

MISSIONAL / RELATIONAL / INTENTIONAL

# BUENA VISTA

WINTER EDITION 2020

**SAMS**

IRELAND

South American Mission Society





# a new pair of glasses



“You need a new pair of glasses” This was a repeated phrase in the consulting room, many years ago when I practised as an Optometrist. A person who had neglected their eyes for a long time would have had many small incremental negative changes take place. As a result, they were in need of a fresh prescription. On collection of their new glasses, a look of wonder broke out on their faces the moment a new fresh vision had been restored!

Organisations will often suffer the same fate of blurred vision if they do not maintain a fresh sense of purpose and direction. In these fast changing times, societies which remain stagnant and unaware of their changing environments, will very quickly find themselves out of touch with their partners and supporters.

SAMS Ireland embarked on a process of Vision Building during the past year. The big question has been “What is God’s direction for SAMS Ireland over the coming 5-10 years?” Prayerfully, the SAMS General Council has been in conversation with various partners to come to a discernible set of guiding aims and principles. This process has helped to renew the same call that gripped Allen Gardiner all those years ago. Set in the context of the 21st Century, the out working of this call of bringing the Gospel of Jesus to the nations of South America will look different. But the same spiritual drive and passion that gripped many down through the years will still be needed today to see the great commission fulfilled in South America.

This new year of 2020, we will be launching a fresh vision document at Friday Night Live event in Craigavon Civic Centre. We want people here in Ireland to have 20/20 Gospel Vision for the Good news of Jesus impacting hearts and minds in all those churches with whom we partner in South America.

Hebrews 12.2 encourages Christians to keep “... fixing our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of faith”. In our personal walk with the Lord as well as our call to be part of a church which is called to mission - let’s be razor sharp in our Vision. Let’s have 20/20 Gospel clarity in all we do.

Your friend,  
*Rev Stephen McElhinney*  
Mission Director, SAMS Ireland

# Argentina

We have just finished another season, another year and there is no word to express how good God has been with his church here in the north of Argentina. As many of you know, it hasn't been easy to face so many challenges as a country, we are still struggling with the catastrophic governmental decisions but we believe in our Father, the Creator of heaven and earth. He will deliver us as He always has. We raise our hand in gratitude because we are witnesses of His power and faithfulness with His children. We celebrate the welcoming of new Christian members to our community; it is the result of people praying for the lost but also for understanding the commandment of making disciples. Along the year we have had a few events where we invited our neighbours to share with us and the results have been amazing, not only did they come but also most of them continued to attend the church. Summer is here, we pray that the new brothers and sisters who have joined us can take part in the summer camps that we have as a church so they can strengthen their relationship with God and with their Christian family. I would like you to pray especially for my pastor and his family, so God can be with him in everything he does not only for God's kingdom but also in his personal goals. Thank you for walking with us, with the Latin American church and thank you for praying for us!

*Cecilia*

**“There is  
a time for  
everything and a  
season for every  
activity under  
the heavens”.**



BUENA VISTA WINTER 2020

## BRAZIL TEAM REFLECTIONS

**In July 2019, Val Thom brought a small team to Rio de Janeiro to work alongside Boas Novas church in Niteroi and Christ Church Rio.**

“We arrived at Rio Airport with our suitcases full of games and an accordion in each case. Joao (*our translator*) met us and transported us to the apartment in Niteroi. Our team consisted of Nathan, a member of Portadown Defenders Flute band and Honor and Jacqui, members of John Hunter Accordion Band.

We had a fantastic two weeks working in Sonya's House putting up ceilings and painting. The last day was set aside for Joao and I to do preparation work for the next team. Our final evening was fantastic, the church held a thanksgiving service and supper. We had a great evening of fun and fellowship; the team played their accordions and the Brazilians all lined up to have a try. We presented Pastor Carlos with a teddy bear from Dunamoney band but it was promptly taken by his wife!

