

Link Letter No.12 April 2015

Dear friends,

“Willing to be changed?”

“Will our children have faith?” is the provocative title of a John Westerhoff book which Paul was reading whilst studying recently for his Master’s dissertation in Youth Ministry and Theology. In the book, Albert Camus is quoted as saying: “if a thought is to change the world, it must first change the life of the person who carries it.” Similarly, Mahatma Ghandi famously once said: “we must be the change we wish to see in the world”, a quote that is stuck above our desk. The focus of Paul’s dissertation is asking why we are not (generally) seeing a growing, passionate, disciplined generation raised up within the church and what might be done to change things. The response of many authors in different countries is that in fact the church is raising up a generation that reflects what the church has become. Unless the Church lives a radical, disciplined life, it cannot expect its youth to grow up doing so. It must become the change it wants to see in



Paul and Sarah Tester
CMS mission partners
Peru

Paul and Sarah are CMS mission partners working in the Diocese of Peru. Paul is a qualified civil engineer and has used his gifts in the diocese alongside his main role in the youth programme. Sarah, a teacher, has been developing the Ark play scheme which helps children in Lima’s poorest communities to learn through play.

the lives of its young people if it wants its children to have faith.

As a diocesan youth ministry here in Peru, we were provoked into thinking around this subject as we continue to find young people with an interest in Jesus, with a desire to follow Him and, when the church is willing and prepared to show them how, a commitment to living as radical disciples of Jesus. Yet we struggle to find adults willing and able to disciple young people, willing to walk alongside



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them as they follow Christ. Such was the negative impact that this has been having on youth ministry that, after a meeting with the bishop here, Paul and Lizbeth (diocesan youth ministry coordinator) agreed to be part of a new movement within the diocese called “Christian Living and Formation” (what might often be called discipleship). The aim of the movement is to help the people of the diocese to live a truly Christian life and to help form them as Christians.

This is a massive challenge but one to which it appears God has been leading and calling us. We have begun with presentations at regional deanery synods around the country and with preparing questionnaires and interviews to help establish the needs across the diocese. We will be combining

this ministry with our role in youth ministry which continues to be our passion. We hope that in the long run this will make a huge impact on the church and on its ministry with young people.

As we mentioned in our last letter, youth ministry continues with teenagers in both the San Pablo mission and at our church. At the latter, we have now begun a student age group which is meeting weekly on a Saturday night in



Cheese and potato pie, stuffed ricoto chili, fried pork and sweetcorn, all traditionally and locally produced around Arequipa



Paul on the buckling bronco stimulator on camp!

people's homes. It is exciting to see young people who have come through the ministry with teenagers now being committed to continuing in their faith amongst work and study pressures, so much so that on Saturday from 9pm onwards they are meeting to discuss and pray about subjects that are affecting their lives in the places they are during the week. Most are also now attending church which is wonderful.

Paul has been getting the group started but is now letting the young people themselves prepare for and lead the different sessions.

It was exciting to see God working powerfully in the lives of the young people at the camp in Arequipa in the south of the country and also to see the follow up to it in the local parishes, in Arequipa and Juliaca. Paul recently visited there as part of the pastoral ministry to youth leaders around the country and enjoyed sharing about the struggles and joys of youth ministry in the church. Because of the time and economic pressures on the student age young people in Lima, plans have now changed from a weekend camp to an all-day gathering on Sunday 3 May. We are having to innovate as the lives of the young people here have changed significantly over the last few years.



Sarah and her Sunday school class on Palm Sunday



Emily enjoying a beach day!

Sarah is back into teaching Sunday school and Sophia is part of her class. This can be challenging as suddenly Mummy is speaking in Spanish and giving other children her attention too! However, it has been great to see how since Sophia started spending four mornings a week at nursery she is much more confident playing with children who speak Spanish. Sophia's start at nursery has gone so well! She especially enjoys painting and playing with her new friends Emilia, Maya and Julieta. Her teacher, Miss Giovanna, says that she understands most things and is already speaking a few words in Spanish. It has really hit home to us what it means bringing your child up in a culture with different values. At parents evening we were given a feedback sheet on Sophia's first month and the very first tick box asked whether the child shows affection towards her friends in the form of hugs and kisses. Not very British! Sophia shows her affection by squealing excitedly and rugby tackling her friends so that box was a big "no"!

Emily continues to delight and surprise us. She is crawling everywhere, trying to pull herself up and has recently had five teeth coming through at the cost of several nights sleep (we now know that Emily's cot is strong enough for Mum to sleep in too!). In order to get the girls around more easily Sarah has decided it's time for her to brave Peruvian roads as well (not for the faint hearted). She is driving with a rather stressed Paul in the passenger seat ("keep out!" shouts Sophia imitating Paul as Sarah gets too close to the kerb!). She still needs to master parking the car in our rather tight garage space which has maybe 5cm free on either side of the car.

Recent heavy rains in the Chosica area (around 40km inland from Lima) caused landslides which killed seven people and left many more without their homes. The area is very hilly with sand and large boulders. When the rain washes away the sand the heavy boulders come bouncing down the hills, destroying everything in their path. Please remember those affected by the landslides in your prayers as the church, amongst many others, sends help to the area. The unusual weather, is causing many problems around the region (a short report from the BBC website is available at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-32081748>)

Please thank God for:

- A positive start to the "Christian Living and Formation" movement.
- The new student age youth group at church.
- Working powerfully through the youth camp in Arequipa.
- Sophia being settled and happy at nursery school.

Please pray for:

- The "Christian Living and Formation" team and for the church to grow and assume its role of discipling young people.
- The student age group at church and for the young people as they continue to mature in their faith whilst under considerable time, study and financial pressures.
- The upcoming student age youth day on 3 May.
- Those affected by the rains and landslides around the country, particularly those in Chosica.
- Maritza and daughters as the girls are back in care.
- Sophia and Emily's health and safety.
- Discernment as to when Sarah can take up the children's work at San Pablo again.
- Sarah's confidence to grow as she sets out in the car without Paul.

With our love and prayers,

Paul, Sarah, Sophia and Emily! xxx

PS. Did you know that you can now receive link letters by email, sent as a PDF? If you would like to receive them this way and help CMS save money, **please send an email to links@cms-uk.org** requesting this change.

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