



Link Letter no. 2 August 2011

Dear friends,

We will shortly be arriving in the UK and hope to be able to bring you up to date news in person; however, it may still be several months before we see you so here is the latest.

A busy August

In August the people of Sombrero Piri will be celebrating the 31st anniversary of their settling (Yatnata is one of the three original communities) and Agustin has been asked to organise a special service which will include a number of baptisms. Please pray that this will provide an opportunity for others to commit or recommit themselves to Christ. It's nine months since Pastor Agustin started making regular monthly visits to Yatnata. This morning, we met together with the Bishop to talk about how his involvement in the Chaco might develop. From now on Agustin will start visiting twice a month and plans to develop links with the three other congregations. He aims to encourage the local leaders to work together and to look to

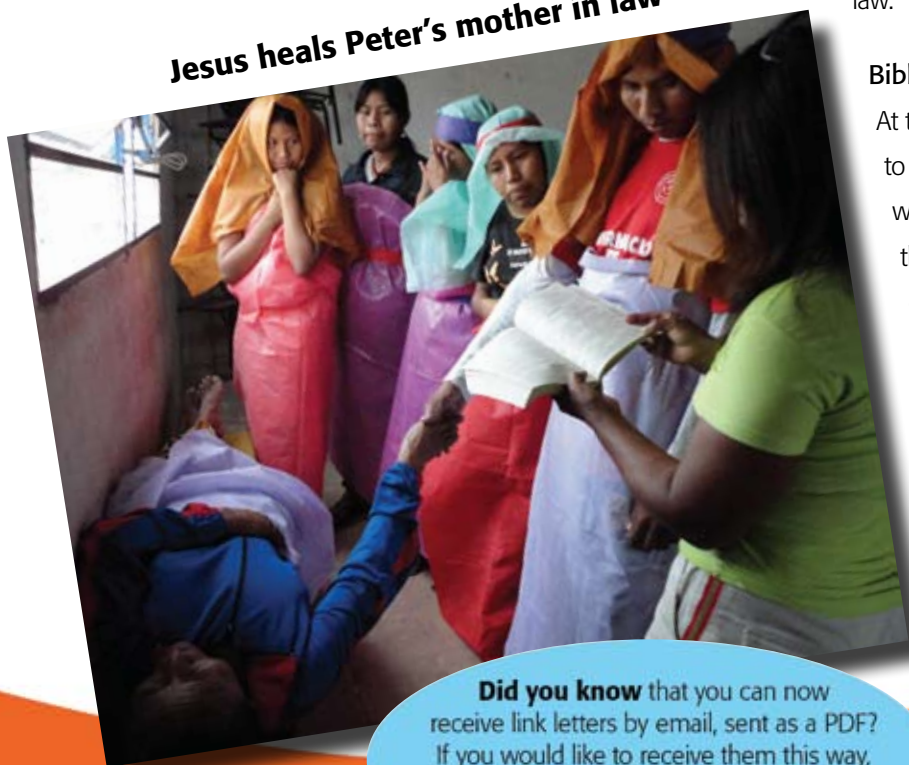
Ed and Marie Brice
CMS mission partners
Paraguay

preparing the next generation of leaders.

August is going to be a busy month as we are joined once again by 'Mission Paraguay' volunteers based in Río Verde and involved in practical projects in some of the surrounding communities. David Orritt, who will shortly be saying goodbye to the July group, and Chris Hawksbee, who has just returned from a two month visit to the UK, would value your prayers as they work out the practical details of transport, accommodation and work projects. In the past these visits have been a tremendous blessing for all involved. Marie plans to visit some of the local churches and put on a programme for the children with some of the volunteers.

Marie was very encouraged by her latest visits in Palo Blanco and Yatnata where children and adults joined in acting out the account of Jesus healing Peter mother-in-law.