The next morning tragedy struck; Joao had died in his sleep. As we found Joao, the doorbell went, it was Pastor Carlos. He wasn't supposed to come and see us that day, but God knew he was needed. In the shock and chaos of the moment, God was in control. It was a very difficult end to a fantastic time. Joao's mother told us that the last entry in Joao's diary on the night he died were the words of the song, 'In Christ Alone'. She also thanked us for loving her son. We continue to be in contact with Joao's mother and family who are continuing to come to terms with Joao's untimely death. Please join with us in praying for them.”

*Valerie Thom*



# Friday Night Jive



Throughout our twenty year association with SAMS, two things have always been so evident and important. First, the deep commitment to Gospel partnership, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with people across South America and the Iberian Peninsula. The other distinctive factor with SAMS is the strong family-like connection that exists between supporters. On Friday 1st November both of these key aspects of the work of SAMS were celebrated as we gathered at La Mon for Friday Night Jive.

In the midst of the mingling and sharing, there was plenty of time to share our SAMS stories with one another and celebrate what it means to share in the story of this great organisation. Following the delicious meal, Mission Director Stephen McElhinney and Chairman Ven Andrew Forster, inspired us with stories of mission and encouraged each of us to consider what role we could play in the on-going mission of SAMS.

Good music and plenty of dancing followed with everyone enjoying a great evening. Huge thanks are owed to the many people who were involved in making the evening such a success, and to the staff at La Mon for their professional and courteous service.

With the Gospel at its heart, the SAMS family is a very special and unique body of people. Let's commit to meeting, sharing and celebrating together regularly to reflect on what God is doing, offer our support to this important work and look forward in faith to the opportunities God will give us to serve Him.

**Graham and Hannah Hare**



SAMS  
Gold

**MONDAY 18TH - 20TH NOVEMBER 2019**

Forty participants from many parts of Ireland arrived at the Slieve Russell Hotel in Co Cavan for a two day conference. This was the first time such an event had been organised by SAMS Ireland. It was a gathering with a difference as in order to attend, participants had to be over fifty years old! In planning this mini conference, retired SAMS Mission Director Bishop Ken (Fanta) Clarke planned to provide a relaxed and comfortable environment where people of the 'Golden' generation would enjoy fellowship with each other. The program provided engaging talks on several themes :- 'Seasons of Life', 'Passing on the Baton', 'Finance planning in retirement', and a health talk entitled 'Organ Recital!'. In hosting the event, SAMS Ireland was able to bring a mission perspective as an ongoing challenge to engage with, no matter what stage in life we find ourselves. A huge thank you to Bishop Fanta and his wife Helen for their energy and enthusiasm in coordinating the event.

# MEET THE COUNCIL

## SAMS COUNCIL MEMBERS



### CHAIR

Bishop Andrew Forster  
*Bishop of Derry and Raphoe*



### VICE-CHAIR

Rev Mark Lennox



Rev Dorothy McVeigh



David Orritt



Tom Stevenson



Judith Finch



Rev Peter Jones

South American Mission Society Ireland is a registered charity working within the Church of Ireland. SAMS is governed by a General Council that takes overall responsibility for it's work. The trustees oversee:

- Oversee the long term direction of the charity as set out in it's governing document
- Ensure that policies and activities achieve set objectives
- Ensure the charity is run in a way that is legal, responsible and effective
- Oversee accountability to those who support and are connected with SAMS.

The General Council is responsible for good governance, and they rely on different people to be able to govern well – volunteers, staff and a mission director. SAMS, through the General Council, makes sure that the Church in Ireland is able to continue developing and maintaining partnerships with the local church in Latin America. Please pray for them as they seek to implement the new Vision aims and objectives.

## Congratulations Bishop Andrew

Since the last publication of Buena Vista it was announced at the end of August that our SAMS Ireland Chairperson, Ven. Andrew Forster was to be elected as the new Bishop of Derry and Raphoe. On 8th December we were delighted that recently retired Bishop of Paraguay, Peter Bartlett was able to take part in the service of Ordination and Consecration in Armagh Cathedral. Please pray for Bishop Andrew and his wife Heather and their family as he settles into this new role.





