

Link Letter No.11 December 2014

Dear friends,

“Counting up the cost”

“I’ve counted up the cost and You are worth it” is a line from *The Cost* by the Rend Collective Experiment. The song recognises that when we are called by God, it will be worth following Him but that there will be a cost. In Luke 14:25-33 Jesus explains the cost of following Him is everything we have. He uses the example of someone who wants to build a tower and needs to be sure he is prepared to pay the cost before he starts. As a civil engineer, Paul knows that the costs of building can often surprise you. In the case of following God, with the cost being everything, it is often easier to sing “*You are worth it*” than to live it.

This year we have particularly felt the cost of our call to Peru in separation from family and friends through difficult times. As you will have read in our letters during the year, 2014 began with the death of Paul’s granddad, continued with Sarah’s risky pregnancy and with good friends moving away, and now comes to a close as we mourn the death of Sarah’s dad. We have felt frustrated as a number of children and young people have chosen to reject, at least for now, the abundant life that Jesus offers and go their own way – we mentioned some of these “lost sheep” in our letters. We have felt let down by some that we work with and sometimes



Emily, bringing smiles and laughter...



Paul and Sarah Tester CMS mission partners **Peru**

Paul and Sarah are CMS mission partners working in the Diocese of Peru. Paul is a qualified civil engineer and has used his gifts in the diocese alongside his main role in the youth programme. Sarah, a teacher, has been developing the Ark play scheme which helps children in Lima’s poorest communities to learn through play.

struggled to see the fruits of our labours.

However, the end of the year is thankfully not just a time for counting up the cost, but also for counting up God’s blessings. In August we were so delighted to welcome our second daughter, Emily, into the world and she is a delight, full of smiles and laughter. We have seen the diocesan youth ministry team grow. Lizbeth, the youth coordinator, has studied youth ministry in Argentina and youth interns David and Susan have taken on more responsibilities, particularly in



David (top right), as part of his youth ministry visits the Huancayo area

visits to Huancayo and Ica to support youth ministry there. We have seen God work in the events we have helped organise throughout the year and seen God working in young people's lives through local ministries at our own church and the San Pablo mission. As you chat to a young person as they explain to you what God continues to do in their lives, and as they show their gratitude and live out what He asks them, you know that the cost has been worth it.

Philippians 2:1-11 explains how God's love for us cost

Jesus everything. "And being found in appearance as a man he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross!" (verse 8). This Christmas we celebrate that Jesus was willing to follow His father's call to be born into this world as a man and to live among

us, even though it cost Him everything. We remember that He shares with us in our pain and suffering, and in our joy and happiness. We are encouraged that He continues to be with us and work in this world, and that He wants all of us to be with Him always. At Christmas we celebrate "Emanuel", God with us.

We wish you a very special Christmas time. Thank you for helping us as we follow Jesus, with all that it costs. Celebrate with us that it is worth it.



Young people and the team from the "Happening" weekend

With our love and prayers,

Paul, Sarah, Sophia and Emily! xxx

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