



**Name:** Paul and Sarah Tester with Sophia, Emily and Annabelle

**Location:** Lima, Peru

**Our role:** We serve in national youth and discipleship ministries with the Anglican Church of Peru and also serve the local church in youth and children's work.

**Our call:** We want the children, young people and the Church in Peru to know Jesus and grow in him.

## Greetings from Lima, Peru!

Dear friends,

### Change

“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.” These words, commonly known as the Serenity Prayer, are attributed to the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. Well known to many, we find that there is great truth summed up in such a short prayer and, as we return to Peru for the next couple of years following two months spent in the UK, it helps us to share about our situation and life in mission.

### “God...”

“I the Lord do not change” (Malachi 3:6) and “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8) are biblical promises on which we can depend. As we answer God’s call to live and share the good news of Jesus Christ in Peru and beyond, amidst all of the changes we can be confident

that the God who called us to Peru has not changed. However, the working out of that call may look very different depending on the “season” in which we find ourselves.

### “... grant me serenity to accept the things I cannot change”

Ironically, one of the key things that we cannot change is change itself! “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven” (Ecclesiastes 3:1). We have been reflecting on this idea of “seasons” as we look at the changes that have happened in our lives and ministry over the last 10 years in Peru.

As we return to Peru we experience great change. A change in language from English to Spanish. A change in temperature from a chilly UK winter to a sweltering Peruvian



Top: Sophia and Emily in the snow - something we won't see in Lima!

Above: Sarah at Sunday school with Sophia and Emily



*Top left: Emily's baptism (soon to be followed by Annabelle's)*

*Top right: Paul and Lizbeth (left) working on discipleship with the church in Arequipa*

summer. A change in culture, in the way things are done, in the way church is expressed and ministry is thought of. As we answer God's call to serve in Peru we must adapt to these changes and seek to discern afresh what God is calling us to do.

Sarah's ministry with many children in the poorest areas of Lima has changed over the past few years to a much more focused children's ministry with our three wonderful daughters and a limited time to be involved in Sunday school at church. Whilst we wouldn't change this season of investing time and energy in Sophia, Emily and Annabelle, it is challenging to be so far from family, living in a culture that doesn't have "Mum's and toddler" groups and to be bringing our children up in ways that are often different and confusing to those around us.

Meanwhile, the girls are entering new seasons of life themselves. Sophia starts school in March, Emily begins nursery and Annabelle will get

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individual time with Mum each morning. Each change holds different challenges but they are important steps along life's way. Do please pray for serenity amongst all things that cannot be changed.

**"... the courage to change the things I can..."**

Life is not, of course, just about a fatalistic acceptance of the way things are. At the centre of our faith in Christ is

our death to our old selves and our new life in him. "For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives" (Romans 6:4). There is a life revolutionising change that we recently celebrated at Emily and Annabelle's baptism and we pray for each of our daughters to grow in their new lives in Christ.

Helping others to grow in their new life in Christ is central to the discipleship ministry in which Paul is now heavily involved. Recognising a weakness in our discipleship as a church, which was made clear to us particularly through the loss of young people from the church in Peru, this ministry seeks to follow God's leading through a movement of the Holy Spirit.

Bringing about change in an organisation is hard at the best of times but if this is of God, as we believe it is, he will make the way and bring about the change. "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" (Isaiah 43:19). Please pray for courage and faithfulness to God's call as we

## PLEASE PRAY...

- For our family and our ministry to be firmly rooted in the unchanging Jesus Christ
- For serenity in all of the upcoming changes that we face and the challenging situations in which we find ourselves
- For courage to change the things God calls us to change
- For wisdom and discernment to hear and follow God's call, especially regarding roles and responsibilities
- For those in Peru affected by unseasonal rains, which have led to floods and landslides.



Above: With young people from the San Pablo mission

ministries at San Juan Evangelista (our church) and San Pablo mission.

Clearly there is much that could be done but there is a limit on the number of hours in the day. If this was a business,

things might be clearer as we weigh up pros and cons but "my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord" (Isaiah 55:8). Do please pray for discernment and wisdom as we seek to hear God's call amongst all of the opportunities and responsibilities and know which changes need to be made. Do also pray for us to have the will to make the right changes and to follow his call, and for others to sense God's call to take on responsibilities in the areas that he wants us to let go of.

### What would you do?

In past link letters, many have found it helpful for us to present an issue and ask readers to consider what they would do in our situation. Here's a new one!

After Annabelle's birth it took two months to get her British and Peruvian passports. We arrived home for Christmas, had a busy two months in the UK visiting link churches, attending conferences and, of course, seeing family. We travel back to allow Sophia to start her new school at the beginning of the Peruvian school year just less than a week after our arrival. How would you help your family to cope with this intense period of changes – of location, culture, language, visits and more?

change the things we can.

### "... and wisdom to know the difference."

As God's new things come to the fore, we seek to follow his call and play the part that he asks us to play. That means that other things that we have committed time to must either be handed on to others whom God has called (and we have trained), or it may be that it is the right time for them to stop. This is particularly challenging when people are involved and we are currently committing time and prayer to seeking God's wisdom as to where the right places to invest our time and energies are.

Lizbeth, the diocesan youth coordinator and member of the discipleship team, will be serving the church in Ireland for a year from March and so Paul will have additional responsibilities in these two areas. As a diocesan youth ministry, we need to work on our safeguarding and we have had a sense of God's leading to ministry linked to the area of young people's mental health. Paul has also been asked to prayerfully consider additional roles in the diocese and we also need to consider local youth

With love and prayers,

*Paul, Sarah,  
Sophia, Emily and  
Annabelle*

**You can give to Paul and Sarah at:** [churchmissionsociety.org/tester](http://churchmissionsociety.org/tester)

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