

Link Letter No.10 December-January 2013-2014

Dear friends,

Family

It was with a heavy heart that Catherine flew back to Argentina in November having been with her family in Guernsey for a few weeks following her sister Gill's sudden death in September.

"For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city which is to come." (Hebrews 13 v14). Gill was much loved by everyone, and it is a great shock.

We have the assurance that she is with her Lord and Saviour who she served so faithfully, but there remain many unanswered questions, and even the clearest calling pales into insignificance next to the loss. However, Gill's sudden home call also galvanised Catherine (and others) into action and a determination to make every moment on this earth count!

When she got back, Nick met her and they drove straight back to Juarez and Catherine was thrown into commitments here. There have been meetings in Salta, Nick has been in Buenos Aires and Chile, and there have – of course – been visitors.



Gill with Martyn



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 and runs women's and family conferences.

Visitors

"We send (or bring) greetings to (or from) Buenos Aires (or Carlisle, Ireland, Cordoba, Mothers' Union, A Rocha, etc)". How often these words have rung out as visitors have stood up at services, shared a word and been given gifts. It is always encouraging (if often hard work) to receive visitors, and these recent months we have had many!

Some of these have been family, and we were so pleased that Nick's sisters could be with us on some of our trips (although sadly Catherine had to return to UK during their stay for Gill's funeral,

and this eclipsed things a bit). Gill and Martyn were planning their own visit for February, and Martyn still plans to come on his own. Whilst Catherine travelled to the UK to be with the family, Nick did a few trips on his own (when his truck was roadworthy), and commuted between Juárez and Salta.

Meanwhile, our two children (now aged 24 and 20) are both embarking on new stages of their careers: Stefi is at university in Birmingham and Sam (and Sally) have moved to Croydon to take up jobs in event management



Some of our visitors



Nick with his sisters

gave you authority, will enable you to make our society a peaceful place, so we can obey God and preach the gospel.” (1 Timothy 2.2)

It was us who were surprised when this same governor had agreed to donate this church to the Wichi community of El Yuto. Clearly he hoped to gain credit in the Amerindian constituency, where his government has sometimes been criticised for not dealing with the underlying problems. These include racism between “Criollos” (white settlers) and Amerindians (Wichi and Toba). Recently Nick and a visiting Methodist bishop found themselves challenging the mayor of Juárez for

and children’s work (respectively). It was an unexpected joy (amidst the sadness) for Catherine to be able to spend a weekend with them.

Politics

The governor of Formosa Province looked mildly surprised as one of the Wichi clergy said to the politicians and others gathered for the opening of a big new church: “*We pray for you in our churches every week, so now we pray for you here in this church, and ask that God, who*



The Provincial Governor (in hat) at the dedication of the new church



Chris Wallis, Hugo Vergara and the Brices

his unwise handling of an already volatile situation.

In contrast to this, it was great to see young people of all the different racial groups in Juárez working together with a volunteer group from Buenos Aires to clear a piece of waste land near our house to make a football pitch. We hope that it will be similarly used by all the groups!

The churches are often suffering injustice, or are in a position to stand up to it. We need much wisdom and prayer.

Evangelism

One public figure who is not afraid to stand up to the “powers” (whether political or spiritual) is Carlos Annacondia, an evangelist from Buenos Aires, who recently spent some time leading open air meetings in our area. His reputation for “signs and wonders” drew a huge crowd for several nights, and many lives were touched, although the overall impact was somewhat lessened by lack of understanding as to how best to minister in an Amerindian context. One positive outcome has been the drawing together of some of the churches – Anglicans and Assemblies of God are now planning joint training and outreach in Potrillo.

New openings

Work opportunities for youth in most of the Amerindian communities are few and far between, and the dominant role played by the elders means they don’t get much apprenticeship either. Although several ordinations have taken place recently, these are mainly of older men. Training doesn’t necessarily lead to appointing the right leaders. Nick has been working very hard to gather a group of youth leaders to work through these issues, and empower young people. We hope some of these will be able to travel to Chile this month for a regional youth training programme.

At the same time it is heartening to double the size of the leadership training team, by including Chris and Helena Wallis. They and the Stokes have been



Youth being trained



The trellis and the vine

piloting a Wichi version of the Abundant Life course, which is also being used in Spanish by Tobas and Criollos. Ed and Marie Brice are also involved, with René Pereira, in helping think through the future of appropriate training and leadership.

Trellis and Vine

One of our visitors left us an interesting book “*The Trellis and the Vine*”, which talks about the importance of focussing on the spiritual growth of people (vine) as opposed to the servicing of structures (trellis). However, it may be that in our situation it is also the trellis

we need to be securing so that the vine has somewhere to grow and does not get trodden under foot. Getting the right balance between establishing good structures and ensuring strong growth seems to be the most important thing to pray for.

Points for prayer

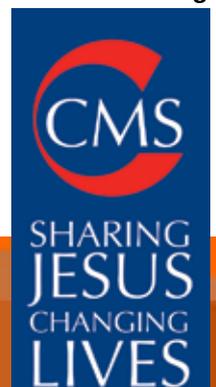
- For all of Catherine’s family as they grieve, especially Gill’s husband Martyn, his family, and Stefanie (their “ adopted” daughter).
- For wisdom and courage in dealings with political powers.
- For increased cooperation between churches.
- For the right use of resources.
- For the empowering of youth and future leaders.
- For appropriate training.

With love and thanks,

Nick and Catherine

PS. Did you know that you can now receive link letters by email, sent as a pdf? If you would like to receive them this way and help CMS save money, please contact **Jonathan Self on jonathan.self@cms-uk.org or 01865 787527**

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