

Link Letter No.8 April 2015

Dear friends,

“Put your hope in the LORD. Travel steadily along his path” (Psalm 37:34 NLT)

This translation of an ancient psalm written by King David seems apt for these days. Nathaniel Hardy, writing a funeral sermon in 1649, noted Psalm 37 to be “a choice antidote against the poison of impatience”. Written in David’s old age, full of accumulated experience, this verse encourages us to keep hoping and waiting on God in the challenges of life, and to keep on track on God’s path.

Yesterday, driving the 265 miles it takes to return from Concepcion to Asuncion, we remembered that it’s six years since we arrived in Paraguay and our feet have travelled to many places and met many people. These six years have seen lots of challenges and the challenges continue. Here are some snapshots from the past four months (the quotes are all Psalm 37:34).

Home leave “Trust the LORD and follow Him” (CEV)

We enjoyed a busy two and half months of home ministry time in the UK travelling and visiting many people and places, clocking up over 4,000 miles. On Christmas Eve, on our way to David’s family, we stopped off at Keele University where we met many moons ago on Sally’s 19th birthday, during her fresher year! We enjoyed a beautiful morning, walking around the scenic woods and lakes of Keele Hall, reflecting that when we started courting we would never have imagined that trusting in the Lord and following Him would have bought us to the place we now live with the responsibilities that have been entrusted to us!



Sally at Freshers Gate, Keele University



Peter and Sally Bartlett
CMS mission partners
Paraguay

Peter and Sally served as SAMS mission partners in Bolivia from 1992 to 2005 where they firmly established the congregation of Cristo el Salvador. They then spent three years at Parr St Peter’s in the Diocese of Liverpool. Peter became the Anglican bishop of Paraguay at the invitation of the diocese’s leaders and was consecrated on 29 March 2009.

Christmas and New Year with family were special times and we watched expectantly as Karen’s pregnancy progressed. Spending time with friends, old and new was good and our visits to 13 of our link churches were very encouraging.

**Home in Asuncion “Put your hope in ADONAI”
(Complete Jewish Bible)**

At the end of February, after sleeping in many different beds, we were glad to be back home in our own bed! Life quickly returned to a normal pattern, if such a thing exists! The School of Ministry has restarted but heavy rain meant that not all were able to get into the city for the first class. The pastors’ weekly meetings have resumed and Peter’s meetings with heads of organisations, pastors, leaders etc are now also taking place. Sally is once again coordinating the St Andrews English speaking chapel and carrying on with the sermon series based on the names and character of God.



Our back garden in Asuncion after a tropical rainstorm

home, kindly agreed to take K as a pupil and she is settling in well at school and was very keen to do her Easter homework with Sally. The new staffing arrangements are working out well. Katty has a very kind heart and is firm with the children; she is also a member of the Zeballos Cue Anglican Church and our leadership school. Mission Esperanza is a small transitory home for up to five children who are placed with us by the Paraguayan child protection service (Esperanza is a Spanish word meaning hope). Teresa, Ana, Mary and Sally – the Esperanza board – constantly pray for the children that the Lord would be their hope and that He would grant them a future filled with hope. Last week M and N left to return to their biological families and



We were warmly welcomed by Christ Church Quinton (one of our link churches)

**Mission Esperanza “Wait for the Lord’s help”
(International Children’s Bible)**

During our time in the UK, siblings M and J went to their adoptive family. Sally had been involved with M, taking her for speech therapy and psychologist’s appointments. Three new little girls had joined the home (sisters K and N, and M). One of Sally’s first tasks was to arrange the housemother Inocencia’s departure and to appoint Katty as the new housemother. She is accompanied by Martha.

In the few days whilst we waited for Martha to arrive, Sally was busy walking K to and from school. The Anglican Annexe school, which is just along the road from the



Teo Rivas, retiring after 35 years of service to the Anglican Church in Paraguay

to the guardianship of members of their families. So now we await the arrival of more children...