# Trusting God for the years to come

## A FRESH VISION FOR THE NEXT DECADE



Tommy Stewart,  
Director of New  
Season Leadership

SAMS has a long and rich history of engaging the Church in the UK and Ireland with mission in South America. As we approach a new decade the Council of SAMS Ireland has been keen to celebrate all that God had done over the years and all that God is doing currently, whilst seeking God's guidance concerning how we can further enhance the work of SAMS in a changing cultural and global environment.

With that in mind SAMS Ireland sought guidance from a well known Christian leadership advisor, Tommy Stewart, who has significant experience working with the Church of Ireland, other denominations and other mission societies. Following a period

of planning and preparation Tommy facilitated an overnight retreat for the SAMS Ireland Council at the Dromantine Retreat Centre in June 2019, at which Council members had the opportunity to pray together and seek God's guidance for the ministry.

### FRESH VISION

Over the summer Tommy and SAMS Ireland Director, Stephen McElhinney, worked together to develop a draft strategic direction. This was reviewed, discussed and agreed at the SAMS Council meeting in September. As a Council, members sense that God has created a renewed sense of mission and are very much looking forward to seeing what God will do in the months and years ahead.

### OUR VISION IS CLEAR: the great commission fulfilled in South America.

Our Mission is to encourage the Church in Ireland to support, empower and partner with the Church in South America.

In the coming years, working primarily with the Anglican Church in South America, we aim to:

1. Support the growth of the Church in South America.
2. Encourage the Church in Ireland by widening its vision of mission, through partnership with the Church in South America.
3. Provide practical opportunities for the Church in Ireland to engage with and serve the Church in South America.
4. Play a full part as an Anglican mission society within the Church of Ireland and as a member of the 'Association of Mission Societies'.
5. Be excellent in governance, stewardship and communication.

### THE WORK CONTINUES

Following on from the agreement of the new strategic direction for SAMS Ireland an operational plan is being developed to enable the SAMS Ireland staff team to effectively implement the vision, mission and aims agreed. We look forward to working with friends and partners, old and new, as we press ahead with playing our part in seeing the great commission fulfilled in South America.



# BUNBEG TO CONCEPCION

By Liz Fitzgerald

I spent 2 weeks in August in Paraguay. My travel companion was Noel Boyd from Bunbeg, Co Donegal and we visited SAMS Mission Partner, Claire Holmes in Concepción. I had no idea what to expect. I prayed. I did a bit of homework about where I was going and tried to prepare for the unknown.

My brief was that we would be visiting during "Children's Week", a national celebration of the importance of children, and that I would be part of the team visiting youth clubs and children's groups. And by the way Liz, you may be asked to preach - bring a sermon.

Gulp! Help! I have no Spanish - but I did have experience of working with a translator for the deaf. And I prayed.

After three flights, Noel and I were greeted with smiles and warmth, both by Claire

and the people she worked with and ministered to. The language barrier did not matter, because all things in Christ are equal - we understood each other.

I found a small dedicated community, deeply rooted in worship and prayer, devoted to God and to each other. And isn't this an essential ingredient in our Christ led life - love God, love one another.

There was not much prosperity among the ordinary people, but they had wealth in their community and devotion to those who had no faith and a great desire to see them come to faith. I cannot say it was simply humbling, because I found it invigorating and stimulating; it was so refreshing to live among a community saturated in faith.

I saw poverty - the indigenous people live in a region called The Chaco. Their

homes are wooden structures, small and inadequate, with no running water, no flushing toilets or hot showers! Barbecues are a treat for us, eating al fresco a treat; here outdoor cooking is the only way, outdoor living compensates for the inadequacy of their homes.

And yet sympathy was not an emotion I would have felt - there was a wonderful dignity here, a beauty in their love for one another and their dedication to the family. Our job was to help them find the love of God in their very meagre lives, and an unconditional love - a love that did not judge by wealth or possessions; love for God and love for one another.

