



sams
IRELAND

South American Mission Society

Buena Vista - Summer 09

BUENA VISTA

Aspiring to be a praying, serving, affirming, listening,
partnering and transforming mission agency.

Dear Friends



Dear Friends

Warm greetings from all of us in SAMS Ireland. We see today a world of economic chaos, uncertainty about the future in the developing and so-called developed world and attacks from all sides on the Christian faith. Yet what an opportunity to show how relevant the Gospel message is and how important mission is in our lives today. We in SAMS Ireland are greatly encouraged as our work evolves through God's Holy Spirit. We reflect on **Friday Night Live** when 450 plus people of all ages took part in an exciting evening of sharing and learning. We look forward to the **btn** teams heading to Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay this year and the individuals from

South America who are being placed in churches in Ireland through our **fusion** programme. We give thanks for all the volunteers and churches who give of their time and finance to enable these programmes and other projects to happen. Keep on praying and thank you for the support which so encourages the church in mission both at home and overseas.

Yours in Him

Denis Johnston

News in Brief

Congratulations to Mr Ronnie Warren (St John's, Lurgan) and Canon Robert Neill (Rector of Drumbo Parish) who have been appointed Chair and Vice-chair respectively of the SAMS Ireland Northern Committee. We wish them God's blessing in their new roles.

Rt Rev Peter Bartlett a former mission partner in Bolivia has been consecrated Bishop of Paraguay. Bishop Peter succeeds Bishop John Ellison who retired last year.

John and Phyllis Logan (St Patrick's, Coleraine) returned in May from another visit to Brazil. The Monte Horebe mission, which they are heavily involved in, is working to raise the standard of living in Itaperucu through a variety of social, educational and health projects. We are also thankful for the visit of Arnold and Louise McClean and Rena Lindsay earlier in the year.

Valerie Thom, Ian Boyd, Ruth Cowan and Beth McCabe will be visiting projects in Brazil including the Reencontro Centre which Valerie has been linked to for many years. The dates of this trip are 27th July to 13th August.

I know it's the summer but we are planning an expansion of our Christmas gift programme. Several countries, numerous church communities and significant individuals will benefit from Christmas gift ideas. Contact us for further details.

Bishop Ken Good and Denis Johnston represented SAMS Ireland at the recent SAMS International meeting in London. There were other representatives from Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the USA. This was a time of sharing, learning and encouragement in a period of transition in world mission.

We are grateful to five members of the Northern Ireland Prison Service who have undertaken a strenuous mountain climbing expedition in the Andes. Part of this exercise was to raise funds for the Red Box project.

Chaco Project



One of the only two landlocked countries in South America, Paraguay is positioned on both banks of the River Paraguay, bordering Argentina, Brazil and Bolivia. Because of its central location in South America it is sometimes called, '*El Corazón de América*' - The Heart of America.

The word '*chaco*' in Spanish comes from the Quechua word *chaqu* meaning "hunting land". It refers to a sparsely-populated lowland region of the Río de la Plata basin, and covers over half the total area of Paraguay. It is one of South America's last agricultural frontiers, with a semi-arid climate.

The Chaco lacks basic infrastructure and modern amenities. The vast majority of people living there belong to indigenous groups living at subsistence level based on cattle farming. Nurse Beryl Baker offers

medical treatment to around 18,000 indigenous people in the Paraguayan Chaco. Beryl has dedicated nearly 30 years of her life to this area and describes herself as an 'orderly, gynaecologist, midwife and dentist', treating anything from TB to gunshot wounds and snakebite. The needs are considerable and alongside meeting daily health challenges, Beryl trains indigenous health promoters to meet some basic community health needs.



Damiana Galeano who has chronic arthritis, TB and cataracts.

Please Pray

- For the provision of financial and practical resources to enable Beryl to serve and treat those who are suffering, so that deaths can be prevented.
- For the provision of funds to provide fuel to get desperately needed water into the communities.
- For Beryl who ministers in a complex, dangerous and demanding environment.

