

MISSIONAL / RELATIONAL / INTENTIONAL

BUENA VISTA



SUMMER EDITION 2020

SAMS
IRELAND
South American Mission Society

Caught in an Eddy

A MESSAGE FROM THE
SAMS MISSION DIRECTOR



I remember my first experience of paddling a river in a kayak. It was exciting being on moving water, less effort was needed. However, I soon discovered that I needed to be more alert in keeping upright and staying on a good line to avoid obstacles. The first little bits of 'white' water were successfully navigated and soon our instructor was asking us to follow him and park in an eddy. The eddy was downstream and recognised as a quiet section of water behind an obstacle. This was a perfect place to peel off from the river current and have a safe rest, going nowhere.

It was pleasant drawing to the side and watching nature happen from this prime spot on the water. The fun was about to begin though, as re-entering the faster flowing stream turned out to be very tricky. One wrong move, and disaster loomed as an overturned vessel! We had good fun that day and yes- I did succumb to momentary underwater explorations!

I have been reflecting on the Covid 19 experience of recent months. In a way, the



pandemic has emerged suddenly on the scene as a massive unavoidable 'eddy' on the river of life. We haven't been directed into it, rather, we have been flung into this rotating mass of water going nowhere fast. As we have bobbed about, (keeping our distance from each other of course!) we have looked hard at the nature of the main current of the river, and wondered how we go about rejoining the main flow of life again. Timing, skill and determination will play a big part in our controlled reintroduction, back into the main flowing current.

As God's missional people caught up in this unavoidable eddy, what should we do, as we long to get back to doing what God has called us to? I would like to suggest that, as always, we go back to the manual, or the skills book. The Bible has all the advice we need when it comes to navigating moving waters, both the fast and the slow, slack sections.

1 Thess 5 v 16-18 says: *'Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.'*

In the still eddy, let's rejoice always. Our Lord has done so much for us and this should be something that keeps us joyful and glad even despite

our circumstances.

We are reminded to pray continually. We breathe continually and our hearts consistently beat, though we rarely think about these things. Yet we are to be so accustomed to prayer that it is to be second nature to us and come without a second thought. Let's be prayer breathers!

The final exhortation is to have the attitude of gratitude. Can we pray 'Lord, I am stuck in this eddy, yet I choose to be thankful, right here and right now'? Some days this is easier to do, and the longer this has gone on, those days have been fewer.

Please pray for our brothers and sisters in Latin America who are in their own turbulent 'eddies' at this time and are having to deal with all sorts of added obstacles.

Pray that all together, both here in Ireland and in South America, despite our circumstances, we will be known as rejoicing, praying, people of gratitude. One day we will be set free from the eddy!

Your friend,
Rev Stephen McElhinney
Mission Director, SAMS Ireland



BANGOR PARISH

Written by Anita Rowe

Flight details, vaccinations, learning Spanish, insect repellent and fund raising. These are the things that seven of us from Bangor Parish Church discussed the last time we met together in February to plan and prepare for a two-week visit to Salta, Northern Argentina this July (2020). Of course now, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the world is a very different place and, sadly, we have had to cancel our trip to Argentina this summer. This is hugely disappointing.

As a church, one of our core values is 'Transform Your World' - it's all about mission. We value the call to reach out to people in need. Locally, this is worked out through initiatives such as Alpha and our Compassion Centre. However, in recent years we have been questioning and exploring what this looks like for us as members of the global church. Giving financially,

through SAMS Ireland and other partners, is an important part of our response to God's call into global mission but we believe God wants us to understand his heart for the least, the last and the lost at a deeper level.

Our hope was that the trip to Argentina would be the catalyst for a long-term, mutually-beneficial partnership with San Andres Church in Salta and that the team's experience would ignite a passion for mission throughout our church. Despite being disappointed that we cannot go to Argentina this summer, we hold on to this hope. We hope to reschedule the trip when the pandemic situation resolves. In the meantime, we will look into remote/virtual ways of connecting with our brothers and sisters in San Andres. On the bright side- this won't require insect repellent!



Brazil 2020

John And Phyllis Logan returned from a trip to Monte Horebe, Brazil, just as Covid -19 lockdown measures were coming into effect.

