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Inspiring Person, Inspiring People

a message from the SAMS Mission Director

"What keeps you going?" was the question someone asked me several years ago. It is a good question and it prompted me to think. Over a period of time of reflecting, praying and searching my heart and mind I came to the conclusion that my answer has to be...An Inspiring Person and inspiring people. The words of Napoleon show the choice before us.

"Everything in Christ astonishes me. His Spirit overawes me, and His will confounds me. Between Him and whoever else in the world, there is no possible term of comparison. He is truly a being by Himself."

Napoleon Bonaparte

Inspiring Person

Like Napoleon in the past, and one third of the world's population in the present, I find the most inspiring person in the history of the world is Jesus Christ. He is utterly unique. His character is impeccable. His life is remarkable. His grace is incredible. His kindness is indisputable. His Cross defies our full understanding and yet we can understand enough to see that it is a sacrifice of a different kind. One of His best friends Peter got it absolutely right...

"He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you are healed."
1 Peter 2:24

"For Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God."
1 Peter 3:18

He loves sinners but He hates sin. He is the friend of sinners and the enemy of sin. He is the sin breaker and the sinner lover. His death on the Cross has dealt with sin

and opened a new way...a path of forgiveness freedom and eternal life. His Resurrection means He really is with us ALWAYS! His coming again will be the climax of history and we need to be ready. What keeps me going and what motivates people in mission is the character, the compassion, the Cross and the commands of Jesus Christ. Contrary to the mood of our contemporary culture I believe He is who He claims to be, The Way, The Truth and The Life.

Inspiring People

The convictions shared above are at the heart of mission and they have inspired Christians throughout the generations. They inspire our SAMS Mission partners and the churches we are linked with in South America. They have changed lives. Disciples of Jesus Christ are willing to live and die for these convictions.

As I finish being a SAMS employee at the end of July 2018 this will be my last time writing in Buena Vista as Mission Director. For almost 50 years I have enjoyed

life in the SAMS worldwide family. Without hesitation I can say that so many SAMS missionaries, Council and Staff members, both past and present, have been inspiring people. They have been marked by a love for Christ, a passion for the Gospel, a Christlikeness in their living and a generosity in their giving of themselves in His service.

The Christ-focussed and Christ-shaped tradition of Captain Allen Gardiner continues to this day. Allen Gardiner was the founding member of SAMS. He died of starvation on a remote South American beach in the mid 19th Century. He was passionate about reaching people for Christ.

A Global Enterprise

Sadly we all know that sometimes we in the church can get it horribly wrong. We make mistakes. We hurt others. We fail our Lord. Having said that I can honestly say that there are no more inspiring people in the whole world than we find in the Body of Christ, the Church of God. We are a global enterprise with outlets all over the world. We look after people from birth to

death. We run ministries of care and compassion. We are to be found amongst the professionals in Santiago Chile, some of the poorest in Lima, Peru, the indigenous peoples of Northern Argentina, Paraguay and southern Chile to mention just a few.

Thank You

I am more than delighted that Stephen McElhinney will be my successor and please pray for him and the outstanding Gillian Lynn as they serve as the SAMS Staff Team in SAMS House. To them, to Archdeacon Andrew Forster our Chairperson, to the SAMS Council and SAMS family here, in South America, in SAMS International, and to my amazing wife Helen I say a sincere "THANK YOU."

May we never be retired but be REFIREd for Christ and be inspiring people in the power of His Holy Spirit!! Thank you to each one for partnership in the Gospel. Keep going!

God bless you richly and deeply!
Bishop Ken/Fanta



Cecilia Valdiviezo

After spending six blessed weeks with you, sharing about my ministry in Salta, I returned home. Every time I leave Ireland there is a mixture of emotions. I am grateful I can visit you every two years. I hope you can grasp a little of what God is doing in this part of the world. As believers, we are called to spread God's Word and His love to make a positive difference in the world. That is what the Church here seeks to do.

Recently I was invited to spend time at a Women's Retreat, helping with games and workshops. It was a privilege to share with these ladies. We were from different churches and backgrounds but we had the same goal.... "to be used by God" in our community.

In the last few weeks I started getting involved in our church programs for the year ahead. Once again I will be helping with the youth and women. We also expect to do a Mission Team trip in winter to a remote place to help a local church in children's, youth and women's ministry.

We have started Sunday school, children's Happy Hours and Romance Academy again. I have been speaking in and visiting different schools and sharing the program. Please keep us in your prayers.

Cecilia



How long have you been in Paraguay?

Mags: 33 years
Gwen 35 years.

What do you see as some of the greatest needs in Paraguay in 2018?

