



BUENA·VISTA

SUMMER EDITION 2010



MISSIONAL ○ INTENTIONAL ○ RELATIONAL



WARM CHRISTIAN GREETINGS FROM SAMS IRELAND.

We have seen much happening in our world during the past months; the Haiti and Chile earthquakes, the volcanic ash situation, various tornados and other disasters which bring us back to the sense of how much we need more than ever to rely on God and His grace. Mission is therefore top priority for all of us both at home and overseas. One of the recent privileges I had was to be invited as a guest to the SAMS USA Retreat and New Wineskins Conference. To be immersed for six days in worship, prayer and Bible Study and to learn at first hand from people involved in mission across the world about what is happening with the growth of the Gospel was inspirational. There are opportunities to join in global mission events during the summer in

our own country and I would encourage you if possible to try and attend some of these. In the USA I was also able to have time with four of the South American Bishops and leaders of other SAMS branches as we planned for future developing links among our diverse cultures. In SAMS Ireland we are continually grateful for your prayerful and financial support and in this issue of Buena Vista you will read of how all this is crucial for the spread of God's word at home and in Latin America.

Yours in Christ

Denis Johnston
General Secretary



BUENA·VISTA

NEWS IN BRIEF

● A BIG THANK YOU ●

We in SAMS Ireland were overwhelmed by the response to our Friday Night Live event. People commented on the atmosphere and spiritual uplift they felt as well as the information they received on mission. We are sorry that due to the

Civic Centre reaching its capacity on the night some people were unable to gain access, but we are making plans to sort this out for next year. Thank you to all who contributed to making this a memorable evening.

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TO CHILE WITH LOVE

Bishop Tito of Chile has expressed his thanks to all who contributed to the Chile earthquake fund. Over £10,000 has been sent so far from SAMS Ireland and this included a substantial amount from Bishops' Appeal as well as generous donations from parishes and individuals. There is an interview with Bishop Tito on the SAMS Ireland website.

LINK WITH ARGENTINA DEEPENS

Rt Rev Nick Drayson and his wife Catherine from Northern Argentina met with Bishop Harold Miller to discuss the link with the Diocese of Down and Dromore and how this could be further developed in the future. They also met Rev William Taggart and his wife Tracey, as the parish of St Katharine's in Belfast had helped to rebuild the church in Lote Uno following floods last year in Argentina.

PARTNERING IN PARAGUAY

SAMS Ireland is now the main link for the Esperanza Foster Home in Paraguay and also FEISA the further education college in Asuncion. We have had strong connections with these two organisations for many years and are pleased to be even more closely associated with the important work they are doing.

FAITH2SHARE

Bishop Ken Clarke recently represented SAMS Ireland at a Faith2Share and SAMS International meeting in Brazil. Discussions took place on the way forward for mission and on links with the Southern Cone in particular. This was a very positive time of sharing ideas and building up global connections. Unfortunately Bishop Ken was caught up in the volcanic ash situation and was stranded for six days in Portugal on his return journey.



Written by Paul and Sarah Tester

We have just had our medicals after spending two and a half years serving in Peru and as we looked through the list of health related issues from that time - a broken nose each amongst others - we are reminded that there are always difficulties when you decide to follow God's call. Yet God never ceases to amaze us with His care for us and His foresight in using all things for His purpose. As two people who God called to serve in Peru, starting with Sarah at the age of fourteen, we have simply said "ok then, we'll go" and God has been faithful and blessed us.

Reflecting on our first term of service in Peru, an amazing country where around half the population is either a child or a young person, we are delighted to see how God has taken the little we have to offer and multiplied it greatly. Paul has been supporting the Diocesan Youth Ministry, starting new youth ministries and helping equip and resource young people and their leaders, whilst Sarah has been ministering to children with educational play schemes, Sunday schools and in childcare projects. In each case we've seen God produce fruit and growth where we have just scattered seeds and worked as best we can.