We thank God that another visit to Brazil and to Monte Horebe has been completed. We found Monte Horebe to be functioning well in all its projects including those supported so faithfully and generously by Coleraine Parish, its individual members and many other groups and individuals. The Caçador Community Centre continues to provide schooling for 20 children; volunteer doctors and dentists continue to care for the population and the "cooperativa agricultura" continues to support the area's farmers.

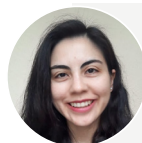
On an equally positive note we found that the main school, in Itaperuçu, has embarked upon two rather

special projects: a well designed and well delivered English language programme; and a link with a distance learning college in São Paulo. The former is coordinated by a dynamic, creative and effective teacher, a Cariocan (citizen of Rio) but whose English is excellent. He is training some of his best students to be teachers themselves. The second project will provide members of the public with the opportunity to study for pre-university qualifications in the MH building itself. They can book time on a computer, access their course materials and communicate with their tutor all free of charge.

A worthwhile trip? Most certainly! Thank you each and everyone for your support and encouragement.

John and Phyllis Logan

.....
 Carla Marin and Gary McMurray tell us about how the
 COVID-19 Global Pandemic has affected them



Carla is a SAMS Fusion Volunteer working in Calry Parish and Sligo Grammar School, Sligo

As you know I had so many difficulties to get to Ireland. Then, three months later the whole world has been affected by COVID-19. To be honest when I heard about this, I didn't take it seriously. But then, as schools and churches began to close, I was reminded by God that I don't have control of anything.

I have wondered whether it was a good idea to come here or maybe it wasn't God's will for me to be here. However, every time I doubt, God shows me that He wants me here. I don't know for how long, but I want to enjoy this experience and let God guide my steps during this pandemic.

Things have been totally different than I expected. I thought I would be spending most of my time with the girls in the boarding house, but it didn't happen. I thought I would be taking part in church activities but instead, all of them are now online. At

the beginning, it was a great way to keep connected, but later on I realised that it's not the same. Online meetings have their challenges too, especially when your role is to care for young people.

During my time here, it's been a process of learning. I encourage myself every day to be disciplined, to persevere, to be patient, to learn that His ways are higher than mine, even when I can't see it. I just have to trust and obey, to see that my weaknesses are not an impediment to do what He is calling me to do.

I still have to improve many things. God is my potter and I am His vessel; I just want to be moulded by Him. It sometimes hurts, but I know I'm His child and He does everything for His good purpose.

In Christ,
 Carla



Rev Gary McMurray is Rector of Richhill Parish, Co. Armagh

For a long time in Richhill Parish, and particularly over the past year, one word beginning with the letter C had been at the forefront of our thoughts and prayers: Concepción. We had been praying and preparing for a mission team to travel to Concepción, Paraguay to continue to develop our partnership through Claire Holmes. We had all our injections and were making final plans when another C word loomed large: Coronavirus.

By the middle of March it was clear that we wouldn't be going (yet!), and so our scheduled departure date came and went, and we didn't make it

out of the orchard county. After all our plans and preparations and prayers, it was disappointing to not board a plane to Paraguay.

Bigger than Coronavirus is another C word. Our hope is in Christ Jesus, who is in control, and so we're trusting in his perfect timing, and looking forward to the day when we will make it to Concepción. Our plans haven't been cancelled, merely postponed. So we may not have made it to you yet, but one day we will, in Christ's good timing.

Yours,
 Gary

ESPERANZA

Hope for some Paraguayan Children

Written by Penny and Murray Metcalfe

This October 2020 the Esperanza Foster Home in Asuncion, Paraguay will celebrate 15 years of welcoming neglected, abandoned or abused young children, showing them the love and care they need while decisions are made by the courts around their future. This is still just as long a process as ever and some children have spent 4 years in Esperanza whilst others just a few months. Most children in this situation would be placed in large, overcrowded and under resourced children's homes so it is wonderful that Esperanza has been able to be much more like a family to well over 100 children, limiting numbers to 5 or 6 children at a time. Some then return to a birth relative but most are adopted by Paraguayan families.