Paraguay is growing rapidly and there is a lot of investment. In many ways it is very blessed at this moment in time. Even so,

Paraguay is still seen as a corrupt country. Please pray for leaders of the country to be honest and work with integrity. There is still a lot of poverty especially in the countryside. We'd ask you to pray for a government who will look after the poor.

Share with us one of your recent encouragements.

In school we are encouraged by our pupils in assembly times and

Bible studies as they take them seriously and they listen with respect. They are enthusiastic about helping others and will quickly plan something to raise funds and visit.

We have been very encouraged when we see ex pupils setting up charities to help their country. Two ex pupils are making prosthetic hands on a 3D printer and seeing people being able to hold things and work. We have seen ex pupils who struggled at school going on to work with other charities and

"Two ex pupils are making prosthetic hands on a 3D printer and seeing people being able to hold things and work."

even take a lead in some. We are seeing our pupils in politics too. One is the main candidate in the running for president. Another is in another party and standing for vice president if that party wins. The head of the Annexe has been encouraging the parents to take a more active part and realise that

they can do things for themselves. They have been doing very well and we are beginning to see a difference.

Many people pray for you and for St Andrew's College and the Annexe School. What are some of the most important things we can pray for you and for the schools?

Pray for the school as it enters a period of change. We hope to leave here at the end of the year and that means there will have to be a new head. Pray for that person as they take over, that they may be able to lead the pupils on in their journey with Jesus.

The Annexe school has lost some pupils because they have moved to new housing which has been built in Zeballos Cue. They thought they were going to a new school but have since returned because it hadn't started yet. Others have had to move to higher ground because of flooding. The area isn't good for living in and many will probably move out eventually. Please pray for the future of the school if the pupils move away.



Simplicity of Grace

by **Chris & Hannah Agnew**
Lima, Peru

Time and time again we have been confronted with the simplicity of the grace of God. Babies, when born, are incredibly dependent on the simple things: love, food and care. Within this environment, through time and effort from both them and their parents, they grow and mature.

In Nazareno it has been wonderful to watch young leaders invite their friends and peers (*one girl invited 7 friends, and they turned up!*), then minister to one another on the retreat just before Easter. It has been such a privilege for us to gently push and prod from the sidelines, cheer these guys on and celebrate fruitfulness with them as one guy called Diego came to the Lord on the Alpha weekend, with many others encountering the love of Christ in fresh ways. One other girl asked if we could see about getting a Bible for her!

Meanwhile, in the Cathedral we have had Alpha breakfast every Sunday, with a solid group of about 10-12 adults coming, and about 5 children. This dynamic is incredibly life-giving and challenging in the same breath, but what an honour to celebrate with one woman called Yanina as she decided to get baptised (*Hannah was her "spiritual Godmother"*), and at the same time journey with a family going through divorce (*the Dad and 2 boys, aged 9 and 7 are some of the most committed to Alpha*). Last week the 9 year old said that he couldn't believe how every week when they watch the video there is a story that directly relates to what they're going through.

Don't you just love how God speaks, comforts and reveals himself!

We have been struck with the simplicity of what we have been doing: relationships, food, conversation, questions, prayer and journeying alongside people. It's not rocket science. Whilst at times we have felt like we are not contributing much, God has used this simple combination of love, food and care to bless people. From baptisms to salvations to beautiful moments of spontaneous prayer over families and individuals, the grace of God is truly wonderful, especially when seen at work in communities of people seeking the way of Jesus together.

"Grace is not opposed to effort, it is opposed to earning" said Dallas Willard. We do not earn any of the blessings that come our way, but we see the fruits of simple effort; involvement in people's lives, demonstrating love, facilitating community and gently but persistently provoking people towards Jesus. Such is the grace of God that prodigals like Diego and Yanina can come home to find arms outstretched, and the elder brothers like us can discover once again the joy of the presence of God.

New Mission Director

The Rev Stephen McElhinney, Rector of St Columba's, Derryvolgie, has been appointed Mission Director of SAMS UK and Ireland.



Stephen will take up his role in June. He succeeds Bishop Ken Clarke who is retiring at the end of July. A member of the SAMS Council for the past 10 years, Stephen has travelled extensively in South America.

Originally qualifying in Optometry, Stephen was ordained in June 2005 and served as a member of the staff team of Kill O' the Grange Parish Church, Dublin, before moving to Drumglass Parish, Dungannon. He went to Derryvolgie in 2011 and was later instituted as Rector of the parish.

Stephen is married to Cathy. After they married, they travelled in South America for 3 months, visiting many SAMS mission partners. They have three children, Ruby (17), Patrick (16) and Scott (12).

His association with SAMS dates back before Bishop Clarke's directorship. Alongside Geoff Hamilton, Stephen pioneered the concept of short-term mission with SAMS, serving in Paraguay for two months during 1990.

