

# Gary & Mary Lou Sander

## Country of Service

Colombia

## Home Church

Evangelical Covenant Church  
Kingsburg, CA

## Birthdays

Gary 8-5  
Mary Lou 1-23

## Next Home Assignment

2025

## Websites and Social Media:

[colombiamission.covchurch.org](http://colombiamission.covchurch.org)

## Facebook

GaryMaryLou Sander

## Instagram

@gmlsander

## Contact

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## Country of Service Address

Carrera 39 #16Asur - 70  
Medellín, Colombia 050022



## MINISTRY OVERVIEW:

We live in Medellín, Colombia, and travel to the four other regional conferences as we accompany and participate in discipleship and mutual mentoring.

By listening, hearing, observing, and following God, we walk alongside the Colombia Covenant Church (Pacto) ministries, focusing on being grace and love as we serve one another. We are in dialog with all leadership in reframing what church and ministry looks like today, discovering pathways to be mutual and reciprocal partners, participating and ministering within the realities of how to sustain life and vibrant ministry.

We facilitate ongoing and new discipleship and mentoring relationships through the mutual sharing of life experiences, biblical truths and spiritual insights with church pastors and leaders, those involved in community outreach ministries



and with new friends and neighbors wanting to learn more about Jesus Christ and what it means to live together in him. We also advocate and serve as sounding boards for social projects through Covenant World Relief and Development, Friends of World Mission, and Serve Globally projects. Our aim is for all to grow in spiritual maturity and leadership integrity as we impact the communities where each one lives with the love of God and the kingdom values of peace, unity, and justice.

### **MINISTRY GOALS ACHIEVED:**

- Our mutual mentoring ministry goals were met in four of the five regional conferences. Together we addressed the challenges of ministry through prayer; grief care; individual and small group conversations; and a study of *Between Two Truths*.
- Walking alongside the Pacto National Federation of Churches (FIPEC) board as it works toward a national reconciliation and restoration encounter in 2023. The first step in this process took place in February.
- We hosted a family mission/vision trip to Colombia in July 2022. We are working toward hosting three small group mission trips for winter 2023 through 2024.
- To stay fresh in ministry we participated in daily Bible reading, journaling, listening prayer; global personnel cohort groups; Covenant webinars; Colombia seminary courses; having read 25 books, listening to two podcasts, and staying abreast of current events and trends locally and internationally.

### **CHALLENGES:**

Pacto National Federation of Churches (FIPEC) has taken on the desire and challenge of being self-sustaining, self-advocating, and self-governing, sustaining its national operating budget entirely on its own, with contributions from its member churches, its ministries, and community outreach projects, without the contribution of outside funds. Serve Globally has not contributed to the national operating budget for 30 years, unlike other foreign partners. We have been asked to walk with them, encourage, and support them by being sounding boards and advisers in reaching this goal. This challenge involves changes in relating with one another and in holding each other accountable to not go back to old, historical patterns of relating and working together. This challenge coincides exactly with our Serve Globally personnel in Colombia who have been growing into this relationship for many years, moving and transitioning to this relationship and partnership with Pacto and ministries.

### **GOD AT WORK:**

We know that you have read of the many times we travel to be with people. That's because we have learned that going where people are, to be on their "turf," in their space, is important in making a connection and in deepening a relationship. That makes for some great adventures that are shared with others. We've walked, taken buses, been on motorcycles, boats, flown on big and small planes, sat in the front and the back of transport jeeps—and we've used cars. All of that to arrive at the location



where others feel most comfortable, where they have invited us to join them and share in their lives.

We become a part of their lives, sitting on their chairs or the ground. With children it is best to play games and read to them at their level—meaning we go “down” to their level. With adults it is just as important to be with them, at their level, and be willing to wait and listen and keep waiting and listening until what is desired to be shared has been shared. Jesus sat down to teach, walked through Samaria, waited at the well, stopped on his walk to address someone calling out to him, and ate at many tables. We, too, want to make the time and effort to let others determine where they would most like to meet with us and enjoy time together.

