

News from Paul and Sarah Tester: SAMS Mission Partners in Lima, Peru



February 2008

The one where Sarah gets bitten by a dog and robbed!



"The water I give will be an artesian spring within, gushing fountains of endless life" - John 4 v 13-14

Dear Praying Friends,

First things first! Don't be panicked by the title of this prayer letter! Sarah is fine and well but she's had some fun and games over the last few weeks! Since the Christmas period we've felt more involved in the mission of the church here and have been finding our feet in our own ministries. We are also really enjoying a visit from Chrissie and Jay, friends from our home Church, who have popped by to lend a hand on their way around South America. Time has flown by since we last wrote and we've lots to tell...so on with the news!

We went to visit some friends in a part of Lima called Lurin and sadly there had been a spate of burglaries in the area. That meant that their doberman, usually tied on a leash, had been let free to protect the house from strangers wanting to steal things. Unfortunately the dog doesn't know the difference between strangers who like stealing and strangers who are passing gringos and, dashing past Paul, it jumped up and bit Sarah on the arm! It wasn't a serious injury - it barely broke the skin - but it did shock Sarah. Following the advice of our travellers health guide we then went on a search for anti-rabies post exposure injections. We eventually found the right place (the same site for both dogs and humans seeking vaccinations!) and Sarah has since had a course of nine injections in her stomach, which have been painful and made her tired, but with just one vaccination injection to go she is upbeat.

Taking this into account, Sarah has had an extremely busy few weeks. She has continued her children's club in Ventanilla, has been helping at a holiday club in Villa el Salvador (if you get a chance to look on a map of Lima it's the complete opposite end of the city to Ventanilla!) and another at the "Santísima Trinidad" church in Pamplona Alta where the church has one of its schools. She has now enrolled around 30 children from Ventanilla for the start of her Playbus scheme and has also enrolled a similar number of people for English classes there. She'll also be taking the Playbus to Pamplona Alta, to both the school and to a church project working with children with disabilities nearby. In the midst of all this she's looking to involve teenagers in the running of the Playbus scheme which she hopes will link into and build up the youth work in the places that the Playbus visits.



The "Happening" Team!

Talking of youth work, both of us have been involved in the Diocesan youth camps. The first, called "Happening", took place in Arequipa. Happening is a weekend's programme that aims to introduce people to Christianity and the Church. What is particularly good about it is that those who took part in the course last time lead the next one. Hence, the whole weekend was organised and run by a team of young people from both Lima and Arequipa and it went really well. At the end of the weekend, the young people shared their experiences and it seemed they had been impacted by it. Then, at the beginning of February, we were involved in the 13-16 year olds camp, in Chosica, just outside of Lima. The theme of the camp was service and, after some teaching and training, each of the young people was involved in using their gifts in evangelistic activities in the main square - music / theatre / children's work / practical service / prayer. It was great to see them using their gifts to serve others and evangelise. The third camp in this summer period starts on the 21st February. We'll be helping take 30+ young people to Ica to help the church's missions there, using the theme of service again. Please pray for all involved.

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Finally on the activities front, Paul has been involved in producing estimates for building work, notably modifications needed to our home church building (San Juan Evangelista / St John the Evangelist) so that it can be host to 160+ children as part of a Compassion child sponsorship programme. The centre will provide a place for children to go for the half of the day they are not in school (children in Peru only go to school either in the morning or in the afternoon). They'll receive lunch, Christian education, teaching on health and nutrition and help with their homework, and it also means their parents can both work during the day to provide an income to support the children without having to leave them locked in the house on their own - a common occurrence here in Peru. Originally the start date for the project was in June, but this has been brought forward to the beginning of March! That has left us short of both time and funds to carry out the work so please pray that this can all be sorted out by the required date.



San Juan Evangelista Church and with the part which will become a Compassion centre circled

Sarah was in the church garden to help entertain the children as they were waiting for their photos to be taken by Compassion - so that they can be sent to potential sponsors - and mistakenly left her mobile phone and wallet in the top pocket of her rucksack. The rucksack was nearby the whole time but someone managed to get their hand in and take them both. She didn't lose much money and she will get to keep her phone number so the only real damage is the shock of being robbed. We have to realise that these things will happen but have noticed that as we start to become more useful in God's mission, the "other side" likes to throw some problems our way. Please pray for our protection and safety as we work here.

For your prayers:

Please thank God for:

- A feeling that we're starting to be more useful and effective in God's mission here.
- All the children that Sarah has been in contact with through holiday clubs
- 2 successful youth camps and all the young people who attended
- Our Spanish which is continuing to improve

Please continue to pray for:

- The third youth camp in this series in Ica (21st-24th Feb) - for God to impact and bless both the young people and those they minister to and for the leaders (including us!) to have energy in the heat (up to 40°C)!
- Children's Ministry - for the launch of the Playbus project, for the Holy Spirit to minister to the children involved and for young people to be keen and able to help in the leadership.
- For the Compassion project at San Juan Evangelista to be able to go ahead at the right time - for the modifications to go well and all the necessary forms to be completed in time.

Thank you all so much for your prayers! You're in

ours! Lots of love from us both, Paul and Sarah

What would you do? - Going deeper

There are lots of issues, linked to cross-cultural mission, that we meet during our time in Peru. We thought it would be helpful to give some examples so you get an idea of some of them - not to give us "answers" - if there are any - but to help you know what we are thinking and feeling. Here's number 4...

Following last month's musical introduction, think about the band James' line "If I hadn't seen such riches I could live with being poor". Continuing last month's money theme, we are often challenged to think about what we model to the people we work with. For example - choosing the standard of living we should adopt and where we live.

Should we live in a poorer area to live in a more similar way to the majority of the people we work with? - It might send a powerful message like Jesus' incarnation - we're here to experience what you experience - but it might also be seen as "playing at being poor" and reduce our effectiveness in our work across several churches.

Should we have a similar standard of living to that which we enjoy in the UK? We'd then have a home we can retreat to, relax in and which will help our effectiveness in our work but it may also say to people - these Europeans / North Americans have no intention of living like most Peruvians do and work for the money, not for Christ! Money is more important than their ministry! It may also cause people to envy what we have!