"SAMS has a special place in my heart. I am looking forward to building on the work of previous directors, mission partners and supporters and to taking us where God is leading," Stephen said.

"Things are changing in mission agencies and with the challenges also come opportunities. I am looking forward to getting out and about, meeting Rectors and others, and flying the flag for SAMS."

Alf Cooper



BUENA VISTA SUMMER 2018

How long have you lived in Chile?

I was born in Chile and my full name is Alfred Philip Cooper Ricards Chavez. I left Chile to come to school in England and then later returned after Theological training and sensing God's call through SAMS. I met my wife Hilary Barrett, a daughter in the well known SAMS missionary family.

You were an enthusiastic atheist, how did you become a passionate disciple of Jesus Christ?

I was at school in England and I was influenced by a good atheist French teacher. I became a Marxist, an atheist and an existentialist. At Bristol University I tried to convert 2 Christians to my Atheism and they told me about the Lord Jesus Christ and the resurrection. It suddenly became crystal clear to me that in fact Jesus Christ did rise from the dead and that this was not some kind of sentimental - romantic - religious idea. If it was true that he had risen from the dead, then I had some serious thinking to do. A few days later I was hitchhiking through Segovia and I prayed, "Lord if this is true come in to my life" and everything changed.

In the next Buena Vista we will hear what happens next



News from St Andrew's College, Asuncion, Paraguay

We are thrilled to know that Carlos de la Sobera will take over as Head of St Andrews from end of January 2019. Carlos is a USA/Paraguayan citizen, having been born in the USA to Paraguayan parents. He is fluent in both English and Spanish. He came to Paraguay at 9 years old but returned to the USA for his university education. He is very well qualified. He taught in the American school in Asuncion before going to work at a school in Nigeria for 6 years. On his return he was appointed as superintendent of Faith Christian schools which belong to a big Pentecostal church in Paraguay.

He is married and has a 15 year old daughter, Sarah. He is a pastor in the Pentecostal church and has seen growth in his congregation over the past few years.

Editor: Thank you to all who have been praying about this appointment. Please pray for all who will be a part of this transition and for Gwen and Mags as they prepare for their next step.



Date for your diary

Next year Friday Night Live will be held on Friday 1st February 2019 at 7.30pm in the Craigavon Civic Centre. Put the date in your diary!! Look forward to seeing you there!



Summer Teams 2018

Two joint SAMS/Exodus Teams will be going to Lima, Peru in July. One Team is from Holywood Parish and includes 2 girls from Mossley Parish and Ballyclare Parish.

A Team of 8 from Annaghmore Parish will be travelling to Paraguay in July. The men will be building another church in the Chaco. The ladies will serve with women and children.



Claire Holmes Interviews

For over 10 years in Concepcion, Paraguay, Saul and Norma and their family have provided incredible hospitality for indigenous people who are very far from home and in great need. They share with us some of the realities of this mission of care and compassion. Their good friend Claire Holmes (SAMS Mission Partner in Concepcion) interviewed them recently...

How long have you been managing the 'Indigenous Shelter' and what changes have you seen during that time?

The shelter was moved from the town centre church to the Inmaculada area in 2007. We have been here since then. In the beginning we had 10-15 people a week, coming in from different communities for health care etc. Over the years that number has risen as thankfully the indigenous

people now receive a small allowance from the government for children and the elderly. Now most weeks we have at least 30 - 40 people.

As the original building is small, having been built to accommodate 10-15 people, we regularly have to use the onsite church building for accommodation. This brings it's own challenges as the church is also used for meetings with local children and young people.

Do you have fixed hours where you attend to the people?

We usually close the shelter for a few weeks at Christmas, but otherwise it is always open. At 10 p.m we lock up, but as most people arrive by boat and at different times, we can get woken up at night to let people in. Also many pregnant ladies stay as their due date approaches and we often take them to the hospital during the night.

What are some of the challenges or things you would like prayer for?

With so many people staying it can be a challenge to keep the place clean. Also we don't permit alcohol and occasionally we have problems with people coming in drunk and we have to ask them to leave.

We ask for prayer for patience, firmness and love as we want to do everything with love and respect. Sometimes that can be hard especially when we are tired, and attending to so many people. There is no other shelter nearby and no government provision so they all come here.

Please pray for protection for us as a family and that our children Beti (18) and Ale (17) will understand. Also pray that as a church God will help and guide us in this ministry.

Thank you to all who support us and pray for us.

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION

Please do read the extra page with this Buena Vista entitled 'An important and urgent message'. It is very important that you respond. If we do not receive a response then we cannot send you any further Buena Vistas or any other SAMS information. Thank you so much for your support and your help! It is deeply appreciated.



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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