As the diocese of Peru grows, the youth ministry, which is supported by SAMS Ireland, is following its vision of seeing strong youth ministries planted in each new mission. Paul has been excited to help enable the diocese to employ a youth co-ordinator (Lizbeth Varillas), and to plant several new youth ministries and strengthen others. He has seen youth leaders being trained and spending more time with God and has also witnessed growth in the number of young people choosing to follow Jesus through this ministry.

Sarah meanwhile has been working with nursery and primary school children through "The Ark" – an

educational play scheme – where she takes toys, crafts and the gospel message to missions in poor areas of Lima. Children have the chance to enjoy being children as they play

in a safe, loving environment. She shares a Bible story and activity with around a hundred children each week and to see them run to meet her each time she visits shows how much it means to them.

At our church, San Juan Evangelista she also helps with the Sunday school and the Compassion Child sponsorship centre.

We are looking forward to what God has in store for us in our second term in Peru!

**"we have just
scattered seeds
and worked as
best we can."**

PLEASE PRAY

- Thanking God for his care and provision for us and his blessings in our first term in Peru
- For more young people in Peru to choose to follow Jesus and for the youth ministry to be equipped and ready to disciple them.
- For the children of Peru to experience the love of their Creator God and to respond to Him.

Thank you to SAMS Ireland for all your prayers and support.





LIFE IN THE CHACO

Written by David Orritt (Co-ordinator, Mission Paraguay)

This is the home of Roberto Sanabria where he lives with his wife, 7 children and 17 grandchildren. They have no electricity or piped water supply. The local woodland is their toilet. There are many families living in similar conditions throughout the Paraguayan Chaco. Roberto's family is now moving into a new home built with adobe brick walls, concrete floor and corrugated metal roof. They have been provided with a long drop toilet. This was one of a number of new homes being funded through Mission Paraguay.

There are very few employment opportunities and Roberto provides for his family by growing sesame seed. In 2008 he had a bumper crop but the increasing drought problems in the Chaco are becoming worse and last year his crop withered and the yield was meagre. Stored rainwater from the seasonal heavy rain provides the only supply of wholesome drinking water, much healthier than collecting from the few small reservoirs which is home to local wildlife. One of Mission Paraguay's priorities is to provide underground storage tanks for rainwater.

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Susan McCaul from Eglinton (Derry & Raphoe) displays a banner for the new church at Rio Verde made in the sewing workshop which she helped to organise for local Paraguayan women. The church was another Mission Paraguay project completed in 2009.

Thank you to the Mission Paraguay volunteers from Ireland and England who travel each year to work through the Anglican Church in Paraguay to share the love of Jesus and to everyone who upholds our work in prayer and gives so generously to support our projects.

Where do you begin? I first went to Concepcion in 1999 as part of a SAMS 'Beyond the Norm' team that went out to do Children's work and some building. While I was there, the church invited me to return to Concepcion longer term, to my surprise not as a builder but to work with children and young people! I had known with certainty, even before they asked me to join the team there, that God wanted me to return one day.

In 2000 I set off, sent out by SAMS, for the beginning of a 3 year contract which ended up being more than 9 years. Concepcion is both a beautiful and a difficult place to live. Some have compared it to a Wild West town. It is not unusual for there to be horses and donkeys wandering around the streets looking for somewhere to graze, and the roads are full of motorbikes. When it rains properly you can paddle knee deep in water, and equally there can be months without rain where there is no point cleaning, because straight away everything is covered in a thick layer of red dust again. Perfect excuse I say for not dusting! Tarantulas can turn up to visit you at home, and did more than once, and snakes have been known to come to the Children's Club. We had a drunk hit the bishop who was dressed up as Goliath, thinking that he was defending the children from a giant. Teams were always a little surprised by frogs in the shower, and four legged friends in the kitchen. Over the years a mobile



Written by C

phone shop and internet café has appeared on every corner.