The Esperanza team consists of a combination of paid and volunteer carers as well as a leadership

committee that includes a lawyer. They work closely with Paraguayan Social Services and some have been involved in activities promoting good practice nationally, even meeting with the Vice President and Minister for Children.

"ESPERANZA HAS BEEN ABLE TO BE MUCH MORE LIKE A FAMILY TO WELL OVER 100 CHILDREN"

Although the Esperanza Project is now an independent registered charity it maintains close links with the Paraguayan Anglican church and is renting a spacious house from the diocese. It also has close links with San Andres College whose ex pupils help with volunteering and



DONATIONS

When forwarding donations to SAMS office, please state to be used for 'Esperanza'

fundraising. Sometimes the team wonder if they will have enough funds to continue the project but God has been incredibly faithful.

Paraguay went into Covid 19 lockdown quite quickly and this has been a difficult time for the children and carers with no visitors or activity outside of the home permitted and schools and nurseries closed.

Thankfully none of the children or carers have been sick. Ana Maria, who leads the team, recently wrote about the worrying impact of the virus on

local fundraising given that this year's events have now been cancelled. Additionally, the Ministry for Children has closed for 2 months which is causing further delay to the children moving to their "Forever Family". However, Ana's closing comment was "I know that God loves our home and for that reason I rest in Him." Please pray for God's Kingdom to come in the lives of each of the children helped by the Esperanza project, for the continuation of his provision in this difficult time and for wisdom, protection and energy for each member of the team.

Born & Raised

WRITTEN BY JUDITH FINCH
SAMS GENERAL COUNCIL MEMBER

My connection with SAMS and South America goes back almost a hundred years!

It was when glancing through the 'Liverpool Echo' that my grandfather Alfred Leake saw an advert for a SAMS meeting. That meeting ultimately led him to sailing to Argentina in 1927. He was later joined by my grandmother Dorothy. Together they were pioneer missionaries taking the Gospel to the Toba and Wichi people, the original and forgotten inhabitants of this land where they served for a total of forty years.

Having been born and raised in Argentina my father David trained for ordained ministry in England and returned to Argentina with my mother Rachel in 1962. They likewise spent forty years in ministry serving the indigenous communities, the Spanish speaking churches and latterly the Anglo- Argentine community.

The first eighteen years of my life were spent in Argentina. I cherish these memories and the truly enriching experience of a cross cultural upbringing.

Today we see the fruits of the missionaries of previous generations.

My brother Andrew Leake continues the family connection with Northern Argentina through his work there in the field of land rights and conservation.

Together with my husband Ken we spent ten years as mission partners in Uganda (the pattern of Argentina had to be broken somewhere!!). We relocated to Northern Ireland in 2016. Being invited to join the SAMS Ireland council has been a great opportunity to reconnect with the partnerships and projects the society is involved in both in South America and at home.

Today we see the fruits of the missionaries of previous generations. It is wonderful to think of the churches amongst the Toba and Wichi Indians today, led by their own pastors and bishops, worshipping our Lord Jesus. With this changing picture Mission Societies have adapted their focus.

SAMS no longer sends pioneer missionaries but we must continue to build on our partnership and seek creative ways to engage in mutually encouraging and supporting our brothers and sisters in the proclamation of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus and the building of His church both in South America and at home.

Bishop Marino the first Indian bishop in Argentina once said 'Please make our story known to the brethren (in the UK) ...we need them to pray for us so we won't feel alone'. This need to be connected to our Lord and to fellowship with others is an unchanging need and perhaps with our current lockdowns brought into focus more than ever. In Hebrews 10:24 we are urged to '... consider how we may spur one another on...'. May this be a challenge that we remain faithful to knowing that he who began the good work will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.





Chile

Update

Dear SAMS family,

We do hope you're all well, especially in these uncertain times of pandemic. Thank the Lord, Pen, Emily, and I are generally managing fine. However, the situation in Chile has taken a turn for the worse. A major spike in new cases, particularly in Santiago, has been recorded in the last week, so the government has had to tighten measures significantly. As of today, there are a total of 53617 infected, 544 deceased, and 22504 recovered, with 95% of beds in the capital's ICUs already being occupied.

