to want to be overly talkative. We decided to just let those questions go and trust God as He led.

Not long after, we stumbled across this new idea (*for us*) of the "Cell Church". We soon grew very excited about its possibilities, feeling that it "fixed" and "answered" many of the problems and disappointments that we had faced over the years. We prepared ourselves to the best of our abilities and on January 1, 2003 we started over, launching MCC.



LUIS (LUCHÍN)

LUCHÍN, FROM A YOUNG AGE, BECAME VERY ACTIVE IN SATANIC ROCK AND DRUGS. HE BECAME ONE OF THE MOST WELL KNOWN "METAL ROCKERS" IN SUCRE. AFTER ALMOST LOSING HIS LIFE BECAUSE OF A HEALTH PROBLEM STEMMING FROM HIS DRUG USE, HE GAVE HIS LIFE TO THE LORD. HE ENTERED SEMINARY AND IS NOW ONE OF OUR MAIN ASSISTANT PASTORS IN THE CHURCH. HE IS THE LEADER OF OUR WORSHIP TEAM, DIRECTOR OF "THE SCHOOL OF LIFE," AND OFTEN VISITS SCHOOLS TO SHARE HIS TESTIMONY AND THE DANGERS THAT ACCOMPANY THAT STYLE OF LIFE. GOD IS USING HIM AND HIS WIFE IN AMAZING WAYS IN OUR CHURCH!



JACKELINE

JACKY ESCAPED FROM HOME AS A TEEN, FULL OF RESENTMENT AND PAIN. TRYING TO FORGET HER FAMILY AND PAST, SHE TRIED TO FIND HAPPINESS IN THE "GOOD LIFE." IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG BEFORE SHE BECAME PREGNANT & AGAIN SHE FOUND HERSELF ALONE. IN A MOMENT OF DESPAIR, CONSIDERING SUICIDE, SHE REMEMBERED AN INVITATION THAT SHE HAD RECEIVED MONTHS BEFORE FROM A FRIEND. THAT EVENING SHE VISITED A SMALL GROUP & EXPERIENCED TRUE LOVE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HER LIFE. GOD GAVE HER THE COURAGE TO MAKE AMENDS WITH HER FAMILY, AND NOW IS A CELL GROUP LEADER, SHARING GOD'S LOVE TOGETHER WITH HER 3 YEAR OLD SON!



FREDDY

AFTER HIS MOTHER'S DEATH AS A CHILD, HIS FATHER FORMED ANOTHER FAMILY AND LEFT HIM TO FEND FOR HIMSELF ON THE STREETS. NEEDING SECURITY HE SOON FOUND A NEW FAMILY IN A GANG. NOW 21, FREDDY WAS FREED FROM A LIFE OF DRUG ADDICTION, ALCOHOLISM & VIOLENCE WHEN SOMEONE INVITED HIM TO A SMALL GROUP MEETING. THAT NIGHT FREDDY RECEIVED CHRIST, AND HAS NEVER LOOKED BACK. HE IS NOW AN IMPORTANT SMALL GROUP LEADER IN THE CHURCH, AND IS QUITE AN EVANGELIST, HAVING ORGANIZED SEVERAL LARGE MUSICAL & DANCE EVENTS TO REACH THE LOST.

Santa Cruz de la Sierra - Bolivia...

A City of Great Extremes



An Introduction to Santa Cruz

Santa Cruz, a city of 1.5 million people (*7x larger than Sucre*), is the largest city in Bolivia. It is located in the tropical eastern lowlands of the country. When first entering the city, a person is struck by the beautiful homes, large buildings and expensive vehicles everywhere. I have heard foreigners ask... Is this really Bolivia? I've seen more Hummers and large SUV's in Santa Cruz than I've ever seen anywhere else. In many ways, Santa Cruz seems to be an amazingly upscale and modern city. Looks can be deceiving.

When God first called us to Santa Cruz, I imagined something totally different. In the few short months that we have been traveling to and living there, we have seen so much poverty, misery, sickness, crime, corruption, broken families, promiscuity, etc. I admit that at first we felt that God was

moving us more in a strategic manner, hoping to use the new church to financially support other church plants all around the country. Even though that is still the case, our hearts have been so touched and broken by the people, the lives and the stories that we have seen and heard there.

OUR HEARTS HAVE BEEN TOUCHED BY THE PEOPLE, LIVES & STORIES THAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD.

Hundreds of thousands of people live in small houses that are often flooded during the rainy season. Sickness runs rampant there because of this. Dengue Fever, Yellow Fever & Malaria are all big killers, especially with the poor because of their living conditions. Drug addicts live in the streets and in the water channels of the city. Crime is very high. Daily there are homicides, houses

Santa Cruz Needs God!

and vehicles are broken into and stolen, people are getting run over. In the past month, two of the people who form part of our launch team have been robbed on the street.

