

## Link Letter no.7 August 2012

**Dear friends,**

**Faith in the family**

*"I have been waiting for years for this. Thank you so much!"*

These words were said by a participant in the Mothers' Union World Wide Parenting Programme (WPP), who had travelled all the way from Buenos Aires to Ingeniero Juárez to take part. Mechi Tarragona is now setting up local parents' groups within an affluent neighbourhood of the nation's capital, far from the dust and poverty of the Chaco, where these skills were shared by – wait for it – a Guyanese lady. Where in South America do they speak English, and yet have both Indians and Amerindians? Answer: Guyana.

Sheran Harper, (coordinator of WPP and married to a West Indian Test cricketer) was also excited about travelling all that way, and finding things not so very different from her own corner of South America. It wasn't just in the racial mix, but of

### **Sheran with Toba facilitators**



### **Catherine and Nick Drayson**

CMS mission partners  
**Argentina**

**Nick and Catherine Drayson are working with indigenous peoples, largely based in the Chaco Forest (roughly the size of France) in the north of the country. Nick is the Diocesan Bishop of Northern Argentina and teaches the leaders of the indigenous churches through visiting and conferences, and Catherine is an occupational therapist.**

course in the problems of family breakdown, and the benefits of sharing parenting skills as part of the Good News of Jesus. Her enthusiasm and her methods were memorable, showing that language isn't everything, especially when it comes to learning styles!

Sixteen people were trained as facilitators, two from urban settings in Salta and Buenos Aires, and the rest from rural backgrounds, in three ethnic groups. Catherine and Shelley will now be coordinating the first attempts to get parenting groups started in these communities, and have been busy translating and collating the materials for distribution.

This is the latest stage in the church's

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### **The wedding marquee for our son Sam's wedding to Sally**

growing commitment to helping families across the area disciple their children. Why not become friends with the Facebook group "Pastoral Familiar – Faith in the Family" and see what is going on?

#### **Joy mixed with tears**

Talking of family, we spent much of the (rainy) English summer enjoying meeting up with most of them. Sam and Sally's wedding had been carefully planned for some time, and Stefi travelled with us after her time in Peru, arriving in time for the great event. It was a resounding success, despite the wet weather. Held in a clearing in a forest by a lake... (with a marquee to shelter in!), there was

a definite festival atmosphere, even down to the chippie and ice-cream vans (and the carefully planned Disney-theme!), as well as good music, and messages from both clergy Dads! It was a wonderful, memorable day and we wish them every blessing for the future! Stefanie is based in Guernsey, getting on with the structure of a 9-5 job this year, but is wanting clear guidance as to what to study next year!

Sadly, Nick's mother, Rachel, died just before we travelled to UK in June. We were able to share in burying her ashes

### **The happy couple**



### **Nick and Catherine at Sam's wedding**





**Rachel, Nick's mum, and Bob with their grandchildren (photo taken a few years ago!)**



**Monico (on the right) with his family in Santa Teresa, where Nick will do language training**

and remembering her with thanksgiving at a special service. *"It was her wonderful smile we remember most... and also her amazing memory."* As tributes from the grandchildren reminded us, nobody's birthday was ever forgotten! We were all challenged by both Rachel and Bob's commitment to passing on their faith to future generations. *"These are the things we learnt from our ancestors, and we will tell them to the next generation... so that each new generation would know his Law and tell it to the next. Then they would trust God and obey his teachings"* (Psalm 78). Nick often has reason to be grateful that his Mum taught him to pray and love the Bible at an early age.

### Keep talking

*"They took our words seriously. They learnt our language. They took*

*us seriously. They loved us."* This oft repeated description of the reason for the success of the early missionaries in being accepted by the people they came to serve is a constant challenge to us as we seek to understand and communicate with our Amerindian brethren. Whilst it is possible to work in a common second language (Spanish), it is always going to be better to speak the mother tongue. In our case the majority speak Wichí, and Nick's main efforts lie here. Catherine may even have a go at Toba!!

After almost three years back amongst the Chaco people, it is tempting to settle for what we've achieved. However, in September Nick is planning to go on his own for a few weeks to an isolated village where he hopes to improve

**Left: Mechi receiving a parenting certificate from an MU leader  
Right: Salta, our second home**



his fluency. He has been invited by Monico Ruiz, (one of those trained at the recent Parenting Course) and his family. It is bound to be a slow process, but it is always a privilege entering another's world.

### **Moving house**

Meanwhile Catherine will be moving house. What, again? No, we are still based in Juárez, but find increasingly that we need a base in Salta. And it will also be useful for our friends the Barr Johnstons as Lynn has become increasingly limited in her mobility. She and Charles will be able to occupy the ground floor whilst we have a flat upstairs.

The bishop's residence has for some time been rented out, and when the tenants returned the key we found it under a pile of beer bottles and grime. It is now being repaired and painted, and generally reclaimed for its original use.

We are so grateful for the people we work alongside. It is a constant challenge to visit and support isolated communities, as well as providing leadership and vision in such a changing environment. We appreciate your prayers in the following areas:

- Safety in travel, wisdom and courage in relating to different situations
- A good start to the parenting groups, that they will lead to community transformation
- For the house in Salta to be a place of refuge and strength
- For the development of our team: (René, David, Shelley, and others further afield)
- For our scattered family, facing decisions, a job for Sam

and guidance for Stefi

- For language fluency.

With our love in Christ,

*Nick and Catherine*

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