We’ve seen the Pacto grow throughout Colombia by discovering pathways of being mutual and reciprocal partners in ministry. Some of those who have faithfully been a part of the communities where the Pacto has ministered are entering their senior years of life. The Pacto churches and ministries are committed to serving and participating with the older adults in their congregations and in their communities in these areas of holistic health. For example, older adults are being offered spaces for medical checkups, exercise, counseling, and nutritional coaching, helping to dignify and strengthen older adults as valuable citizens who can contribute to the formation of future generations.

## **MINISTRY GOALS:**

- Participate in the Mutual Mentoring of the Colombia Pacto leadership in their spiritual formation—utilizing both virtual and in-person gatherings as best suits each regional conference. We will be intentional to include the theological education students and incorporate them into the leadership of this ministry as they learn and grow and look for opportunities to share what they are receiving and being equipped for.
- Offer individual and small group encounters with the Colombia Pacto leadership, giving the chance to share more personally about real-life challenges they face.
- Accompany the national Pacto (FIPEC) Board as it works toward national reconciliation and restoration.
- Explore opportunities of hosting two mission/vision trips to Colombia, addressing the Colombia Pacto ministry visions and needs.
- Stay fresh in ministry through mutual mentoring; spiritual practices; cohort groups; author chats; and from books, articles, and podcasts addressing faith, justice, and social issues relevant to life today.

## **PRAYER REQUESTS:**

- Pray for the Pacto National Board as they aim toward becoming a unified and influential national church with



its members participating faithfully and creatively in sharing God's love and salvation, growing in number, in discipleship, and becoming self-sustaining.

- Pray for those involved in the eight church planting initiatives.
- Pray for the new believers and those still seeking to know Christ through these outreaches.
- Pray with us as we go deeper in our serving each other through gracious love and mutual submission.
- Pray with us for our continued health and vigor.
- Pray for our family gathering in Colombia in November. Pray for safe travels, great health, and blessed connection times for the 20 of us.

### **SUPPORT LEVEL – 100%**

Thank you for supporting us financially this last year. Your giving directly helps us with expenses related to community engagement, ministry, and salary. As global personnel we are required to raise 100% of our support every year. Through your gifts and partnership, you ensure that we are able to continue serving in places where God has called us. We are grateful for your kingdom partnership.

### **PARTNER WITH US:**

- A global internship to Colombia, volunteer program participants, new Serve Globally personnel, and mission teams could support us through visits offering:

- Counseling, advocacy, lay-counseling training in life issues
- Working with children and young professionals in their English language learning
- Health Brigades (eyes, dental, general checkup, community health training)
- Peace and reconciliation and social justice outreaches
- Elderly care consultation
- Small business and micro business consultation
- Men's outreach or women's outreach
- Construction projects—in churches or social project sites
- Family mission/vision trip

### **THANK YOU:**

Dear ministry partners and church families, thank you for your incredible faithfulness to us over these years. We appreciate your prayers and financial support that cover us and allow us to continue well here in Colombia doing what we love to do—being with the people in ministry and life as we share of God's love and grace. We enjoy sending you our two monthly e-newsletter communications: 1) praise and prayer requests; 2) ministry stories and updates. As we send you these e-newsletters, we hold you close to our hearts and in our minds and prayers. We thank you for your communications back to us through a personal email, your church newsletter, or being connected with a small group. Also, thank you for reaching out to us through virtual gatherings for



prayer and opportunities to share updates. As we participate in life together, these connection times offer us all glimpses of God's *shalom*, love, inclusion, unity, justice,

and liberty—when heaven comes together with earth, and all seems right and good and just, at least for a little while. Let's keep finding the Christ between us.

### **TO SEND A FINANCIAL GIFT:**

Mail checks with a gift note for **Gary & Mary Lou Sander Support** to

Evangelical Covenant Church  
PO Box 773420  
Chicago, IL 60677-3420

### **TO GIVE ONLINE:**

[giving.covchurch.org/personnel-detail/GaryandMaryLouSander](https://giving.covchurch.org/personnel-detail/GaryandMaryLouSander)

