



News and Prayer Requests from James Palmer in Chile



October/November 2008

There's been a lot of news recently, and as that astute social commentator De la Soul featuring Chaka Khan says "it ain't all good, and that's the truth". Rising food prices (here as well), serious political instability in Bolivia (not that I have heard about it on the European media), what the media in Spain call *la tormenta financiera* (the financial storm) and so on. We think there's a lull and then the rain comes back again, this time blown vertically by the near hurricane force winds (I saw this one time when I lived in Florida: it was rather exciting).

But life goes on, doesn't it? Last month was our "mission" in La Serena in the *norte chico*. One of our graduates is doing a church plant up there and we went up to get involved with various aspects of the work they are doing. It fell to me to do a presentation to a group of professors and students at the Catholic University of the North, which went down well. I had a little adventure with a bat which got stuck in my room and woke me up at 2am flying round in circles in my room: flap flap, thud, flap flap, thud. It was the first bat I have seen in the flesh and they are horrible. After I went, the students were involved in some sort of event where people were asking them what they believed. Apparently it was a disaster and they came back to class and said that they realized that they had not been taking their studies seriously enough. It's very easy to think that what they study in the class room is "irrelevant" and "academic", but I think that they realized that being able to talk clearly about why they believe what they believe is not "academic", but essential to the work that they are doing.

I enjoyed spending time at the beach (just walking): I'm not a city boy and find the noise and horrible air pollution of Santiago (which has been made worse by the highest levels of pollen in about 20 years) very draining. I am hoping to try to get to the beach for maybe a night a month, or something like that, just to keep me sane. I've had a number of low grade illnesses (ear infection, muscular nodules caused by stress which make swallowing painful, low energy levels and tiredness), which has been annoying. I need to get out of Santiago more regularly (which for me means a few quiet days by the sea with a good book and surprisingly early nights!).

The eight week apologetics course is now finished, but that doesn't actually mean my work load decreases much as I did all the preparation for it in what should have been my winter break so that I could teach the systematic theology course on the church this semester. That's going quite well I think: I am getting better as a teacher (slowly), but the weekly burden of translating the notes and handouts is starting to lose its charm. I have about 4 weeks more of that, then I start doing the same thing for my history courses for next semester.

I am trying to plan my summer (which, don't forget is Jan and Feb for me) with trips to the USA and a short family visit to the UK, but have not been able to sort out details yet. The work load and my tiredness have meant I am really behind on all the logistics. Pray for me to get up a bit more energy to get it all done, and for the students and their exams (they too are rather end of year run down).



South American Mission Society

Allen Gardiner Cottage, Pembury Road, Tunbridge Wells TN2 3QU
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