Broken Families, Broken People

The worst part about Santa Cruz is the situation of the family. Of our launch team, we know the family situation of maybe fifteen of them. Of those, ten have never lived with their father.

Angel's Story

Angel (*the guy in this photo below*) is truly an angel. He has given dozens of hours to guide us and help us put in the floor and the stage of the place where our church will function. He is a successful carpenter, plumber, electrician, gardener & friend. :-) He shared his story with me one day while we were laying brick together.

His father died when he was four. His mother remarried, but that marriage did not go so well. His stepfather was a drunk who cheated on his mother and beat them both repeatedly. When Angel was eleven, this man threw him out of their house. He tried to persuade his mom to go with him. He said that he would work and they could rent an apartment. She finally said no,



and he left at that young age to do life on his own. He worked and did what he could to get by. When his stepfather died about ten years ago, he went back home and took care of his mother, as he still does today at the age of 32.

Angel said something to me that I will never forget. He said, “*Pastor, I’m glad my father died when I was young. He was also very violent with my mother. What good is a father? I cannot understand why anyone would want a father.*”

It's Not Just Angel

The sad part is that Angel is not an isolated case. He is normal. Men are known for running around, and have very little commitment to their families. They joke and compare how many “lovers” they’ve had. One man told an assistant pastor of ours this... “*In Santa Cruz things are very different. Here the women are easy. All that you have to do is say a few nice words to any woman that you want, and she’ll take her underwear off for you.*” Crude, but revealing. That is the mindset there.

Maria’s Story

Maria is a girl who works, cleaning and cooking, with an American couple that we know. Before living with this couple, she lived and worked with another family most of her life. At a very young age her mother sent her to the city to work. One of the boys in that family raped her repeatedly since she was nine years old. Now, at the age of 17, she has sadly terminated three pregnancies through abortions.

THERE IS HOPE!

It has been heartbreakingly getting to know these people and their stories. The great news is that THEY are the reason that Jesus came to this world.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS ON ME, BECAUSE HE HAS ANOINTED ME TO PREACH GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM FREEDOM FOR THE PRISONERS AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT FOR THE BLIND, TO RELEASE THE OPPRESSED, TO PROCLAIM THE YEAR OF THE LORD'S FAVOR. LUKE 4:18-19

Getting Down to Business...

What We Need to Do in Santa Cruz

Why Are We Writing This?

We are writing this, and I (Jason) am here in the USA because we need to plant this church in Santa Cruz. We have an opportunity to make a huge difference, but we need your help. We haven't been able to and we can't do it alone. We need partners. Without the necessary finances we can do little. Allow us to explain what we've done, our ideas, our plans, and what we need in this new venture with God.

Our Preliminary Work

Over the past months we have been able to raise up a launch team of close to forty people and almost 100 have given their lives to the Lord through evangelistic activities. People are excited about what God wants to do there in Santa Cruz.

Our main frustration has been the inability to find a place to meet with everyone, and to really "take off" as a

church. For months we looked for places to rent, but any place worthwhile was going for \$1,200 a month or more. In June we finally found a place for \$350 a month... BUT. (That's a BIG BUT) To make the place useful for the church, we had to put a floor in where the garden was and we also have to set up a temporary roof. All of that takes an investment, but we decided that it was better to spend our money on something that we can keep afterwards, rather than spend thousands of dollars a month on rent. As you can see in the pictures, we have now put in a floor and a stage, but we still don't have a roof. So to summarize our current situation, we have people... and not just regular people... we have people who are excited to get in and reach Santa Cruz for Christ, but we don't have any of the things that we need to truly take off as a church.

OUR PRELIMINARY WORK



Keys For a Successful Plant



JASON WITH SUCRE TEAM



WORSHIP IN SUCRE



ERYNN ON DANCE TEAM



SUCRE CHURCH

Keys For a Successful Plant

Having previously planted a successful and growing congregation, we are well aware that the only true model for growth is one that includes God's continual presence and power in our lives and ministry. At the same time, we believe that success is not just spiritual. Studies have shown that there are three main keys for a new church to have long term success. We will list them, and then we will elaborate on each one of them.

- 1) It is important that the main pastor have a true and specific call from God to plant the church.
- 2) They must have a good strategy.
(ex. Just opening your doors and putting out a sign is not a good strategy)
- 3) It must be sufficiently funded.

