

MISSIONAL / RELATIONAL / INTENTIONAL

BUENA VISTA

WINTER EDITION 2021



The Last Word

A MESSAGE FROM THE
SAMS MISSION DIRECTOR

*"The Lord is in his holy temple;
- let all the earth be silent before him."*

HABAKKUK 2v20



**"Many have tried
to understand and
rationalise the the
times we live in"**

Habakkuk looked around in disbelief. What he saw in his culture saddened him. God seemed absent, he thought that contemporary culture had won the day. BUT Habakkuk decided to stand his ground. Then God spoke and outlined how Habakkuk's wayward people were going to have to live through great turmoil that meant everyone would turn then to God once more. This text finishes with a statement (chapter 2 v20) that reminded the listeners very clearly that God was in his temple and that as people turned and re-turned to Him all unholy voices would be returned silenced.

This has very clear overtones with what we are living through today. 'Where are you God?' 'Why have people turned

away?' "This impending disaster will be the end of us all...". This sounds familiar. BUT God is in control.

Habakkuk saw something that confirmed beyond all doubt, that God was still where he said he always would be found - the Temple. The Old Testament dwelling place of the Temple has been superseded by the New Testament picture of the living body of Christ - the Church. As we look at one another as Christians, we see the dwelling place of God who takes up residence in each of us through the Grace of the Holy Spirit. Together as the Church, this temple is moving, living and breathing. We can go across the street or even journey to the ends of the world, to places in South America. Where God's people move

and have their being - this is where other people see God and his Holiness. When confronted with God and all his Glory - all other utterances seem trivial and absurd.

A lot has been said in recent months, many have tried to understand and rationalise the times we live in. From Presidents who try to talk themselves into an alternate reality, to pandemics which seem to have the ability to keep people talking in circles.

Let's remind ourselves that God has the last word. And after He speaks, the world falls silent in reverence, fear and awe. This is the God who we proclaim in Mission, the one who has always been watching and waiting for such times

when all the world will know.

In this edition of Buena Vista we will have opportunity to thank God for the way he has been at work in His people - the church. There are examples of people who have been faithful as they present God in his glory and mercy. Continue to pray for SAMS which partners with churches here and in South America as we find a fresh voice to proclaim the Gospel (after the silence of encountering God!)

Your friend,
Rev Stephen McElhinney
Mission Director, SAMS Ireland

Learning the Ropes

Partnering with the local church in Latin America has always been a top priority for SAMS Ireland. Several years ago, SAMS Ireland committed to part sponsoring Theological education for 3 students in Paraguay. Here is an update:



Esteban Romero is completing his 4th Year (remotely), and has dreams for the future Church in Paraguay:

"This has been a different year at Bible College. We have continued our studies from home, through a virtual platform. At the moment, I take classes from Monday to Friday. I am also working on my thesis, which is about the Missionary Commission in the Gospels and in Acts. I am interested in how the Bible speaks to the Paraguayan church through this, so that we can obey the Lord in the next decades to come.

The Lord has blessed me greatly through Bible College. I have grown

in knowledge of God's Word. I have learned how to use many tools that are essential to study and to teaching the Bible. I learned about Pastoral Care and Counselling, Conflict Resolution, Christian Ethics, Hermeneutics, Exegesis, Hebrew, Greek, Youth Ministry, Church History, Systematic Theology, Christian Pedagogy, Evangelism, Leadership and so many other important subjects related to the church and the ministry.

I have big dreams for the Church in Paraguay. My country is divided into 17 Departments. I would love to serve Him by doing mission in each one of these 17 departments, planting new churches there so that the Gospel will reach the whole country."



Gustavo Flores, also coming to the end of his 4th year reports:

"...God has helped me throughout this year to be able to see the Christian life in a more integrated way. He has helped me to appreciate more the ministry of preaching and mission. Above all, the studies have helped me to love our Lord Jesus Christ more, the Son of the only all-powerful God. God's love is so great that, just trying to imagine it, I am shocked, amazed and speechless, Glory to God for who He is, and also for everything He does out of love for his children.

My goals for the next few years are to serve the church of Jesus Christ, present my thesis and put into practice all that I have learned. It is so nice and exciting to think that after finishing my studies I will be able to dedicate more time to the church since at the moment I am a bit limited by studies.

Once again thank you for giving me and my other brothers the opportunity and unconditional support so that we can study, it is of great value to me, because if it were up to me, this study would be very difficult."