Beryl needs money and prayer as getting medicines in Paraguay is fraught with complications. Getting medicines of any kind is difficult. Every month Beryl tries to source medicines on her monthly visits into the capital city Asunción. Beryl supplies a chain of health workers, trained by her, who live in Indian communities so help can be immediate. The following is what she will buy with any money that is raised: medicines for fevers, painkillers and basic antibiotics. SAMS has decided to create a project which supports Beryl and her ministry; For further details contact us at SAMS House.

“You can give without loving but you cannot love without giving.”

A. Carmichael



Amancio Ruiz organising transport to the clinic.

Youth Ministry Project



Peru is possibly one of the most diverse countries in the world. From the Amazon rainforest in the east, through soaring Andean peaks down to the desert coastal plains on the western Pacific coast, there is something for everyone. Famous for the stunning “Machu Pichu” Inca city in the mountains, lilting pan-pipe music, colourful clothing and of course Paddington Bear, Peru also lays claim to the source of the mighty Amazon, the humble potato and the oldest civilisation of the Americas.

The diocesan youth ministry is yearning for growth in faith. With bags of passion but short on resources the youth ministry’s focus is on training and equipping leaders to evangelise, disciple and send out young people in service. It provides resources and materials to leaders and their various groups. It also delivers training events and organises numerous summer youth camps. The hope is to expand these programmes and to help churches

to have a vibrant and Christ-centred youth ministry. With a boost, many more young people could be equipped and resourced.

Lizbeth Varillas, the diocesan youth ministry coordinator, observes that “the Diocese of Peru is growing and the churches are reaching areas where there are many young people who still don’t know God. I believe it is important to grow the number of youth leaders which is one of the tasks of the youth ministry, and also one of my heart’s desires. We have an opportunity to motivate and walk with young people enabling them to grow, learn and mature in faith, ministry and service. In this way we hope that they, as leaders, might encourage young people from their local churches and wider communities to truly know God.”

“Resourcing, valuing and supporting young people is the best way to invest in a prosperous future.”

SAMS is working closely with Paul and Sarah Tester, SAMS Mission Partners, living and working in Lima, Peru. Paul's focus is on youth work development and Sarah's on working with children through The Ark educational play scheme and Sunday schools. Together they are working

Sonrisa Fund

Running in parallel to the youth ministry programme there is a student sponsorship scheme which values and resources young adults who have the potential to continue with their studies within an institute or university setting. The Sonrisa Fund (Smile Fund) provides bursaries to pay at least part of the costs of higher education.

Karen recently graduated with her degree in education, specialising in early years. She has spent the last five years studying and so there was a great celebration of her achievement. She is a leader in the youth group at Holy Trinity church in Lima and would not have been able to study without the help of people from overseas whom she has never met.

Kevi is hoping to follow in her footsteps by studying graphic design. He is the guitarist in the worship group at St John the Evangelist's church and is involved with the church's youth work and the diocesan youth ministry. Without help, it is unlikely he will be able to achieve his dream of running his own design business.

to help children and young people become mature followers of Christ. We have developed a project which aims to raise funds to support this important work in Peru. For further details on the project go to the website or contact us at the SAMS House.

Dear God

We believe that resourcing, valuing and supporting young people is an investment worth making.

We pray for the diocese of Peru, the diocesan youth ministry coordinator, Lizbeth Varillas and every young person who belongs to the numerous churches and youth initiatives.

We pray for growth in the number of youth leaders. Grant all those in leadership the wisdom, vision and skills to resource and encourage young people to mature in faith.

We pray also for the student sponsorship scheme which enables young people from challenging circumstances to enter higher education.

We commit all those in leadership and every young person to You. Give them strength to grow in You, and to keep alive their joy in Your creation.

