

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



June / July 2008
Busy Bees!



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

Dear Praying Friends,

We guess it had to happen some time - we got too busy to send a prayer letter for June! Hopefully this letter with our news for June and July will give you a good flavour of what we have been up to and will inspire you to pray doubly!

Compassion Child Sponsorship Centre at San Juan Evangelista: As you will probably remember, Paul was very busy getting the building at our church ready for a centre for underprivileged children. Thankfully the necessary adjustments to the building were completed and the centre opened for the children at the beginning of June. The team that are running the project are now getting accustomed to how the project will work and the children are beginning to attend. Please pray for good attendance, for the children to be blessed through the centre and for many to come to the Sunday school which Sarah is helping to lead. Sarah is hoping to support the work of the centre with her "Ark" scheme and is looking to see how that will work out.



Children on their first day at the Compassion Centre

Alpha Retreat with the young people from Misión San Patricio: Thank you for your prayers for the youth work at Misión San Patricio. Paul has been helping Juan Carlos, a Peruvian, to start and build up this group using the Youth Alpha course. We now have a group of at least ten young people who attend regularly and came away with us on a weekend retreat as part of the course. The weekend was a real blessing with most encountering the Holy Spirit, either for the first time or in a fresh way. It was also great for the young people to have the opportunity to visit a new place as many have little chance to travel. Please pray for these young people as they grow in their faith.



The "Happeners" leading worship!

"Happening", Lima 2008: Whilst on the subject of youth work, both of us were part of "Happening", a youth weekend designed for those who are new to Christianity or needing a "refresher"! The weekend programme itself is full of surprises which makes the weekend work so well so we can't tell you too much. Our role was that as the "parents" of "Happening" (!) which meant looking out for the team of young people running the event and providing help, support and a "wise head"! It was great to see over fifty young people attend. Please join us in praying for them to continue to grow in their faith and for them to get involved in one of the church youth groups for continued discipleship.

The Ark: Sarah is greatly enjoying taking the Ark to Santísima Trinidad school and to Misión San Patricio. She hopes to expand the use of this Christian educational scheme, including taking it to San Juan Evangelista and to Misión San Pablo. To be able to do so, she will need to involve more local people in leading the scheme, training them and helping them to help the children. Please pray for her to have the wisdom, ability and opportunities to do this and for all the children she works with. In May we asked you to pray for opportunities for Sarah to share her faith with Ingrid, a friend who has



Ingrid working with the children

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been a great help to Sarah, volunteering as an assistant with the Ark. Sadly, one of Ingrid's friends recently died, and Sarah has been helping Ingrid through this difficult time. Please pray for both Ingrid and for Sarah.

Building work and short term teams: Paul continues to help the diocese with its plans for new buildings, developing estimates for construction work for a number of potential projects and liaising with potential donors. He feels that this role is secondary to his work with young people so please pray that God would open up the way for the diocese to build what He wants to be built and that the administration involved will not take over Paul's time. We have both also been involved with helping short term teams either plan and make arrangements for their visits to the diocese, or helping them with translation whilst here. We recently helped with a team of visiting dentists and had the dubious pleasure of seeing a number of extractions close up! Again, we don't feel this is our primary role for being here but have helped out whilst others have been away, so please pray for the right balance in our work and for others to be more involved in this area.

Holidays: Sarah's parents visited us for two weeks in June. It was wonderful to see them and it gave us the opportunity to take a week's break in Huaraz, in the Andes. We enjoyed the stunning scenery, the fresh air and the sunshine and had time to catch up with each other. They also got to see what we normally do in a week, especially enjoying Sarah in action with the Ark. We're now looking forward to the visit of Paul's sister (also called Sarah Tester!) from 29th July to 22nd August when we will also be taking a week's holiday. Please pray for safety in all our travel and for good times with family.



Us enjoying Huaraz!

Anything else! Paul's leg is healed and he has started rugby training again! He's also been helping with twice weekly diocesan theatre workshops (as a translator only - don't worry those who've seen Paul's attempts at acting!). We currently have Mavis Crispin, a former SAMS Mission Partner here in Peru, staying with us as she undertakes a placement as part of her ordination training. She began the "Playbus" project which has now developed into the Ark and so Sarah has been enjoying discussing ideas with her.

For your prayers:

Please thank God for:

- His blessing on the Alpha retreat and "Happening".
- For the start of the Compassion project at church.
- Sarah's chances to share her faith with Ingrid.
- A wonderful time with Sarah's parents.
- Paul's leg healing.

Please continue to pray for:

- The team running the Compassion project to have great wisdom as they start out on this exciting venture.
- Improved numbers and consistency in attendance at the Compassion project, Sunday school and the youth group at church.
- The continued discipleship of the "Happeners", the young people at San Patricio, and for continued growth in the diocesan youth work in both faith and number.
- The expansion of the Ark, with volunteers coming forward to help and for Sarah as she trains them.
- Wisdom in the use of our time.
- Paul's sister Sarah's visit (29th July - 22nd August).

What would you do? - Going deeper No. 8

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:

Theology - A word that doesn't inspire many but it should do! Your theology is your understanding of God and from it comes your beliefs and your behaviours! It affects the way you attempt to relate to God and how you "do" church. Fine you say, and so? Well you have your "theology" and I have mine. My understanding of God might be different to yours and I may want to relate to God in a different way. I may want to "do" church in one way and you in another. Relating that to Christian mission - what if the Mission Partner's "theology" is different to that of say their Vicar's? Or their Bishop's? Or to the people they are working with? Should there be strict rules and statements of what we should believe and how we should "do" church. Should there be flexibility to allow everyone to believe and do what they want? Whose theology should we try to change? Can there be unity when people hold different beliefs? See the Anglican Church's debate over Homosexuality and the Church to see how testing the issue of theology can be!

Thank you for all your prayers. We are seeing them answered! Love, Paul and Sarah