Marco Pereira (2nd Year) writes:

"The year 2020 has been a challenge, due to the pandemic, face to face classes have had to be suspended. The University has invested in a virtual platform...This is the second semester of the degree. The subjects that are contributing the most to my spiritual growth are Greek and the Introduction to the New Testament II. These subjects are enriching my knowledge about the scriptures in such a way to know God's character better. Something that I have learned in this short time when teaching and studying the word of God, is that the historical context, helps us to better understand what the writer wanted to teach, which is undoubtedly inspired by God. I am grateful for the financial help that SAMS is giving me, with which I am training myself to be able to help and work with everything for the extension of the work, for the glory of God."

Please pray for Esteban, Gustavo and Marco. Pray that God will continue to call others into leadership to serve the church in Paraguay.



End of a Chapter

WRITTEN BY CLAIRE HOLMES



Paraguay has been a massive part of my life over the 25 years since I first went out in 1994 and it will continue to have a special place in my heart even though my time as a mission partner with SAMS has now finished.

I have been reflecting on the past 20 years in Concepcion and on seeds planted in the context of the Parable of the Sower. As a church and together with yourselves many seeds were planted as we worked with hundreds if not thousands of children, young people and adults through teaching the Bible in schools and in church based children's clubs and youth groups, discipleship and trying to show God's love in practical

ways. So many people have supported, prayed, visited on 'mission trips' and contributed in many different ways. Thank you! It is our prayer that as in the parable of the sower, the seed will grow, multiply and bring forth a crop. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:7, 'I planted the seed, Apollos watered it but God made it grow.' We would love it if together, through prayer, we could keep on watering the seeds which have been planted, trusting in God to bring growth and to protect, sustain and build up the current leaders and raise up and provide new leaders.

San Juan, one of the annexes outside Concepcion is an example of growth even though it took time. This church, about 30 miles from Concepcion started

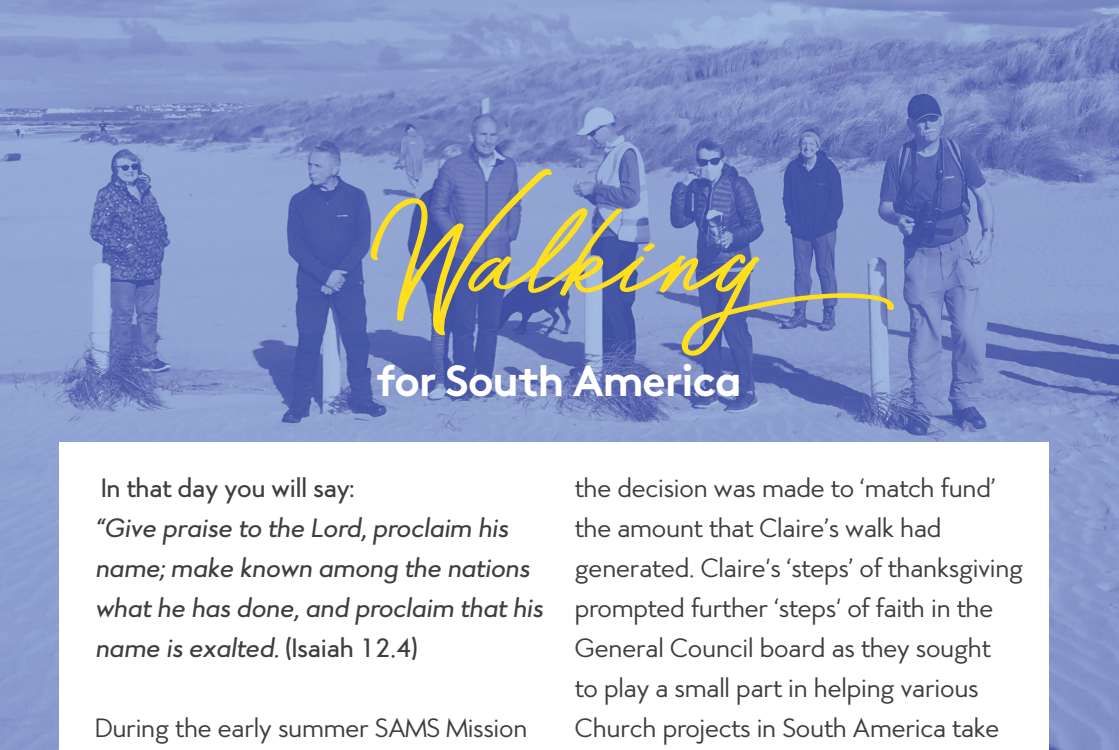
about 30 years ago when a family there, Totito and Tita came to know the Lord and had a weekly meeting for themselves and their neighbours on their patio. People from SAMS Ireland and England supported them and teams visited to help build a church and work with the local people. For many years Totito and Tita were discouraged as the congregation didn't grow and often it was just their family who met. Yet they continued faithfully and in the past few years the church has grown to over 30 men, women and children committed to God and to serving Him. The leaders