Amen

Sewing Project

THE SEWING PROJECT



Delya lives on the edge of Paraguay's capital city Asunción on a sandy plot. There is no running water but a deep well. Cooking is done on a charcoal brazier. There isn't enough money for a fridge. There are eight people, including children, in the extended family. Delya's husband left her when her children were small but she managed to provide for them by taking in washing and collecting plastic bottles and bottle caps for recycling.

Poverty can rob people of hope. Many women in Paraguay have never had the support to complete primary education. The sewing project is simple and small, yet for the women who participate, opportunities are created. It enables new skills to be developed such as using a sewing machine and making clothes. Like all beginners, frustration with slow

progress, the need to concentrate, getting seams straight, hems even, and unpicking what's gone wrong are experienced, yet in the midst of this a community grows.

Having the sewing workshop in the shanty town has opened up new possibilities for the women. Delya told me, "This sewing workshop is my real work; it's a joy." Starting with nothing, in three months Delya has learnt to cut out from patterns, hem, do straight and zigzag stitches. She's made tops, trousers, cushions and place mats. You can sense a hunger for new learning. The next steps are to fit zips, tailor clothes using a tape measure and tackle crochet, all the while polishing the basic skills. The women are keen to come to the sewing workshop because, besides the advances in learning, it gives them a sense of belonging which

raises self-esteem and creates a sense of empowerment. I thank God for His investment in this project. I'm excited to see where it's leading. Many people from disadvantaged backgrounds in Paraguay have few opportunities to buy new clothes or learn new skills as productive as this. The women are learning professional skills for self-sufficiency through making clothes and soft furnishings to sell. With the money they make from sales, most want to buy their own machines. This is the first step.

Caroline Gilmour-White, Project Co-ordinator in Paraguay.

The sewing project doesn't take place in isolation. Local Anglican churches in Paraguay are committed to enabling children and young people to grow on a personal, social and spiritual level. The sewing



project establishes a natural focal point which creates a safe and supportive environment for women, children and young people to gain valuable life skills. People living below the poverty line cannot afford the luxury of toys, therefore providing access to toys as part of the sewing project's wider commitment to basic community development creates the potential for learning through play, giving a golden opportunity for mothers and toddlers to learn together. SAMS are backing this project and project packs can be viewed on our website and copies can be sourced from the SAMS House. This important relational work is a practical example of sharing God's love in Paraguay, providing physical and spiritual nourishment and giving mothers, children and young people the building blocks to move forward.

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." A. Fran



The SAMS Ireland **fusion** programme offers placements to people from overseas within a parish setting in Ireland. It is also committed to developing formal and informal training opportunities for volunteers.

Participants from Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile have made considerable contributions to numerous churches throughout Ireland. Both Latin partners and local churches have benefited.

This is the story from Virginia Morales who was placed in Derry & Raphoe Diocese.

The two months that I spent in Letterkenny as part of the SAMS Ireland **fusion** programme was such a significant time. The invitation was to go there and learn about the Irish Culture, their faith, and

an opportunity to serve and share in a local church of Ireland parish and the wider community. While I was there, people opened their homes, invited me for cups of tea and kept me warm with their stories around the fireplaces. I keep many of their stories safe in my heart and I feel blessed to have met such special and kind people. Two very special people I meet while visiting were Rev Stewart, and Eve Wright. Stewart is an amazing man of God with a special capacity for listening to people with empathy, and always ready to serve with passion. I am forever thankful for their kindness and the generosity of the many friends I made in their community. My experience in Letterkenny was a blessed one. I was able to meet with people in their homes, visit in a local hospital, and work in different schools and participate in Conwal and Gartan church confirmation groups and share in various services. I know that the time in Ireland was much more than a simple cultural experience. Now I need to take time to pray and listen to what God wants next. Pray with me and pray for me, my dear friends. Everything is possible with God. Thanks to SAMS Ireland for enabling me to participate in the **fusion** programme.