Changes in the diocesan office “Keep and heed His way” (Amplified Bible)

On his 60th birthday, diocesan administrator Teo Rivas retired after 35 years of faithful work for the diocese! We celebrated his retirement with a special lunch and jointly celebrated Asuncion Rojas’s steadfastness in his important role as one of the translators for the Enxet Bible translation project. The translation is finally complete and we are waiting on funds to be raised for the first print run of the Enxet Bible. Enxet is the tribal language of many Anglicans within the Paraguayan Chaco.

Miriam Greco, who recently retired from the administration of St Andrews School, is now the new diocesan administrator.



Asuncion Rojas,
a faithful Enxet Bible translator

Concepcion “Don’t be impatient for the Lord to act! Keep travelling steadily” (Living Bible)

Due to Bishop Andres’ retirement last year, and the lack of younger leaders with experience in the church, we are travelling more frequently to Concepcion than we had previously needed to do. We spent the Easter weekend in Concepcion, holding meetings and interviews with some key people in the church. Peter preached on Easter morning on the hope that we have in the Cross and Christ’s resurrection and the need to constantly seek to be in His presence. The



Sunshine after the rain; Easter morning worship in St Paul’s, Concepcion

meetings went well and we plan to return for the church’s AGM the first week in June. Heavy storms meant that there was no electricity or water for most of our time there and necessitated changes to the Sunday morning service (no projector, sound system etc). So we enjoyed worship led by guitar and saxophone!

Travelling on to Concepcion on Good Friday we were glad that we had taken supplies of Sally’s homemade Easter Chipa (a Paraguayan Holy Week tradition)

as the services on the TransChaco Highway were not serving food! On our way back we were also glad we had saved the last of the chipa as the service station was straining to cope with the large number of Easter holiday travellers. Their delicious Paraguayan empanadas (a bit like a Cornish pasty) will have to wait for another trip as we wanted to get home before dark.

New Baby! “Wait with hope for the LORD” (God’s Word Translation)

Five days before her due date (Good Friday) baby Elodie Hope Stewart was born. Mum (Karen) and Dad (Dave) are thrilled as are all of our family at the gift of a new baby! We are excited to be her grandparents, and now rejoice in the knowledge of having three grandchildren. Elodie Hope signifies “wealthy in hope” and we pray that she will indeed be granted a great wealth of hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. What a blessing WhatsApp is – today we saw photos of her first walk round Balham in her pram with her mummy and daddy.

Following on from Holy Week, we remember the disciples as they walked along the road to Emmaus and talked together – together they were discussing everything that had taken place. And while they were discussing and arguing, Jesus Himself came near and began to walk along with them (Holman Christian Standard Bible Luke 24:14-15). Please pray for us, that in the varied responsibilities that we have that we would know the Lord’s strength and presence. Pray also that in all the conversations we have, be they easy, encouraging, difficult or challenging, that we would know the Lord’s presence and His wisdom.

We give thanks for:

- Visit to Concepcion
- Good health
- Time with family, friends and link churches
- Baby Elodie Hope’s safe arrival
- Positive changes in the staffing of Mission Esperanza
- School of Ministry.

Please pray for:

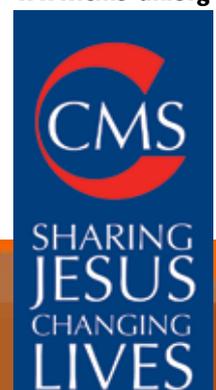
- Good health and safe travelling
- The AGM at St Paul’s Concepcion and the election of the new church council
- Patience, perseverance and wisdom in ministry
- Diocesan administration and for the new administrator Miriam Greco
- Upcoming meetings of the board of FEISA (Anglican early years teacher training college) of which we are both members
- Planned visits to La Patria and Rio Verde in the Chaco.

Stalwart walks in step with GOD; his path blazed by GOD, he’s happy.
(The Message, Psalm 37:23).

Thank you for your prayers,

Peter & Sally

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