there planted the seed, watered it with prayer, love and teaching supported by many SAMS supporters and in time God brought the growth. What an encouragement!

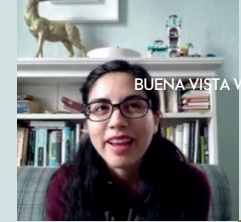
Thank you so very much to the Director and General Council of SAMS Ireland and to each of you for all your constant care and support.

"the seed will grow, multiply and bring forth a crop"





Zoom Interviews



In that day you will say:

"Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. (Isaiah 12.4)

During the early summer SAMS Mission partner Claire Holmes looked out of her window in Portstewart across the bay towards Castlerock and an idea started to form in her mind. Claire had been making significant strides in her recovery from cancer. As an act of thanksgiving to God for answered prayer, she thought she could set about to complete a sponsored walk from Portstewart to Castlerock which is about 11 miles. Some weeks later after a bit of planning and advertising Claire completed the walk on a sunny day at the end of August. In all, over £6,000 pounds was raised. The money raised would help the church in South America in it's response to covid -19 issues. At a SAMS General Council meeting in September,

the decision was made to 'match fund' the amount that Claire's walk had generated. Claire's 'steps' of thanksgiving prompted further 'steps' of faith in the General Council board as they sought to play a small part in helping various Church projects in South America take 'steps' in combating the worst effects of Covid-19!

The Isaiah 12.4 Project was set up to administer grants to Covid-19 projects in various Dioceses in South America. Further church contributions have created a total fund of £18,000.

At a later stage, we hope to bring more news of how these projects have made an impact in different church settings. We would like to thank all those people who helped support Claire on her walk, and everyone who made generous contributions. We hope and pray that this initiative will bring praise to God and make his name known.

What do we do when a pandemic starts and we can no longer travel by air? We used to ZOOM over the clouds on our way to meet partners in South America, but now we Zoom in an entirely different way! SAMS has been learning to use new technology, just like every other organisation. Once we got used to the Zoom buttons and the recording option, we were very quickly able to make long distance video calls - and this wonderfully allowed others to join in and listen to the conversation.

Over the summer months we were able to take these edited video recordings and make them available on SAMS Ireland Facebook site (www.facebook.com/samsireland).

These interviews have helped many people re-connect with faces not seen in a while. We were able to hear from Bishops (Archbishop Greg in Buenos Aires, Bishop Raphael (Bolivia) and Bishop Daniel (Uruguay), Church leaders (Ronnie

and Nicky Irene, Estaban Ramero, Cristobal Ceron, Juan Carlos and Penny and Luke Pratt (originally from Ireland) who is studying in CEP, Santiago.

Carla Marin (Antofagasta, Chile) also gave an interview from Sligo where she is based as a FUSION volunteer.

The questions we asked were:

1. Please tell us about yourself, where you work and what you do normally.
2. How has the Covid- 19 pandemic affected you and your ministry?
3. What are people's greatest challenges as they deal with the Pandemic?
4. How can people watching this video pray for you and the church?

Please continue to pray for these partners as they continue to deal with the ongoing effects of Covid-19 in their lives and ministries.

Mission: It's all about Jesus



Greg Venables retired from the role of Archbishop of the Southern Cone of South America on the 28 Nov 2020. Greg and his wife Sylvia are beginning retired life in Asuncion, Paraguay. But where did it all begin?

Greg and Sylvia Venables took the big step to go to Paraguay in 1978. Greg recalls this as a process of him sensing God's call, Sylvia identifying God's call and the right 'time' emerging.