And then there are the people - open and friendly. Everyone who came to Concepcion took the children to their hearts. They are so special (as children everywhere are) with their dark eyes, big smiles, hugs and enthusiasm. Many of the people fight for survival on a daily basis, but mostly without complaining.

During my last few weeks in Paraguay, the children, young people, and the adults in all the different parts where I had worked put on a farewell, for me, and as I sat back and watched what God had done



SECOND NORM

laire Holmes

and allowed me to be a part of, and which I was leaving, at least for a time, it was bittersweet. The Lord opened the door into schools, both a school to teach English where I was able to make contacts that I wouldn't otherwise have been able to make, and another school to teach the Bible to about 250 children weekly. These were schools that we had prayed for, but hadn't gone to actively seek an opening in. God sent them to ask for us to go to them. A Children's Club started through a "Billy Graham Evangelistic Campaign" that was televised. The children came thinking there was a party on. There

are now about 70 children and young people every Saturday who attend that. Other adults and children's meetings were started by Bishop Andres who stopped by the side of a road, or in a community to talk to people. He talked to them about Jesus, and invited them to come back the next week with their friends. In other areas we saw that there was no church or Christian input, so we prayed, planned, and then opened a work with children and young people especially, but also with input to families. Many of these children are now coming to the youth group. There have been many encouragements, but also many discouragements, and battles, but through it all we have seen how The Lord accomplishes His Word – "I will build my church."

One of the best parts of the time in Paraguay was a growing team, with a passion for Jesus, and for the children and young people. This team – Norma, Zuny, Ana, Adriana, Narcisa, Cristina, Fabio, and Lorena, under the leadership of Bishop Andres, and Bishop Peter are carrying on this work. Please pray more and more for them – for energy, wisdom, ideas, and the ability and desire to keep going more and more. Please pray too for more leaders. I thank God for the team there and also for you and for all of your support for SAMS, for Concepcion and for myself over many years. Many of you pray and give. Many have... (CONTINUED OVER PAGE)

**"I will build
my church."**



(CONTINUED FROM PAGE NINE)

...come to be a part of what God is doing in Paraguay and in other parts of South America. Teams have made such a difference in so many ways and the nationals that they went to be with and to help still remember them even years later. Thank you. It makes a difference. We all need to keep making a difference for Him.

Now I have been home since just before Christmas. I have been with SAMS, and have had the privilege of visiting many different churches, some for the first time. I am also seeking God's will for the future though I am no further on at this moment than I was in December. All in good time.

Thank you again and God Bless.

Gracias.

Claire Holmes



JOURNEYS END

Written by Esteban Alvarez

The SAMS fusion programme offers placements to people from overseas within a parish setting in Ireland. The fusion programme also seeks to link local churches in Ireland with short, medium or long-term projects overseas. Esteban Alvarez from Chile is presently concluding a two year placement in St. Saviour's Craigavon (Down & Dromore).

“A step in this journey that is nearly finished in this endless journey of serving Christ”.

How can I summarise two wonderful years serving in St Saviour's, Church of Ireland through SAMS Ireland? I think it is impossible! But I would like to say that God has been with me during my time here, by challenging me, moulding me, working in my character as a Christian, using me in ways that I never thought or imagined and fully using the gifts that He gave to me; Strategy, teaching the Word of God in creative ways, leading the worship, pastoral support, kids and youth ministry, etc. I think, what I am trying to say is “thank you God for all that you have done in my life and in the lives of

many people that I have encountered during my time here”.

I would like to mention just a few highlights of my work here. Firstly, I have had the privilege to be involved in a team with Church Army volunteers and this has allowed me to gain experience from an innovative agency and I have been able to share my experience from South America with my Church Army colleagues. Secondly, having the freedom and support to train Youth Leaders, which will further develop the ministry in St Saviours, Craigavon. Thirdly, I have been enriched by the experience of visiting different churches and sharing within the Church of Ireland the passion for local and worldwide mission and especially the SAMS Ireland vision of



resourcing local and overseas churches.

