

News from Paul and Sarah Tester: CMS Mission Partners in Lima, Peru



January - March 2011
"Happy Campers"



"The water I give will be an artesian spring within, gushing fountains of endless life" - John 4 v 13-14

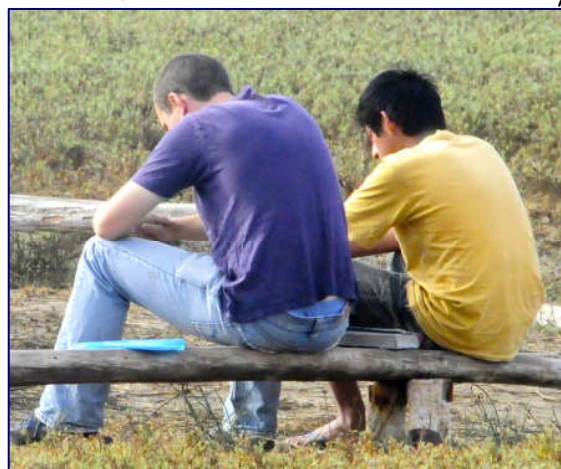
Dear Praying Friends,

You last heard from us in December which is too long ago! Since Christmas time we have been in our busiest time since we arrived in Peru but it has also been a time of great blessing from God. We hope you enjoy hearing about all that has been happening here! Our church's youth alpha weekend had to be postponed by a week because of the tsunami alerts last weekend (such a tiny inconvenience compared to what has happened in Japan). We are conscious of the terrible events over the last few days and ask you to join us in remembering Japan in your prayers.

Much of our time over these Peruvian summer months has been invested in the three diocesan summer youth camps. In total we had around 150 young people attend and we were delighted to see God working in their lives. The first camp, in Arequipa in January was the first diocesan camp for young people in the south of Peru. Young people came from Arequipa and Juliaca to share in 3 days of worship, teaching, fun and friendship. It was great to see a team of young leaders taking on much of the leadership of the camps and to see the **unity** between them and the young people and their churches. The second camp was for teenagers from the Lima and Ica region and was also a first...the first 5 day camp we've held. The theme "Connect to the Vine" has really stuck with the young



The young leaders who led the camp in Arequipa – Nikole, Paul, Lizbeth, Yohana, Daniel, Susana, John, Daniel and Chris.



Paul talking and praying with Jesús, one of the young people and young leaders at San Juan Evangelista, on camp.

people having spent their time seeking God's presence in sports, art, music, dance, teaching, games and much more! Their enthusiasm and **passion** made the whole week exciting and we saw first time commitments to Christ and many more deepening their relationship with Him. In the third camp, for the late teens and early twenties in the Lima and Ica area, we spent 3 days on the same "Connect to the Vine" theme that God has been speaking to us about as a youth ministry (see John 15 for more info!). As these older young people engaged with God it was great to see his Spirit at work and young people being challenged and ministered to. We hope that the **growth** we witnessed will be permanent and will spill out into the churches the young people attend. **Unity, passion and growth** - a great summary of some fantastic times with God and with the young people.

None of this activity is worthwhile unless it is translated into changes in the young people's lives. Arriving back from the teenager's camp, Miguel from San Patricio, Ventanilla found that his teenage sister Angela who didn't go on camp had disappeared. Praise God that after many prayers were lifted up on her behalf she was found safe and came home

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a week later. During her time away, Miguel had been praying in some of the creative ways he had learnt on camp. It was amazing to see his honest prayer and to see God's answer. We continue to be alongside both Miguel and Angela and the family, particularly supporting Angela as she works through a number of issues.



Josué (3) gets busy painting the mission!

It was such a joy to see the older girls from San Pablo 'El Arca' project, Estéfanie, Marisol, Sarita and Liz, taking part in the teenagers camp. Liz was also put forward to be a young leader which she thrived at. It was an encouragement for the girls to be part of something bigger and of course they now want to start their own youth group, which I hope Liz will help lead. We plan to start in April on Friday evenings and are currently looking at the how to light the building (there is no electricity supply and it is dark in Lima all year round from 7pm). As the neighbours have reroofed the Church and the children and teenagers have painted it, we feel like we are moving forward. Many children were also blessed at the mission and in Ventanilla with the gift of stationery for school (thanks to UK donations). The following week Melissa thanked me, explaining that her dad, a bus driver, had hurt his foot the previous week and so couldn't work. There had been no money for food (relatives had fed them) and certainly none for school supplies. She was grateful that the Church had provided the basic resources that her and her brother needed to start the new school year.

Thank you for your prayers for the sisters from San Juan Evangelista who are now living in a lovely children's home that even has a garden with peacocks, sheep and rabbits! I have visited and the girls are generally settled and responding well to their new life. The home is a short term arrangement whilst the authorities work alongside the mum to see if the girl's home situation can be improved so that they can return to their family. I have spent many days with the girl's mum trying to help her get long awaited birth certificates for her children. I have experienced first-hand how complicated and disheartening this process can be. Having been reminded of the story of the persistent widow, I'm now phoning the appropriate department so often that they will surely soon get fed up with me and give us the document we need!

Bite size Highlights:

- ⇒ After two days of queuing and paperwork we finally got our new resident's cards from immigration, one of the most stressful places in Peru!
- ⇒ Sarah celebrated her birthday in style with a number of surprise parties in the missions and churches where she works!

For your prayers:

Please thank God:

- For his presence in the summer youth camps and the changed lives as a result
- For Angela's safe return home
- That the sisters are well settled in the children's home
- For the gift of stationery for the new school year

Please continue to pray for:

- The young people who have returned home from camps - that they would continue in their walk with Jesus.
- The sisters living in the children's home and for their mum and younger sister at home
- The launch of the youth group in San Pablo
- Angela and family

What would you do? - Going deeper No. 19
Getting to grips with cross-cultural mission and some of the issues we encounter. Take some time to chew over the issues! Here's this month's:

It's easy to get excited about numbers: 3 summer camps, 150 young people etc. Numbers are also, to a certain degree important. We want to see lots of people choose to follow Christ and to do so day by day. However, getting fixated by numbers can mean that the Angela's of this world and the girl's mum's of this world get forgotten. Jesus invested in 12 particularly and even more so in a few of those 12. They then continued his work when Jesus ascended into heaven. Yet Jesus also had crowds following him.

Where should your focus be? On ever increasing numbers of young Christians or on an ever deepening walk with Christ of a few? Is there a way to balance the two?

With love and prayers from us both, Paul and Sarah