Jesus heals Peter's mother in law



Bible teaching materials in Enxet

At the end of June we made a special trip to El Estribo to visit Ceferino and Gilberto. They are both lay workers, one in the community of San Carlos and the other in Dos Palmas, and we went to give them copies of the new experimental edition of SEAN 'Manual of Bible of encounters' in Enxet. I spent about an hour with each of them explaining and reading different part of the manual. I hope to visit Ceferino and Gilberto again during August to see how they have been getting on with the studies. I also want to give out some more

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Peter's mother in law serves Yatnata style

copies in the other Enxet speaking communities. The evaluation will then have to await our return at the end of the year.

The manual includes just the first 25 studies, which are a combination of evangelistic studies and early discipleship studies, because we weren't able to check all the 74 studies which Remigio translated into Enxet.

While in El Estribo we also visited Carlos, lay leader of the church in Paratodo'i, a community which is largely Guaraní speaking. We took him a copy of the booklet, translated into Guaraní, which accompanied the studies we held in Río Verde in May. Carlos introduced us to Florencio, his brother, because he had recently been diagnosed as having epilepsy. Some Christians in the community had suggested that his illness had a spiritual origin and he was fearful that as a result he wouldn't be able to get work.

Florencio, a man of about fifty, told us that, when his eldest daughter was quite small, she was taken seriously ill. The local healer (shaman) was called in and said that the girl was going to die. Family members went to call in another healer. Florencio couldn't bear to stay in the house and went and cried to God saying that he would give up his drinking habit if God would heal his daughter. On returning he heard her voice and knew that God had answered his prayer. He said that he was able to keep his promise and gave his drinking habit immediately but found giving up smoking more of a challenge; however, in the end and with God's help, he was able to break that habit too. He then invited us to his daughter's wedding in September. Florencio's story is quite typical of way God intervenes in the lives of Indians bringing them to a living faith in Jesus Christ.



Introducing Gilberto Manual

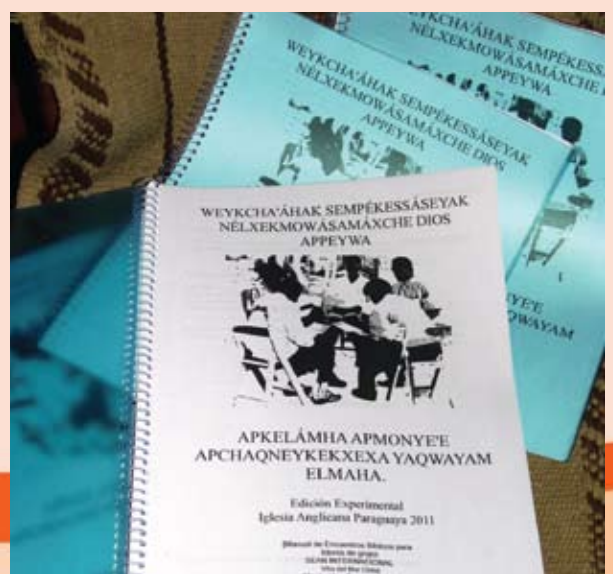
Visitors to San Mateo

On 14 August lay workers, Rafael and Eligio, from San Juan church near Asunción will visit San Mateo Río Verde; later in the month the church in Zeballos cue will also send up workers for a weekend. This is part of the preparation for our three months in the UK. Salomon and Victor, also from San Juan, were the first to make one of these visits in July.

Salomon came to Christ when he lived in Río Verde 20 years ago; he is also a policeman who has done most of his service in Chaco communities so is known by many people there. He and Victor arrived on the Saturday midday bus. After a short siesta we went to see Antonio and Zuni, the local pastoral helpers. After a time for 'terere' (local drink) and prayer together, Salomon and Victor went to visit two or three of Salomon's contacts and also some of Antonio and Ed's.

Antonio's work colleague of some 15 years ago, Carlos and his wife Ordulia – a couple in their forties – were an obvious choice. They had recently returned to Río Verde, after being

The New Enxet Bible study manual





Juan, Karina and children Juan and Lucas



Karina and son Juan

away working on a ranch for a couple of years. Ed had visited Carlos on a number of occasions both before they left Rio Verde and since their return. This would be our third visit in as many months. Carlos was keen to read the Bible passage and answer the questions in the gospel tract we took along. Then Antonio had an opportunity to share his testimony for the first time and invite Carlos to come to church the next day. Carlos was clearly moved and agreed to come with his brother-in-law, Dario.

