

## Land for Life

Fundación Refugio

*Circular No. 27 October 2014*

### Temporary pause on deforestation in Salta

In a surprise move, Salta's government has placed a temporary ban on issuing deforestation permits in most of the Chaco (though not all). Whilst we have done our part in putting pressure on them we have to recognize the important role that other organisations have also played, including Greenpeace Argentina and ASOCIANA. The government has expressed a desire for dialogue, but we have learnt to be cautious with such announcements.

We have so far declined a formal invitation to dialogue because the government is refusing to suspend deforestation in areas that it has already issued permits for. We will evaluate how matters develop before we accept to join in discussion. In the meantime we continue to support all parties with information we have gathered from monitoring deforestation over the past years.



Since returning from the UK Andrew attended an International Conference on Protected Areas in Northern Argentina and bordering countries. There is an expressed intention by Salta authorities to develop protected areas in the Chaco, and we are now keen to focus our attention on how we can best exploit the possibilities that this may create (which interestingly is very much in line with the initial purpose we had established for the Land for Life initiative).

### UK deputation

We are pleased to be developing new links with the following UK Churches: St Peters (St Albans), St Mary's (Watford), St Wilfrid (Halton), Holy Trinity (Kendal), St Mary's (Meysey Hampton) and Church on the Heath (Fleet). Andrew met with each Church or their leaders during his recent visit to the UK, and we very much look forward to developing a strong and creative partnership in mission with them over the coming months and years. Deputation is the hardest and most tiring aspect of this job, yet at the same time we recognize it is a vital aspect to developing and strengthening the way the body of Christ (his Church) engages in international mission.

A steady decline in Church giving over the past years means we are having to focus more of our time on fund raising. Alongside support from churches, we also encourage individual giving, and for those who feel they would like to do this, we invite you to give via the Direct Debit form included in this letter.

### British Airways delay leads to a new link

Andrew's British Airways flight to London was delayed by 24 hours. His forced stay in Buenos Aires led to the opportunity of sharing about our work with the men's group from the Anglican Cathedral in Buenos Aires (where Andrew was staying while waiting for his flight). This has proved to be an important meeting, as people were not only very interested in what he had to say but have also expressed a keen desire to help in any way they can.

### **A potential new base for Land for Life ministry**

The Diocese of Northern Argentina has recently invited us to consider taking on the administration of their retreat centre in La Caldera, a small town located 20 minutes drive from where we live. The property is ideally suited as a meeting/conference centre, with accommodation for up to 50 people. It also includes a large tract of land which is ideally suited for the purpose of teaching and providing practical hands-on experience in creation care.



La Caldera has served as a retreat centre for several decades. The infrastructure and the site's location make it an ideal centre for Christian ministry, and we really look forward to what God has in store for this place in the near future. We would very much value your prayers for this initiative. Among many other issues, we sense that the centre will give our current work a far better grounding, and allow us to engage more formally and at a more practical level with Churches from across the country, as well as with secular organisations.

La Caldera will allow us to initiate a formal programme for volunteers, both national and foreign - there will be plenty of work to be done.

### **Family News**

Tomas and Ceci are still doing well in their studies in Cordoba. They came to visit briefly after completing midterm exams and have gone back to study for the next lot of exams which will start at the end of November. Carolina continues to keep up with her studies and with tennis.

### **Prayer Pointers**

- Pray for our discussions with our Bishop and Diocesan leaders over the possibility of us taking on the administration and running of the retreat centre in La Caldera.
- Give thanks for the temporary halt to deforestation. Pray that we will be able to know how we can best respond to the opportunities for dialogue that this may open up with the authorities and other organisations.
- Pray that God may continue to provide the funds that are required by CMS in order to enable us to continue with our work and ministry here in Argentina.
- Pray for Tomas and Ceci and their studies in Cordoba. Pray for their safety - violent crime is becoming more and more common in Argentina's larger cities.

Contact: [andrewleake@gmail.com](mailto:andrewleake@gmail.com)

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