We visited several children's clubs. I could see the love of God beaming onto them and beaming through them. We visited youth groups, and I could see the enquiring mind of disciples of Jesus at work. And together we prayed.

**What did I bring home with me?** I brought a deep sense of experiencing and living in community with Christ at the centre. Every morning, every evening, we prayed; every time we set off on a car journey we prayed (which did concern me at first!)

**What did I gain?** I honestly feel I gained more from being among the people of Paraguay, than I ever dreamt of - I was immersed in Jesus in a very visible way, day and daily, I felt closer to God than I had ever been before, I felt the spirit restless in all I did. The people of Paraguay opened this to me.

**Would I go again?** Yes please.

**How do I feel on reflection?** Enriched, invigorated, engaged.



**"there was a wonderful dignity here, a beauty in their love for one another"**



# Concepción Calling

By Claire Holmes

Life doesn't always work out as planned! I have felt for a while that my time in Paraguay is drawing to a close and have been planning to come home around the middle or latter part of 2020. I am however home at the time of writing this (end of 2019) for health reasons and hoping and praying I will be able to return sooner rather than later. Concepción has a great team of volunteers, but there is a lot of sickness and other challenges amongst the leadership at the moment so please do pray for the team, for the Lord to sustain, strengthen and heal.

It's been a while since I have mentioned 'Simply the Story.' In the church we consistently use this style of oral Bible

studies with all ages and in different settings. In January, three of the team - Lorena, Zuny and her eighteen year old daughter Rebecca are planning to go to Peru to help deliver a workshop there. It is a great opportunity for them to join in God's Mission in other parts of South America and they have said before how it helps them to understand better how God loves the world. We pray it will be a blessed time for them and for the church in Peru. We also hope to do a workshop in San Juan, one of our country annexes where the church is growing but where there aren't many leaders. There is a desire there to have training in order that more people will be able to lead Bible Studies and teach.

## My Trip to Paraguay

By Matthew Walsh

My second trip to Asunción in Paraguay was a whirlwind of emotional and spiritual strengthening.. I had previously been to Paraguay in the summer of 2017 as part of a team from Mullavilly Parish. This time however, I was on my own. From the moment I stepped off that plane in Asunción I knew that this time was different. I had prayed a lot before I left that God would guide me and show me the work He wanted done. He answered my prayers in ways I never imagined and He showed me things I never thought I would see.

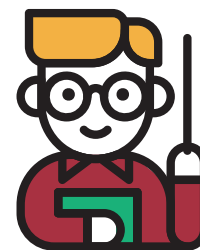
The first and last weeks of my 4 week trip were spent in Colegio San Andreas shadowing Pastor Ronald Irene. As a prospective school teacher, this was a big step to actively be following a teacher in a school. This was a great experience as it allowed me to use the talents that God has given me to put smiles on faces. Furthermore, it taught me that even though I didn't speak Spanish I could still make an impact for

the glory of God through teaching and speaking in assemblies.

The other two weeks were spent working in the community alongside the Irene family. The majority of the work we did was within different children's homes. One of these was Jardin de Esperanza. This is a home for children who live with HIV. It was amazing to provide them with a number of things such as clothes and a new

mechanical game to keep the children safe. This was all thanks to the money donated through fundraisers and it felt amazing that we could show the love of God through items that will make the children's lives just a little bit better.

While in Paraguay I was able to meet some amazing people and it really allowed me to grow as a person and in my walk with God. I saw how God's love can change lives and it shows that if you put all your trust in God, the sky's the limit as God will always keep you safe.





# Friday Night Live 2020

Craigavon Civic Centre  
Friday 7th February 2020 at 7.30pm

You are warmly invited to Friday Night Live 2020... always a night not to be missed! We will be hearing exciting stories of God at work in South America. Refreshments afterwards will give an opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones! Look forward to seeing you!



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