We had an especially good attendance that Sunday, and Carlos was there too. Solomon took the opportunity to present the gospel using his mother tongue, Guarani, which is so much easier for the folk to understand than Spanish. Carlos did not make a commitment to Christ but we pray that this first visit to San Mateo will not be his last.

Juan and Karina

One warm Sunday towards the end of last year we were pleasantly

surprised when an Argentine couple, Juan and Karina, and two of their three children Juan and Lucas, arrived early for the morning service. They had walked the five kilometres from the ranch where they had recently moved. They gave the impression of being accustomed to attending church and the 'evangelical vocabulary' rolled off Juan's tongue with ease. It was, however, unusual that an Argentine should come to Paraguay looking for work when it is far more common for Paraguayans to look for work in Argentina.

Over the next few months we gradually got a clearer picture. Things were not what they seemed as most of Juan's contact with the church had been in his childhood or via his mother. He had come to Paraguay some four years earlier to escape the police who were pursuing him for his involvement with drugs. Though they rarely came to San Mateo (partly because the lack of transportation) we suggested they study

Antonio sharing his testimony with Carlos



the Abundant Life course and they accepted. Karina's knowledge of the gospel was very limited, but she has been keen to learn and put into practice all she can.

We then discovered that she had also been recently baptised in the Adventist church associated with the school that their sons attend in Río Verde! Karina has had a troubled history and has lost contact with two daughters by a previous liaison, but, God is working in her life. However, her relationship with Juan is not good and although he goes through the paces of doing the study he shows little real sign of wanting to make the necessary changes in his life and return to God; but as long as he is open to continuing the study we confidently pray that the Word and Spirit of God will soften his heart.

Getting the orange light

We decided to stay on after Sunday lunch and watch the final of the 'Copa de America', as Paraguay had not reached the final of this important South American championship since 1979. Marie, never a great football fan, decided to take a siesta instead. We had been in Gral Aquino (a small town about 100 miles north of Asunción) since the Thursday visiting Javier and Melody. On the Sunday morning we had met in Javi and Melody's large front room with the small group of Christians lead by Melody's grandfather, Don Ramon who with his wife have been working as missionaries there since 1974.

Don Ramon, who lives a few blocks up the road, invited us to lunch. Lunch was cooked by Melody's brother, Brian, who with his wife Natalia, their daughter and numerous dogs, live next door. In the back yard they have a large avocado tree loaded with fruit so after the football, which sadly, Paraguay lost, they filled up a large bag for us to take back to Asunción. Javi and Melody and one of their two dogs came with us. I started the truck following the instructions the mechanic had given me, but despite the motor starting the orange light stayed on. I turned the motor off and tried again; success this time as there was no orange light! Javi drove all the way, the light making no more appearances, but we still don't know what is causing it. Earlier in July we had taken it to a second mechanic

who after three days and a bill of £200 said that the problem was not with the fuel pump (as we had been told earlier) but suggested we change the battery (only six months old) and follow a special procedure when starting. The vehicle for the moment works well, but it would be nice not to have the uncertainty of the orange light.

Prayer points

- Thanks for the new Enxet Bible encounter manual and for those testing it.
- For lay workers Ceferino, Gilberto and Carlos in El Estribo, Antonio and Zuni in Rio Verde.
- For Agustin's contact with the four congregations in Sombrero Piri.
- For Carlos and Ordulia, Juan and Karina
- For the Mission Paraguay volunteers and the work amongst children.
- For the support for San Mateo from the churches in Asuncion now and in the future.
- For safety in travel and wisdom in dealing with mechanics.
- For our programme of visits while in the UK.

Looking forward to seeing you before too long

In Christ

Ed and Marie

PS: CMS ask us to send out four link letters in this format each year and we will continue to send out our other emails at suitable intervals, but this method means we can share more and spend less time on putting it together.