Virginia Morales

Peter & Sally Bartlett - from Parr to Paraguay

It's a long way from Parr to Paraguay! But that's the move that Peter and Sally Bartlett made just a few months ago, as Peter became Anglican bishop of Paraguay at the invitation of its leaders. The Bartlett's have two grown-up children, David and Karen, and spent the last three years at Parr, St Peter's in the Diocese of Liverpool. But they are no strangers to South America, serving as SAMS mission partners in La Paz, Bolivia, from 1992 to 2005, where they built up the congregation of Cristo el Salvador and then focused on discipleship and leader training. The church continues to prosper under the leadership of Bolivian Ronald Irene and his wife Nicky.

Peter and Sally gave their lives to Christ as teenagers and it was in Yorkshire that their careers and relationship developed. While Sally taught, Peter served as assistant warden at the crypt for homeless men at St George's Church, Leeds, followed by 12 years as a social

worker before the call came to overseas service. During the Bolivia years Peter was ordained and the subsequent time in Parr saw them give the church a springboard for growth. Sally worked in the parish alongside her job as a Learning Assistant specialising in children with additional needs. As they turn to Paraguay with its huge challenges, they seek with God's grace to make disciples and embrace the ministry of raising up and empowering, through the Holy Spirit, new leaders to extend the mission of the city churches and to help the indigenous churches develop their mission calling.

Pray for Peter and Sally daily for encouragement and wisdom and may God's blessing be upon the various areas of ministry which are church planting, leadership training, school oversight, teacher training, Bible translation, youth and children's work, marriage enrichment and various areas of community development.



Church gathering Northern Paraguay

Red Box Project



The Red Box Project is committed to supporting people and projects in South America. Cecilia Valdiviezo, the **Red Box** Co-ordinator, was with us in Ireland for several weeks at the beginning of 2009. It was a packed programme for Cecilia as she visited and participated within numerous churches. Cecilia returned to Argentina and the movement of people continued as two of our Red Box Project gap year volunteers have just returned home.



Naomi Francey
Gilford Parish (Down & Dromore)

My Gap Year.....

Where to start? It is difficult to sum up nine months in Argentina into 200 words, but I'll try my best. My work involved working with kids clubs, soup kitchens, children's hospital, being a teacher assistant in a primary and secondary school and basically showing people the love of God in all that I did. Would I do it all again? YES!

I think that the highlight of my trip would have been working in the Mirador, a soup kitchen just outside the city of Salta where we fed the kids, helped them with their homework and played with them in the park. These kids were cheeky, funny and energetic. They also had patience with my lack of Spanish and were just great to be with.

They came from the surrounding shanty town area and the love I had for them was so special.

Their lives seemed so carefree, even though I'm sure some of them had many struggles hidden behind their smiles.

Argentina itself is a tremendous country; I loved it whenever I got the opportunity to travel. The Iguazu Falls bordering Argentina and Brazil were amazing, the geysers of Chile were breathtaking and the Bolivian

countryside was so peaceful. Salta is a great city, surrounded by beautiful mountains and filled with people who have beautiful hearts. I know I have left many friends and a new family there and I will return when God wants me to go again, I hope it's sooner rather than later!



Megan Johnston
Lisburn Cathedral (Connor)

I spent nine months of my gap year in Salta, Northern Argentina as a volunteer for SAMS Ireland. I was based in a local Church called "El Redentor" where I was a leader of the children's Bible study club. I participated in the weekly youth group and worked as the Pastor's secretary. I taught in private and public schools helping as a language

assistant, which you can imagine really opened up my eyes to the extremes in society. I had my own English classes, which were a real blessing during my time in Salta as I have no teaching qualifications, although it was encouraging to experience God's hand at work. Please pray for my students as they still continue with my online English classes, that they would have an open mind to learn.