The Venables family set out on their adventure, part of which saw their plane slide off the end of the runway in Amsterdam on an aborted take off! Undeterred, they eventually arrived in Asuncion Paraguay after 27 hours of travelling and into 42 degrees of heat! As a teacher Greg took up an English teaching role in Collegio San Andres. It was here early on that Greg felt most fulfilled in mission work, connecting with young people and their families and introducing them to God's love through Jesus. In 1983, the call to ordained ministry eventually resulted in a packed school

courtyard where Greg was ordained into the leadership of the church. Paraguay was home for the next 7 years until circumstances meant that they were to return to England. However, South America never left their hearts. In 1992, the family returned to La Paz, Bolivia. After only a matter of months, Greg was invited to become Bishop of Bolivia in 1993. Here, the family served in mission until the unexpected call to be Primate of South America in 2001 and a translation to the Diocese of Argentina. They travelled extensively, encouraging the Anglican Church leadership in South America and beyond.

In this new chapter of their retirement, they will be close to family in Asuncion, Greg says the theme of "The Gospel first, all the time" will still be the story of their lives. At SAMS Ireland, we have no doubt that the local church in Paraguay will benefit hugely from Greg and Sylvia's presence and their missional desire to continue preaching, teaching and sharing all about Jesus.

The Chaco Church Trust & SAMS

Written by Bishop David Leake, Chairman Chaco Church Trust

My father Canon Alfred Leake left a small legacy of £5000. Before he died, he and my two sisters organised the creation of the Chaco Church Trust in 1991. It was designated primarily to support missionary work amongst the Toba and Wichi Indians of Northern Argentina, where he had spent a lifetime of ministry since 1927.

Wisely, they included this proviso in the Trust Deed:

"If at any time the Trustees (i.e. of the Chaco Church Trust) shall be of the opinion that the purposes hereinbefore declared can be more effectively carried out by some person or charity they may pay the whole of the Trust Fund and the income thereof to any Charity registered in the United Kingdom having similar purposes to the Charity".

The Trustees believe that this time has come and have unanimously approved the proposal that such a step should now be taken. We are grateful the proposal has been accepted by SAMS Ireland and, after conversations with Bishop Andrew Forster and Rev Stephen McElhinney over the past

two years, this step should take place in the next few months.

I am assured SAMS Ireland will respect all designated funding which in the past has helped finance Bible translation, the installation of small radio transmitting stations, publication of Indian language materials, advocacy work in helping protect Indian land rights and in general all matters related to the protection of the forests, as well as supporting the two recently ordained Indian Bishops

Finally, my deep gratitude to Mr. Philip Tadman who has kindly guided us through all the steps that have been taken, corresponded with the donors, and followed guidance provided by relevant authorities with regard to Gift Aid donations and other matters.

I commend this new development to your prayers. For my wife Rachel and I it is a delight that our daughter Judith Finch was recently elected on to the SAMS Ireland Council and I know she will welcome sharing details of life in Northern Argentina where she was brought up.



Giving in the Name of Jesus

Isabel Montoy is Principal of the Nurseries and Pre-school Christ the Redeemer in Lima, Peru. In a recent interview she told of the difficulties that she and the staff faced when Covid -19 closed down the school in March. She remembers the picture of the children's sad faces as they realised that they were no longer able to come to school. Pastor Anderson (the school Chaplain) explained that the teaching never stopped, even though the classrooms remained empty.

"The pandemic was affecting some of the families in extreme ways"

The teachers devised a new system of contacting the families using 'WhatsApp' on smart phones. This helped instruct the children in some of their lessons. Through these communications, church members became aware of some of the greater needs in the community. The

pandemic was affecting some of the families in extreme ways, loss of jobs, medical emergencies and food poverty.

The phone calls allowed the church connected to the school to respond to the developing need and to put into practice the text from Acts 3.6 "What I have, I give in the name of Jesus".

There was a high concentration of Covid-19 in the school catchment area, and food parcels and medicines were delivered to affected families. They prayed that the testimony and witness of the church going into the community would bring the message of Salvation to everyone they encountered.

They ask for continued prayer as they look to the new year and plan the church programmes with the ever present circumstances that the pandemic bring.

Carla
MARIN

Carla Marin arrived in Sligo earlier this year
and is based in Calry Parish Sligo.



Since I've been in Ireland, I've been facing a lot of changes. Although I don't see them as something bad, I can see God working through them.

