

Link Letter No.15 November 2014

Dear friends,

**Greetings to you all from hot, muggy Juarez!** Following a dramatic storm last night, we are without electricity this morning, but at least the temperature in our house has dropped to 30°C!

#### Family news

We are adjusting to being back in Juarez after an unplanned absence. On a trip in late September, we were briefly near a place with mobile phone signal, and we received texts and then a phone call from our son saying David's father was nearing his end. We arrived home (Juarez) on the 29th and David spoke with his brother, and their father passed away later that night. We felt it was important to return to England to be with the family for the funeral on 20 October, so we went back for a week. It was a very long way to go for such a short time, but it was well worth it. We will go back to England again in late December in order to be there for our son Jonathan's wedding to Anna-Joy Coulter in Dublin on 2 January!

#### Chaco trips

We have been on two more visits to groups of Wichí churches, getting to know people and issues and encouraging local leaders. One of the zonal pastors is an old man, now going deaf, but we were impressed with him. The Wichí love to gather for anniversaries and other celebrations which involve services that go on for hours, but Julio's question is always "Are there any results?" Are people growing in faith, deciding to follow Jesus or being reconciled to Him and the church after a time away? By the end of this year we hope that we will have visited all 15 zones into which the indigenous churches are divided. It has been a real privilege to accompany the zonal pastors in these trips round their often quite far-flung groups of churches.



*Students at the training course using the new Wichí hymnbook*



#### David and Shelley Stokes

CMS mission partners

#### Argentina

Former SAMS mission partners, the Stokes returned to the Diocese of Northern Argentina in November 2010 with CMS. They are accompanying the mainly Wichí speaking congregations at a time of rapid change. David is involved in encouraging and training new and existing church leaders. Shelley works mainly with the women, helping with the women's conferences and encouraging the start of parenting groups.

#### Mothers' Union and AMARE

A new initiative for women called AMARE, affiliated with the Mothers' Union, has just been launched. Besides standing for "Group of Anglican Women Renewed in the Spirit", AMARE means "I will love",

Misión Anglicana, Salta S/N, Ingeniero Juárez, 3636 Formosa, Argentina

davidshelley.stokes@gmail.com



*Logo on the AMARE t-shirt*

in response to Jesus' commandment to love God and one another. All the women in the Anglican churches will be invited to become members, and we hope that it will increase their confidence, commitment and effective service. The membership fee is combined with purchase of a t-shirt with the logo, which is designed to express reaching up to God, in to fellow Christians and out to those outside. Now the challenge is to get the teaching, membership cards and t-shirts out to the 150 or so churches! We talked about it at the Wichí women's conference in Rivadavia in September and the Toba women's conference this past week, but so far only a few of the leaders have had the opportunity to become members.

#### **Lhatenekhi completed: now the "Liturgia"!**

The first 1,000 copies of the new Wichí hymnbook are nearly sold out. The small print run allowed us to make some corrections for the next 3,000 copies which the printers have started delivering to us. One of David's next tasks is to help complete a revision of the "Liturgia", as it is called here, a book containing the other services the Wichí churches use. The challenge is to work out how much innovation to introduce, which services now need to be available in Spanish as well, and finding an appropriate group to check the results.

#### **Reshaping Christian education within the diocese**

We introduced briefly last time the present members of the team and mentioned the financial difficulties facing the diocese at the moment. Our colleague Rene has been running annual two-week training courses for new leaders for the past decade. Nearly 90 students attended the most recent course in Juarez. The system, however, really needs re-evaluating. Some of the more able students cannot attend because of work commitments, others cannot get to Juarez because of the distances involved and those who do attend are not always the most appropriate ones. Involving the right Wichí pastors in the training process has also been difficult. The present financial constraints are demanding a considerable rethink – ideally a new system will be one that the church leaders can really own, and that will produce fruit in this context. This will be challenging for all involved, especially Rene and David.

#### **Points for praise and prayer:**

- Praise for the reception of the new Lhatenekhi, and pray for good progress with the revision of the "Liturgia" service book
- Pray for vision for the reshaping of the Christian education programme for the indigenous churches
- Praise for the launch of AMARE, and pray for its spread among the congregations
- Give thanks for the 15 zonal pastors who play such a key role in visiting and encouraging their groups of churches
- Pray for our family, especially our son Jonathan and Anna-Joy as they prepare for marriage.

This comes with our love and early greetings for Christmas and the New Year!

With our love, and in anticipation of seeing you soon,

*David and Shelley*

[www.cms-uk.org](http://www.cms-uk.org)



**Church Mission Society**

Watlington Road, Oxford, OX4 6BZ Tel: 01865 787400 Fax: 01865 776375  
Email: [info@cms-uk.org](mailto:info@cms-uk.org) [www.cms-uk.org](http://www.cms-uk.org) Registered Charity Number 1131655