I - God's Call

This, thankfully is the easiest one for us. When God called us to Santa Cruz last year, it was probably one of the last places on earth that we would have wanted to go. Since then, He has put a

love and a passion for the city and the people of Santa Cruz in our hearts. We have no doubt whatsoever about God's calling to plant this church.

2 - Strategy

We honestly were lacking on this for quite awhile. Our idea at first was to almost duplicate everything that we did in Sucre. That turned out to be inefficient and impossible. We realized quickly that our Sucre church plant had certain dynamics that we couldn't possibly replicate in Santa Cruz. It was impossible because we didn't have the finances to do. After trying many different things and becoming increasingly frustrated, we finally put everything on hold and decided to start over. That is where we are now.

Before we can move any further ahead, we must raise enough finances to be able to put a roof on the building that we're renting, buy a sound system, more chairs, advertise, etc. That is my goal while I am home.



EVANGELISTIC EVENT IN SANTA CRUZ - APRIL 2009

Keys For a Successful Plant - cont.

Preview Services & Launch Date

To build momentum for a large launch, we plan to hold three monthly preview services starting November 29 (*if all goes well with our fundraising*). Our goal with these preview services is to raise up a 75 member launch team. These people will help us launch the church on our launch date in February. These preview services will be full fledged services. After each one we will follow up closely with those who attended, and we will invite them to help us with our next service (*thus becoming part of our launch team*). For each preview service we will meet with our launch team to set our goals, delegate responsibilities and hand out flyers. We will pray with them for people who they will be inviting, and then after the next service we will do the same thing again. We will also mid-month with all who attended the preview services for a cookout and games.

After three preview services, (Nov. 29, Dec. 27 and Jan. 31) we have set our true launch date for February 28, 2010. We currently have some small groups around the city, but in late March, a month after the launch, we will hold an encounter retreat and will begin our leadership training course called "The School of Life."



To be able to do these services, and ultimately launch well, we need quite a few things. One of the most important things that we need to do is to find a worship leader. Joel Cuellar was originally our guy, until we decided to send him and his wife back to Sucre to take over the church there.

3 - Finances

This is the hardest and most frustrating part. We simply cannot move forward without this. It's nice to say, "God will provide", but I've found over the years that God doesn't make money grow on trees. If we need money we have to ask, and pray, and fundraise to get it.

Let us share our budget with you...

Roof	\$8,500
Electric Meter	\$400
Finish Floor	\$500
200 Chairs	\$2000
Plants	\$220
Regular Lighting	\$400
Stage Decorations	\$350
Stage Lighting	\$1,200
Projection System	\$4,760
Video System Computer	\$1,373
Promotion	\$2,500
Printed Material	\$2,500
Sound System	\$5,220
6 Month Salary Worship Leader	\$2,143
Trip to USA (Tickets, Vehicle, Meetings, Luggage,	

Printed Materials, Misc) \$3,934

TOTAL: \$36,000

We believe that with \$36,000 we can make a large impact in Santa Cruz.

Where will we get that? We have two options. The first one is you. Would you consider giving towards this work? Please understand that this is not for us. This is for these people, and God's work with them. We ask you first... Would you give a sacrificial gift to make an impact in the lives of hundreds, perhaps even thousands of people in Santa Cruz?

The second place where we could find partners are new churches. We ask today that you would help us "get connected". Talk to other people, organizations and churches that may be interested in partnering with us in this, and then let us know! May God Bless You RICHLY and Thank you for your time, prayers, and your support.

Love,

Jason & Norah Skipper



I Want To Be a Part of God's Work!

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God has called all of us to reach the lost with the gospel of Christ. Not all can go physically, but everyone can obey God's calling to GO, by praying and giving. We have gone physically, but we need your prayers, gifts and monthly support to continue our ministry. Without them we could not continue. Your gift or monthly pledge is and will be used in the name of Jesus for spreading His Kingdom. Even the smallest amount is a large help to us. We ask that you would give by faith, understanding that God is in control.

He promises us in Luke 6:38 "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, Pressed down, and shaken together and running over..." We ask that you would just trust God as we have learned to do over the past years. If for some reason you cannot continue a pledge at some point, we will understand. You can fill out this form and send it to us. Please just take that step of faith and help us win Bolivia for Christ

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail: _____

Date: _____

One Time Gift: Amount: _____Monthly Pledge: Amount: _____

Do you want a monthly receipt? Yes No

All gifts are tax deductible. Make Checks out to "The Hand of Hur, Inc." and send them to: 293 Bray Hill Lane, Oakland, MD 21550 OR you can give securely and easily online at www.hohnet.com. Thank you and GOD BLESS!

*Jason, Norah, Erynn, Jordan & Derrick Skipper
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