

News from David and Rachel Leake in Argentina – May 2008

Dear friends

We are both very well and thank you all for your prayers. Time so far has been full and profitable. I (David) have been able to work together with Michael Browne, the Toba Translation Coordinator. It has also been possible to spend a fortnight checking though translations and the first 14 chapters of Revelation have been completed as have the first 6 chapters of Hebrews, these are proving to be the books requiring most time. 1st. Thessalonians and Colossians have now also been fully checked and we have a clear picture of what is to be done next. I feel that we have made some significant progress and ask for your continuing prayers. Besides checking translation it has been possible to be involved in the ministry of encouragement (we hope!!) and also have the joy of meeting many old friends and to be able to share in their joys and sadnesses, this is particularly true as many share with us news of loved ones who have died since we last met.

One of the aspects of change has been to adapt and see how a traditionally "hunting and gathering culture" has taken to the use of computers and mobile phones, all so different from David's childhood when men still wore just a loin cloth and feathers! It was a particularly interesting experience to show a DVD of photos taken by Alfred Leake in the 1930s, with this generation's ancestors almost naked playing their native game of hockey wearing ostrich feather headdresses and anklets, pictures of fishermen in the Pilcomayo river and families sitting on skins on the dusty ground outside rough brushwood huts. Not only has communication become instant but improved paved roads has made travel easy and more predictable. I hardly imagined we would ever travel from Salta to Ingeniero Juarez (a centre for the Toba people) on a double-decker air conditioned coach with far more seat space than British Airways! However, like all things in developing countries there are those who wonder if the asphalt road will soften under the fierce summer sun and subside with the weight of heavy lorries which now use the newly paved road as a short cut to Paraguay and Chile.

Certainly the word "change" is the first concept that comes to mind as we revisit people and places after a space of about 18 years and we are also made to think of how to make the Gospel relevant in this "new age" for the "new generation." Whilst we are pressured to find new illustrations and relevant language to express the eternal and unchanging message we are clearly reminded by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever". Improved medication and access to better health care has meant an increase in the Indian population and whilst many speak more and better Spanish, their "soul language" remains their mother tongue and the translation of the Word of God remains a priority as the church seeks to proclaim the eternal message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We look forward to seeing you all again early July and hope to write again before then.

David & Rachel