Finally what a privilege simply sharing over these past two years the gospel with children and young people in different parts of your country. I would highly recommend this experience to people from South

America, who have God's call on their lives and I will encourage potential volunteers from my country to take the challenge of serving in Ireland.

I would also highly recommend that churches in Ireland participate as SAMS Ireland placement churches. This enables young men and women from South America to experience church in a practical and significant way, creating the opportunity for mutual learning. It gives through different cultures a passion for Christ, preaching of the gospel and an ability to witness for Him everywhere, regardless of age, gender or locality.

A significant chapter of my journey is nearly over, and there are so many people that I want to thank but if I do, that would be an endless list. So, I will just say:

Thank you to SAMS Ireland.
Thank you to St Saviours, their leaders and all the parishioners, that have always shown to me so much love,
Thank you to Carryduff Parish, who

will be supporting me during my training in the Anglican Bible College in Chile. Thank you to all the people that I met during these two years and especially those who have supported me in prayer during my time here.

“A significant chapter of my journey is nearly over”



I know that in my heart I have mixed feelings about going back home because even if I do miss my family, friends and country, I know that I leave behind a lot of people that I love and sincerely appreciate, but as we say in Chile

“this is not a farewell, this is just a see you soon”. May God bless you and your country richly and all the Christian work here, and definitely I will keep in touch but I will appreciate your continual prayers for me and my future ministry. I will be praying for all of you as well.

In the Love of God,
Esteban Alvarez
(SAMS Ireland Volunteer)



NOVIDADES

D O B R A S I L

WRITTEN BY JOHN LOGAN

“Once again we are being blessed by the presence of our partners from Northern Ireland”. This was the message coming through from the Monte Horebe community in Brazil during the recent visit of St Patrick’s, Coleraine, members Arnold and Louise McLean and Rena Lindsay.

Now seasoned Brazil travellers Arnold, Louise and Rena, representing a much larger group of Monte Horebe supporters in Northern Ireland, spent two weeks in April in Itaperuçu strengthening ties and serving the community. Understanding the culture and knowing the people and projects as they do, the three folk from Coleraine rolled up their sleeves and set about their work. They succeeded in their goals of providing practical and moral support for those working permanently in a challenging environment. From teaching English through mixing concrete to feeding work teams and identifying and acquiring resources for the mission, they were never found wanting.

This was also the case when it came

to monitoring the progress of projects particularly those supported financially and prayerfully by many people here. In general reports have been extremely positive: the community centre in the impoverished Caçador community is now above foundation level; the sponsored child programme meets childrens’ needs; the Graphic School is up and running with students producing a variety of stationery items for sale and for use in the mission and the school and creche continue to flourish despite the long term absence, due to illness, of the Principal Teacher. It is Shia’s absence which, unfortunately, has curtailed the development of the educational side of the Community Kitchen located in the mission building.

Monte Horebe, as ever, thanks all those who support the work. Please consider the following as prayer points:

- A speedy return to full health for Shia de Moura
- The acquisition of sufficient funds to complete the Caçador building project
- Continued good health, vision and energy for the mission directors and the leadership team.



Jordan Wilson has recently returned from Argentina. As a Red Box volunteer Jordan had been part

of our community for six months helping the local church, working in a nursery alongside working in different schools. Having good Spanish helped her to be involved in the culture at a deeper level, plus her general attitude to life inspired many of us, visible through her big smile and the phrase "I will do it, no problem". It gave us such a good example of servanthood in a practical way. Jordan's

open personality was a blessing for the locals and especially young people as they could easily approach her and start a friendship no matter the differences in social or cultural backgrounds. Spiritual growth was evident in Jordan's life during her placement as she realised the need to put everything in God's hands since this was His mission and working for the kingdom was more important than working for a denomination. Her presence in my life, home, church and wider community has been a blessing and also a great opportunity to expand the body of Christ.

