

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



October / November 2008
Have a very Happy Christmas!



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

Dear Praying Friends,

With the whole cabinet recently resigning due to a corruption scandal and then the hosting of a summit of world leaders including the Presidents of the US, China and Russia, Peru has felt as though the eyes of the world are watching. Our lives have seemed no less busy although they haven't received so much coverage, so we thought it was about time we let you all know what's been happening.

Sarah's News: In our last letter we asked you to join us in prayer about wisdom to discern where God would have us focus our ministry. Sarah has particularly felt led to have two main places of mission, the first being our church, San Juan Evangelista where there is an ongoing explosion in Sunday school growth. There are now around 50 children each Sunday thanks to the new student centre, a real push on the teaching, the provision of mid-morning fruit and most importantly God. Sarah hopes to support the student centre team more and help the children's ministry continue to grow. Her second area of focus is Misión San Patricio in Ventanilla where she continues to have around 50 children for "El Arca" each Saturday afternoon. She has been frustrated she has not been able to contribute more to the mission and so hopes to go an additional day a week to get to know children and parents better and contribute more to the pastoral work. All of which means she will not be working at Santísima Trinidad school after Christmas which, after discussions with the head teacher has left Sarah with a feeling of peace about the coming year.



Story time at San Patricio



Learning new games at the youth leader's retreat!

Paul's News: Paul asked for your prayers for the diocesan youth leader's retreat which went well with a number of new faces attending. It was an encouraging time of learning, sharing and of course having fun together! Paul continues to feel his priorities are in youth work and particularly with lifting youth (and children's) work higher up the priority list within the diocese of Peru and particularly with church leaders. He is continuing to help implement changes to improve the diocesan youth ministry and to achieve these ends hopes to see the diocese take on a full time Peruvian youth coordinator soon. His alter ego has been busy with construction work on the Sagrada Familia church building project and with coordinating the visit of a team from the US to work there. Apart from one rock dynamiting explosion that was somewhat bigger than expected (!), all has been going smoothly although the project is now on hold as more funds are sought.

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Bite-size Highlights:

- ⇒ Paul's parents were with us for two weeks at the end of October. They had the chance to see some of what we do during a "normal" week and then we had a week away with them in Trujillo in the north of the country.
- ⇒ Sarah helped organise a "Light Party" (alternative to Halloween) at church with the team from the student centre.
- ⇒ We both helped with translation at "Wheels for the World", a mission to the disabled and a partnership between Peruvians and Americans.
- ⇒ We have seen a deepening in friendships, both with Christians and non-Christians, over recent weeks. It has been great to get to know people better and a real answer to prayer.
- ⇒ We're "Godparents" to Santísima Trinidad School's "graduating" five year olds at their special ceremony and party.
- ⇒ Paul's nose has healed well despite him playing in the national rugby championship final two weeks after breaking it! He came through unscathed and after a 10-0 victory he can now say he is a national champion!



With Paul's parents at Huanchaco beach, near Trujillo, which is known for these reed boats.

For your prayers:

Please thank God for:

- A growing Sunday school at San Juan Evangelista.
- A successful youth leader's retreat.
- A great time with Paul's parents.
- His guidance in our ministry.
- A gift to help support the team at the student centre.
- Paul's nose having healed well.

Please continue to pray for:

- That youth and children's work would be seen as a significant priority.
- For a committed, Christian helper to work with Sarah at San Patricio. Please remember Isabel, a Mum, who is keen to help but is suffering from arthritis in her hands.
- The upcoming season of children's Christmas parties, that the focus would be on Jesus (not the presents!) and that all the children would find them a happy time.
- For friendships to deepen and for chance to share our faith in Jesus with others in natural ways.
- A meeting of SAMS general council on the 29th to decide on SAMS future and whether a possible merger with CMS will go ahead.
- For wisdom for Sarah to know how to best support the student centre and the children in San Patricio.

What would you do? - Going deeper No. 10
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:

Short Term Mission Trips: One of the real growth areas in world mission and also the centre of considerable debate. Many churches from the "West" send teams of people on mission trips to help those in the "Global South". These trips often inspire and bless the participants with a heart for mission and connect people with countries and people they would never otherwise have known. However, they are costly, the teams are often unskilled and they require the receiving church to invest heavily with personnel and time that could be used elsewhere. Are these trips a new way God is encouraging his mission or tourism by another name? Are the benefits to the receiving people sufficient or should the money invested be sent direct to these people instead?

This will be the last time we write a newsletter this year so we'd like to take this opportunity to say have a wonderful Christmas! Thank you for your support. With lots of love and prayers from us both, Paul and Sarah