Our last 10 weeks have meant very little movement. Nevertheless, we've been hugely blessed, because we're staying at Pen's mother's

THE GOVERNMENT HAS HAD TO TIGHTEN MEASURES SIGNIFICANTLY

house in a sector of Santiago which has only seen 3 weeks of total lockdown, instead of at our own apartment which has seen 8 weeks of it. We've self-isolated as much as possible since we arrived back in Chile in February – having passed through London and Madrid airports the same week that the first cases were reported there – and this has been made remarkably easier by a small garden and yard which Emily's making the most of.

My classes at CEP have continued uninterrupted, but now they take place via Zoom. This has required some adjustment, and, though I've been struggling with my time management and reduced access to study resources, I continue to enjoy it all. Just prior to the pandemic's arrival, I was also placed at a new church, but have so far only participated in one Sunday service. However, I'll preach my first sermon from Proverbs 10:10-21 on June 28th!

Pen's had a difficult time since

our return from holidays. She was made redundant in December, and has struggled to find work since. This has been compounded by the knock-on effects of the pandemic. She received the promise of freelance project-based work from a firm this week though. Otherwise, she's dedicating all her remaining energy to caring for Emily and me, and she does a fabulous job.

Emily's coming on in leaps and bounds. She loves singing, dancing, and art, and surprises us both every day by the speed with which she's learning, particularly as she's doing everything bilingually. We're also delighted that she's now only using nappies at night!

We continue to pray for you and give the Lord thanks for all that you're doing to support us.

May He bless you and keep you!

Luke, Pen, & Emily.

Concepción Calling

By Claire Holmes

I left Paraguay suddenly at the end of September 2019 after getting sick, without having the opportunity to pack up and say goodbye. Although I had been planning to leave around August 2020 it wasn't easy to be taken out so suddenly especially at a time when the local church in Concepción is without a pastor and many of its leaders have health issues. Having finished cancer treatment around Easter in May, I was given the wonderful news that the Cancer was no longer visible on a scan! I am currently feeling well and at some point would love to return for a few weeks to say goodbye and finish off.

One thing I led whilst in Paraguay was 'Simply the Story (STS),' inductive Bible Study 'Oral Style'. It has been such an encouragement that Lorena Ramirez, a young woman from the church in Concepción, who has faithfully and consistently been involved both in being trained and training, is on the way to becoming a lead instructor, meaning she can lead workshops in Paraguay and elsewhere. Lorena has recently arrived back from a trip to Peru and here is what she says:

What took you to Peru and how did plans change when you got there?

In January I spent a fortnight in Peru as a STS instructor at a workshop in an area not far from Lima. I returned in March, with the team, to do more advanced training. Things changed the day after arrival when due to COVID19 the government suspended all activity including the workshop. I ended up spending 4 weeks in Peru as the airports were closed and fortunately I was able to stay with a family from the church. They (Nato and Maria) treated me like part of the family. Maria had done the workshop in January so we were able to train her. I eventually returned to Paraguay on a humanitarian flight where I did 14 days quarantine before returning to Concepción in a military plane.

What did you find most difficult and how did God show his love?

It was difficult being outside my country during the changes that were happening. My flight had been cancelled and for a time the embassy had no answers.

That was difficult! But God provided physical and spiritual food both for me and for the family I stayed with. They welcomed me with love and they too received blessing. I learnt so much there about adapting to any situation and place and that the Lord's plans are perfect. I also learnt about patience whilst waiting.

I see what happened as being a big test, and with God's help I passed the test.

Lorena continues to be involved with 'STS' in Paraguay and D.V. the team hope to do another workshop in January in the same place in Lima, with some contacts from the Anglican Church.

Lorena with her family





SAMS has been conducting a series of interviews with people we have mission partnership with.

To view these visit the SAMS Ireland Facebook page:
facebook.com/samsireland



Use this QR scan to take you to the SAMS Ireland webpage.

Legacies

SAMS is extremely thankful for legacies which are left by individuals for the benefit of the work in South America. Legacies can make a real difference to the ongoing work and the extension of God's Kingdom. Thank you for partnering with us. For further information in confidence contact the SAMS House.

Thank you for being part of the SAMS team. If we can serve you in any way please do not hesitate to contact us.



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