Cecilia Valdiviezo
(Red Box Coordinator)

GOING AWAY

COMING HOME



I'm a student at Belfast Bible College, as well as studying for a Queen's degree in Theology I am also working towards an associate diploma. As part of the diploma I have to go on an international placement for a minimum of five

weeks. I had looked into a number of organisations but with no success, I had made up my mind to pull out altogether but God had other plans. Literally the next day I met Cecilia from Argentina a SAMS Ireland representative at my Church St. Ignatius, Carryduff. I was inspired by the work that she does in South America and everything pretty much worked out from that point and I

am now officially going to Salta in August with SAMS, spending time in the schools and absorbing the culture. My biggest concern is getting to Argentina, God is really getting me out of my comfort zone, this is my first time travelling solo and it's also the longest journey as well - so prayers are welcome! I don't have any expectations, I have never been to South America so everything is going to be pretty new to me which I'm excited about. I can't wait to spend time with Cecilia and her family and also to get to know the children and young people I'll be spending time with. I am so thankful to Cecilia Valdiviezo and Geoff Hamilton for this opportunity.

Sonya Brown
(Red Box Volunteer)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

(in a global recession)

Relax; this isn't an introduction to another guilt trip! What effect does our consumerist culture have on the level of commitment that we are willing to give? As Christians, we need to realize that one of the reasons our faith at times doesn't challenge our lives in a revolutionary way is that the safe and confined form of Christianity which only makes noises within walled buildings leaves us passionless and void. It takes commitment to sit down and read, to contemplate, pray and reflect. There's so much to do in our modern lifestyles that takes less commitment than spending time on our knees.

Holistic, whole-life, discipleship must be a life lived in covenant and without any form of spin. Covenant means commitment. Covenant has been the foundation for humankind's relationship with God since the beginning. Covenant is a commitment to listen to and to follow God. We fool ourselves if we think we make this commitment only once in our lives. How can this commitment be taken

further? By committing to a specific rhythm of life that makes room for God to speak and allows our faith to evolve. We are covenantal people and a life with discipleship running through our veins demands more than signing cheque books or gift aid declarations.

We are called to invest our lives not simply our money in a life of covenant. We are called to consciously disengage from a consumer lifestyle which worships self and move to a place which understands self as something to be given and shared within our local communities and the wider world.

Let's learn to stop together and listen. You never know we might just hear beyond the noise of our daily routine and grasp afresh that God loves us deeply not because of what we do, but because of who we are.

I DON'T WANT TO GET TO THE END OF MY LIFE AND FIND THAT I JUST LIVED THE LENGTH OF IT. I WANT TO HAVE LIVED THE WIDTH AND DEPTH OF IT AS WELL.



BUENA VISTA

PRAY FOR:

Claire Holmes as she seeks clarification for the future

Mission Paraguay as team members serve this summer in Paraguay

Cecilia Valdiviezo as she develops the Red Box Project in Argentina

Jordan Wilson as she settles back home & **Sonya Brown** as she works in Salta

Steven Alvarez from Chile a fusion volunteer who completes his service in Craigavon

Cristian Ascuí from Chile a fusion volunteer who concludes his service in Cookstown

David Alanis from Argentina a fusion volunteer who finishes his service in Lisburn

Saray Martin from Spain a fusion volunteer who continues her ministry in Bangor

Bishop Nick & Catherine Drayson as they serve the people of Northern Argentina

Bishop Peter & Sally Bartlett as they serve the people of Paraguay

Dani & Flavia Lescano as they train for ministry in Argentina

The Monte Horebe Community and the Reencontro Project in Brazil

Gerardo & Suyai Gimpel in Chile as they seek God's direction for their future ministry

Lizbeth Varillas the Diocesan Youth Ministry Co-ordinator in Peru

Samuel Lago who is training in Chile for the ministry

Teaching opportunities for Primary and Secondary teachers in Paraguay

SAMS Ireland 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 both here in Ireland and overseas.

For further information in confidence contact the SAMS House.

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