Red Box Project

My nine months in Salta was a significant time in which I learnt many things not just about faith and, relying wholeheartedly on God but it was also character building and an opportunity to learn things about myself. Having made life-long friends and extended family in Argentina, I know that if God calls, one day I will return to Salta to and it will be exciting to see how much the people have developed and strengthened not only in their faith but also as a Church body. This is my prayer.

CORE AIMS

- Support children's and youth work
- Resource leadership training
- Develop language skills
- Facilitate the soup kitchen
- Enable educational sponsorship

God calls and sends us into our communities to participate in His mission. It demands identification without loss of identity: it means going beyond our comfort zones and entering other people's stories, as Christ entered ours.



Enjoying a seat at the end of a kids' club!



Love for Life

For the past two years SAMS Ireland has developed a very successful link with Love for Life which is a project that supports young people and their carers in the area of Relationships and Sexuality Education. Love for Life is committed to the task of empowering young people through supporting their personal development. Its vision is to influence change within society so that young people have a healthy respect for themselves, relationships and sex. Love for Life's work is underpinned with an acceptance of each individual as being incredibly unique and special, irrespective of what choice they make in any area of their lives.

The link with SAMS Ireland has enabled the programmes to be delivered in Spanish to churches, schools and youth groups in Paraguay. The feedback from Paraguay has been very positive and as a result of this we have been

asked to present the programme in other South American countries. The Diocese of Northern Argentina which is linked with the Diocese of Down and Dromore has identified a need for such a programme among their young people and during the summer a skilled team of practitioners representing SAMS and Love for Life will visit both urban and rural areas in Argentina. The programme will be presented by Alison Crawford from Willowfield Parish a former SAMS mission partner in Paraguay and Graham Hare (Magheralin Parish) who works with Love for Life. This is a great opportunity to encourage the links with the Diocese of Northern Argentina and to share skills and resources in a significant and practical way. Please pray for all the arrangements, the translation of the programme, for every young person who participates in the programme and for health and safety in travel.



beyond the norm

The **btn** programme aims to give participants the opportunity to encounter South America within a supportive environment. It creates new experiences, new opportunities and new challenges. It provides the setting in which volunteers experience mission and cultural diversity first-hand. This year Geoff Hamilton will lead a team of 13 from Annaghmore Parish in Armagh diocese. This is a developing story as Annaghmore has been a supporting

church for many years, and the link has evolved and become more relational. Pamela Gomez from Salta in Argentina was placed within the parish as part of the SAMS **fusion** programme. Pamela was deeply enriched through her placement and she will be one of the people overseeing the team's summer placement. The local rector Dorothy McVeigh will be part of the **btn** team which will participate in various projects.



Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile.

Mission Paraguay

Each year people from churches in Ireland and GB travel to Paraguay to share with local communities in a variety of projects organised through the Anglican Church in Paraguay in conjunction with SAMS Ireland. Initially involved with providing new buildings for the local church, Mission Paraguay has now developed its involvement in areas where the local church is active to include improvements to basic housing in the poorer areas of Asunción, the capital; providing new homes and water storage facilities for people in the Chaco and funding a range of activities which resources children and young people. This year there will be the opportunity for volunteers to participate in the evolving sewing workshops.

As we live in the local communities we are able to visit people in their homes, build relationships with fellow Christians living in very different circumstances in another culture, to laugh and cry together and to worship as one. We gain an appreciation of the work of mission partners such as Claire Holmes and how she and others, working through the local church, are able to share the love of God and bring people into a closer relationship with Him.

The July group departs Belfast on 9th July and returns on 31st July. This group will be based in Roque Alonso, on the outskirts of Asunción and the group includes Moira Lindsay, Margaret Collins, Alice Johnston and Claire West.

The August group departs from Belfast on 31st July and returns to Belfast on 21st August. This group will be based in Concepción, roughly six hours drive from Asunción and the group includes Noel Boyd, Michele Sheridan, Peter Sheridan, Claire Hinchliff, Catherine McElreavey, Margaret McElreavey and Lindsay Workman. At the same time there will be a group based in the Chaco at Rio Verde; this group includes, Lee Campbell and Susan McCaul.