When the school opened, the girls boarding house opened as well. I take care of the girls during the evenings and mornings and do Zumba with them. Through this I've had so many opportunities to approach them. In the school, Canon Patrick Bamber and I have been working in the Christian Union. We have around 8 students who come every Friday in order to have a time of prayer, hear the message and of course, a time of chatting and encouraging one another.

As well as preparing materials and presentations for the weekly livestreaming services, I also make phone calls to people who live alone. It's been so encouraging talking to them. They have amazing stories and I can see how God is working in their lives too.

It's been a time of a lot of learning and application. I've taken several courses on mentorship, how to interpret the Bible, youth ministry and leadership. I'm really thankful for everything God allows me to learn. One of the most important areas where God has been working is my prayer time and trusting in His promises. After praying, I took the decision to stay another year in Ireland, so I'm preparing my documents to renew my visa. I trust that God has a lot of things to teach me here and wants me to serve Him here. I feel so fortunate to be able to live in Ireland and for the amazing people God has allowed me to meet.

One of the Bible verses I've been meditating on is "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving" Colossians 4:2. Through prayer, I've been challenged to keep praying and trusting God that He's working even when I don't see anything in front of me.



SAMS News

Celebrating news from the SAMS family

Luke and Pen Pratt, Santiago, Chile

Praise God that after a difficult year of adjusting to Zoom lectures, assignments and limited placement experience, Luke has completed his second year. They were so thankful that Pen was able to secure a job in August which allowed her to work from home. Pray for Emily who will be starting nursery school in March. The initial wave of Covid deaths has affected some of the local Anglican churches. Pray for the political situation which is more peaceful at the moment as an amended Constitution will be voted on in the future.

SAMS General Council News

During 2019 and early 2020, SAMS Ireland appointed 3 new council members. We are delighted that Noel Boyd (Donegal), Alison Hutchinson (Belfast) and Ven. Elizabeth Cairns (Mulavilly, Portadown) have taken up posts on the SAMS Ireland General Council. Each one has spent time in South America and has clearly demonstrated a heart for the church in Latin America. SAMS Ireland will benefit from their oversight and experience. Please pray for them and the entire General Council as they exercise wisdom and due governance.

Garden Project (Siwok Foundation) - News from Alec Deane

There has been quite a lot happening in Northern Argentina in recent months. The drilling rig has been busy with 4 successful new 'perforations'. These clean sources of water will improve hygiene and help with drip irrigation of planted crops. At the beginning of November, Alec announced that Siwok foundation had been voted 1st out of 3 finalists in South America for prize money which would enable them to renovate and restore a building in Misión Chaqueña so that it can be used for teaching better food production for Wichi families.



MBE's for past Mission Partners

Mags Southern and Gwen Carlisle were honoured in the Queen's Birthday Honours List which was published in October. Both were recognised for services to education in Paraguay. Mags and Gwen were both senior teachers in St. Andrew's College, Asuncion since the early 1990's. The school was started by SAMS missionaries in the late 1960's to provide high quality education in English with the Gospel at its heart. Many significant people have been educated here, including the present Paraguayan President Mario Abdo Benítez. Mags and Gwen were both surprised and humbled at the news. "This was very much a recognition of the great team we were part of in the school". Mags and Gwen returned to the UK in March 2019 to retire near family in the North West of England.



The Road to Health

Beryl Baker has seen many things during her time in Paraguay as a nurse working among the people in the Chaco. Often the Chaco inhabitants are neglected, and placed well down the list when the Government implements different policies. The distance and inaccessibility of the Chaco has often been a barrier to speeding up the delivery of goods and services when they are most needed. Part of this problem has been addressed recently with the arrival of tarmac highway. Beryl has stressed the importance of this new piece of infrastructure. As a result, journey times will be reduced and travelling will be much safer. This will be especially important when serious health issues emerge and hospitalisation is necessary. Pray for Beryl as she adjusts to spending more time in Asuncion as she continues the process of relocation from the ranch.

Friday Night Live

5th February 2021

Due to the continuing uncertainty with Covid-19 restrictions, we will be hosting Friday Night live on FACEBOOK as a 'Premier' video at 7.30-8.30pm.

Please log on here: [Facebook.com/samsireland](https://www.facebook.com/samsireland)

Afterwards there will be the opportunity to join a Country 'Zoom' prayer time for: Chile, Paraguay, Peru
(see details on website and facebook nearer the time)



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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