

Link Letter no.3 September 2012

Dear friends,

"Be full of joy all the time. Never stop praying. In everything give thanks." 1Thessalonians 5:16/18 NLV

"All we have to do is decide what to do with the time given to us." JRR Tolkein

Amazing – we each receive the gift of 24 hours a day! And we are responsible for our attitudes, decisions and actions. This year we have been reading through John's gospel. Mark Stibbe in *"Everyday with the Father"* notes that Jesus is most concerned to keep to His Father's timetable, and always acted out of a finely tuned sense of the Father's time. Time seems to move both quickly and yet at the same time perfectly in tune with what needs to be done. Much has happened, planned and unexpected, joyful and sorrowful too.

A time to mourn

In June Peter's mother died very suddenly and within three days we were back in England. Father, thank you for kindnesses and hospitality freely given at short notice; the air ticket; David's help with paper work and preparation of the

Prawle Point, Devon: a time of peace and rest during our busy visit to England



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.

order of service booklet; Karen's gentle company and support; the use of Dave's flat; the encouragement of worshipping at Ascension Church in Balham and hearing God's timely word; the opportunity to grieve and be close to Susan and her family; reading Mum's prayer journal and her testimony; Pat's support, opening her home to us as we spent time in Mum's room and sorting through her things; Neil's pastoral support and the dignified funeral; the Minster ladies cheerful serving of a lovely tea and Kit Kats; a weekend by the coast in East Prawle; dear friends, Martin and Linda and Martin and Sheila; time with our extended family and also being able to see two-day old Dylan; and above all the chance to be grateful for Mum's life, her testimony and faith, her input into our lives.

A time to learn together

Dr Forde and his wife Joan led our two week Winter Bible School. Joan taught on

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The Forde's visit to La Puerta to pray with the girls

Wisdom and Dr Forde on the Person and gifts of the Holy Spirit. About 40 leaders from Asuncion churches attended and we are grateful to the Father for inspiring us, teaching us and filling us all with the Spirit and wisdom. The girls from La Puerta particularly benefitted from their time with the Fordes. Thank you Father for ministering to the broken hearted and for your healing work.

A time for hospitality

Father, thank you for all that was done during the recent Mission Paraguay trip, the gift of being able to receive and offer hospitality; your Word preached; for buildings repaired; for friendships made and renewed; for Ann Varley's unstinting support of FEISA and christening our spare room the Garden Room!

A time to be God's family together

Sally has recently taken over the coordination of St Andrews Chapel service rota and is leading services regularly. This English speaking community of faith is made up of long term expats, Paraguayans, Latins and also short term members. With joy we saw Taylor, Sara, Gonzalo, Ryan, Coto, Jennifer and Angela confirmed and the word of God tasted sweet as we ate cake decorated with words from St Paul – *Be transformed*.

We said goodbye to Bill and Pam, Linn Tedman who faithfully taught in school for many years, and the Hickmotts who were with us for a year. They all contributed their gifts and time to the community. Thank you Father for blessing

The confirmation cake at St Andrews Chapel



A tree surgeon at work with machete





President Franco leads church leaders in a blessing prayer for the nation



Ronald Irene's ordination, using his Paraguayan stole

100 years of witness to your goodness and the extending of your Kingdom.

A time to eat together

We continue with our monthly dinner/marriage classes with Yoryi and Yasmi... thank you Father for the gift of marriage. A team from St Marks Haydock came to teach and model cell church. This team was very well received and our pastors learned much from them and were inspired by their example. Thank you Father for Amanda, Mark, Richard, Joe, Sandie and Sue; for tears and laughter, challenges and fun, visits to groups, modelling good discipling, sharing, learning and being together; for a BBQ celebrating Peter's birthday with the team and the Asuncion mission partners and benefitting from Moses R's wise words on personal accountability.

A time to rest and relax

With the pastors on Friday morning we are studying and learning around the concept of life shapes and are currently thinking about

rhythms of rest and work. This is a challenging subject for pastors in general! We thank you Father for our pastors and their families; and the great sacrifices that at times they make for the people of God; for the chance to spend time together and get to know each other better; for fellowship together; for your care of Pastor Agustin and your healing touch in his life.

Thank you Father for creativity: Sally enjoys spending free time on projects, on her own and with others – recent projects include trying out ice cream recipes, making cards in support of FEISA, and with the help of an artistic friend making Paraguayan stoles – Ronald Irene modelled the first one at his recent ordination as Presbyter.

A time for change

Paraguay as a nation is undergoing changes in culture. There is a desire to remain faithful to the traditional but also

**Left: Lapacho tree blossoms, building the old and the new together
Right: Sally, Angela and Nancy decorating the altar for the World Prayer Day retreat**



to embrace new ways and to take advantage of modern technology. We thank the Father for a growing openness to the gospel; for the reopening of the Villa Guarani church; for the Te Deum for the nation which took place on 15 August at the Asuncion's largest church – the Family Worship Centre. Among the 6,000 Christians present were leaders from many different churches. It was an historic occasion with the President and the head of the Supreme Court both praying for God to bless the nation.

Thank you Father, for you protected Paraguay during the recent change of head of state.

Our immediate environment at home is undergoing changes – in the garden we have removed a tree with a rotten centre, whose roots were damaging a wall and have moved around plants that didn't seem to be in the right place. Next door but one to us, an impressive refurbishment is taking place, combining part of the old façade with new elements. The season has changed also as spring is here and beautiful Lapacho trees are flowering. Thank you Father, you are controlling the seasons and times in our lives.

A time to travel

Peter travelled to Thailand to take part in the Global South Conference. Thank you Father, for you promote diversity within the Southern Hemisphere Church and gave Peter the opportunity to meet and fellowship with leaders working in a wide range of situations. Sally's recent jaunt to the World Day of Prayer Retreat in Caacupé was much less tiring (and most probably much more fun!). Thank you Father for sisters from all over Paraguay and for new friendships made.

A time to pray

Thank you for sharing with us in our gratitude to the Father for his great mercy and love for us and all people, especially Paraguayans. Thank you for your prayers. Please could we ask you to pray for the following:

- The Diocesan Synod during the first week of October
- The Chapel centenary celebrations – weekend of 23 September
- The continuing development of healthy churches
- An increase in the practice of good discipling

- The Lord's strategies to be put in place for the mission of the church within the Chaco
- The visit of evangelist Mark Swiger at the end of September and the beginning of October
- Continued safety and good health
- Wisdom in the use of our time and gifts

May the Father bless you...

Yours in Him

Peter and Sally

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