



**Ed and Marie Brice**  
CMS mission partners  
**Argentina**

One of CMS's longest serving mission partners, Ed and Marie have recently moved from Paraguay to Tartagal in Northern Argentina after 30 years serving the Enxet people group within the Chaco of Paraguay. Ed and Marie have taken on the pastoral oversight of the Anglican Church in Tartagal and will work in the northern area of the Chaco.

## Link Letter No.7 February 2014

**Dear friends,**

The Tartagal Annacondia campaign got pride of place in our last link letter. Quite different, but just as much in need of our prayers, is the question of Indian land rights and the spiritual issues which lie below the surface.

Just before Christmas, Ed – almost by accident – found himself attending a public hearing in the small isolated Indian Community of Corralitos (about 50 miles southeast of Tartagal). The hearing took place in the recently built school. The playground became the unlikely car park for 4x4s which brought in the land owners, government officials and representatives of NGOs. Ed had been asked to act as driver for Claudia of the Asociacion team; she was there to speak against the land owners' request to clear



*Claudia (from the Asociacion team) speaking*

yet more forest for agriculture. The reason for our opposition is the unresolved land claim of four Indian communities and a number of landless *campesinos*. The Indian communities have a long standing request for land in the area but the provincial government has failed to demarcate it, which gives the land owners a free hand to request further deforestation.

CMS mission partner  
Andrew Leake, representing

“Land for Life” (*Refugio*), was also at the hearing and with him a lawyer from Greenpeace and another from the Roman Catholic Church’s Indian pastoral team. The first hearings were due to begin at 9:30am and the second at 11am. The first one started about an hour late and, to the consternation of officials and landowners, there were so many contributions that the second hearing had to



*Andrew Leake speaking*



*A chance to speak...*

could understand. This makes a farce of a procedure which is little more than a rubber stamp to the process anyway. Those defending the Indians repeatedly pointed out the obstacles to the Indian’s participation, and eventually the chairman allowed them to speak in their own language with a translator. Firstly a trickle, it quickly became a flood as they expressed their feelings of

be postponed until about 2:30pm. Andrew informed me that these public hearing are the last hurdle that the land owners have to jump, in the process of getting approval for further land clearing. The hearing is chaired by the Department of the Environment and technical reports are presented, before members of the public can then ask questions.

No attempt was made to explain the highly technical content of the reports in terms that the interested public – mostly Wichi Indians –



*Waiting to be heard...*

impotence and fear at the prospect of further deforestation. Andrew told me that there was a long list of hearings programmed for the summer months, implying further deforestation on a large scale, making the prospect of a just solution even more difficult. Other communities of Indians and *campesinos*, who we don't have contact with, will also be affected. Please pray for a change of heart in the authorities and a broader vision to include the disadvantaged and oppressed as well as the privileged.



*Playground in Corralitos*

Asociana continues to experience a financial and managerial crisis; this comment from Andrew highlights the need for our prayers: *"I found it very sobering to think that had ASOCIANA not been on the scene the way it has for the past years, the debate you witnessed yesterday would never have taken place. That is the absolutely critical difference [the] church can make in the field..."*

In January, Marie made a couple of trips to Salta in connection with her book. Two bookshops there have enthusiastically accepted copies on a sale or return basis; one is Christian and the other isn't. Two other Christian bookshops showed interest but must wait until after the holidays for an answer. We are also waiting for news from a number of other organizations,

based both in Buenos Aires and other parts of the country. Please keep these developments in your prayers.

Thanks to Chris Wallis, who provided the contact with his Vida Abundante groups, the transport to the Pilcomayo River communities and accommodation in Santa María, Ed was able to share the Panoramic Vision of the Bible material. This provided him with a chance to have a few trial runs before he shares the same material towards the end



*Wallis's house and spare room*

of February with some Indian Assemblies of God Churches in Tartagal. Praise the Lord for these opportunities and pray that they will both wet people's appetites for further Bible study and under the Holy Spirit's guidance provide them with a tool which will help them to explore it on their own.

When Bishop Nick [Drayson] visited Tartagal and the Wichi Lapacho 2 church last week, the pastor responsible for the zone, Germán Miranda, asked about opening a church in the neighbouring Wichi community of Mora 2. Ed went along when the bishop met the people there, last Friday afternoon. It was agreed that Pastor Miranda would hold a service there the following Sunday and Ed was also invited. A number of people from Lapacho 2 also attended the Sunday morning service,



*Sunday morning in Mora 2*

including Clemente, at 8:30am.

Next Sunday, he will come on his motorbike to take Ed to Mora 2.

It remains to be seen if a Wichi speaker comes to lead the service.

**For praise:**

- The important work done by the Asociana team over the years.
- For the interest shown in Marie's book.
- For the help and support provided by Chris and Helena Wallis.
- For the opportunity to share the Panoramic Vision of the Bible.
- For the new initiative in Mora 2.

**For prayer:**

- Wisdom for the bishop and the council of Asociana as they work for a solution to its problems.
- That God will provide the necessary openings so that Marie book gets into the right hands.
- For the development of work with the Christian Education Team.
- For the new initiative in Mora 2.

In Christ

*Ed and Marie*

[www.cms-uk.org](http://www.cms-uk.org)



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