Quarantined Worship

Mahatma Gandhi was once addressed by an enthusiastic young Christian who was trying to convert the Indian leader. Gandhi listened to him for some time then simply said this, 'I cannot hear what you are saying for the noise of who you are.' Quarantined worship is deeply flawed and introverted; it becomes nothing more than noise.

As humans, our identity is shaped primarily by the stories that we hear and tell and we all live within many stories. Hearing, re-telling, pondering, celebrating and continuing God's story is a significant and challenging task. Choosing God's story as the primary narrative helps shape our lives. Through worship we glimpse the central metaphor which shows us the nature of God, human existence, and of the world. At the core of the story we find love, a love for God, a love for one's neighbour, and a love for one's enemy.

In our everyday lives we are constantly fed a diet of spin, which is designed to shape us according to

the dominant stories of our society and to make us pliant, well-adjusted, and unsatisfied consumers. If we accept and live by this story, there's no chance of us or our churches being places of hope. Thankfully God's story is our reference point and if we are willing to embrace His narrative we can discover and participate in something which impacts the wider world for good.

Quarantined worship is a form of egocentricity. Worship that moves beyond self is in essence an expression of social action which seeks to improve human welfare, develop community values and serve others in a respectful manner. Maybe if we come out of 'quarantine' we might just admit that we have not fully grasped the truth and implications of Christ's death and resurrection. Worship equips us for mission. Envisioned by our encounter with the God of peace, we go back into our families, communities and wider world equipped with hope and vision.

That which we claim to be aware of in our souls must become visible before it is credible. Likewise, our actions need to spring from the depths of our spirit if they are to be of substance and significance. True worship means involvement with God's world. One characteristic of worship is its missional dimension which is the opposite of quarantine. Being missional is about finding out how to be good news. It's about addressing real needs before perceived needs. Our theology needs to be worked out in the midst of anger, despair and hopelessness. When worship imprisons itself upon the lives of individuals and church communities it naturally moves out onto the street.

When the people of God understand worship in this way, they will be a people who are an integral part of this world with all its consumerist

trappings, but they will be different, not in the clothes they wear, the rituals they keep, or the songs they sing, but in the lives they live. Christian worship always reflects the culture out of which it is offered. Patterns of speech, styles of dress, senses of time, rhythms and harmonies of music, and styles of visual symbols vary widely depending on cultural contexts. At the same time, worship must not be enslaved to culture. It must remain prophetic, challenging any dimension of local culture that is at odds with the gospel of Christ.

The Franciscan Friar, Brother Samuel, observed that Christian communities must reinforce how broken they are, how vulnerable they are and how much in need of God's grace they will always be. We are all called beyond quarantined worship.



Pray For:

Claire Holmes as she concludes her current ministry at the end of the year in Concepción, Paraguay.

Cecilia Valdiviezo the Red Box Project Coordinator.

Give thanks for the work of **Naomi Francey**, **Megan Johnston** and **Helen King** as gap year volunteers in Argentina.

Gerardo and **Suyai Gimpel** mission partners serving in Chile.

Raquel Greco serving in youth ministry in Paraguay.

Hugo Vergara as he ministers in Northern Argentina.

Nick and **Catherine Drayson** serving the Indian church in Northern Argentina.

Lizbeth Varillas the diocesan youth ministry co-ordinator Peru.

SAMS fusion volunteers working in Ireland, **David Alanis** (Argentina), **Saray Martin** (Spain), **Esteban Alvarez** (Chile), and **Cristian Porre** (Chile).

Daniel and **Flavia Lescano** from Argentina who are in ministry training.

Samuel Lago from Chile who is in ministry training.

Date for your Diary

Friday Night Live 5th February 2010 Craigavon Civic Centre

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