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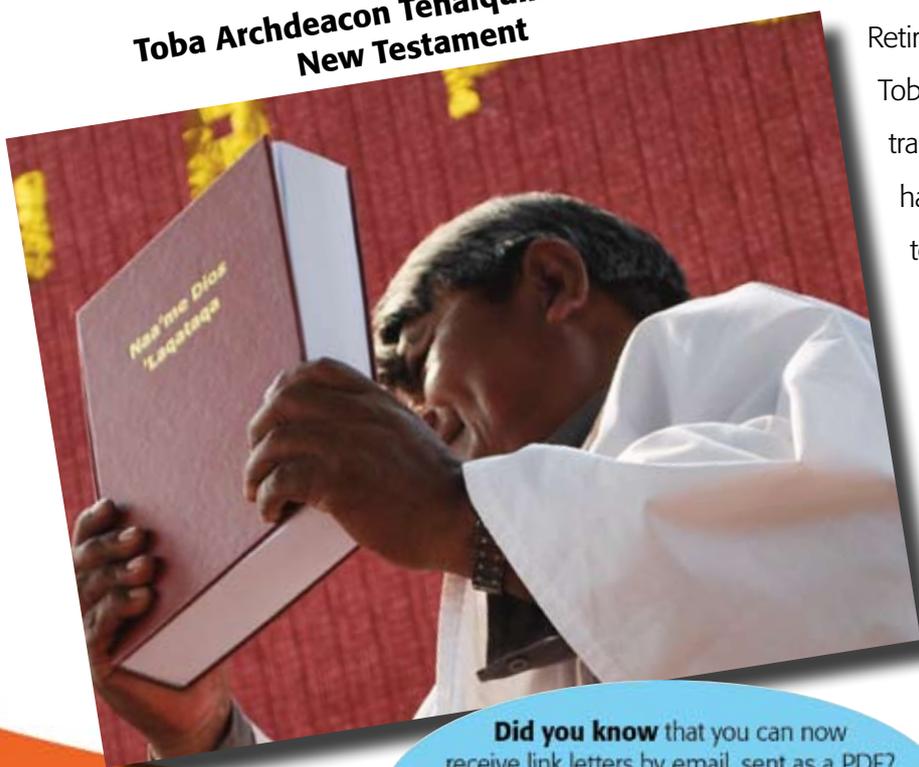
Dear friends,

Whirlwind bucket stop tour

It is Advent Sunday, and a sudden change in the weather has replaced the searing heat with much-needed rain, and a cooler day to reflect and write. (We hear there is snow in England!) It also marks the end of a year of whirlwind touring, finally visiting all 127 churches in the area, ending appropriately in *Los Baldes* (The Buckets!). This has ensured a lot of travelling, on all sorts of roads, and attempting to understand what is going on in each place.

Some of the difficulties facing the communities seem a bit like whirlwinds, throwing everything up in the air, and leaving everything out of place. Hopefully things can be

Toba Archdeacon Tenaquin with the New Testament



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put back together in a better shape. We have also had a spate of real whirlwinds too, leaving much damage, some of which has been repaired thanks to generous help.

Highlights of the last three months

- The Toba New Testament was presented. Following 20 years of translation work (and 80 years since the arrival of the gospel), the Western Toba now have the Scriptures in their own language.

A wonderful affirmation of their culture and spirituality, the launch was attended by crowds from all over the area, including several political dignitaries. Retired bishop David Leake, who grew up with the Tobas, was appropriately the main speaker, and translator Mike Browne introduced the team who had worked with him. They were later able to teach some introductory courses, which will help with reading and applying the text. The challenge for all the Indian language groups in the Chaco is how to develop use of their own language, both written and oral.

- The Spanish speaking Youth Alpha course was completed. The criollo church in

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Left: Bishops Nick and David at Toba presentation
Right: Quichi Tenaquin, Rene Pereira, Mike Browne and David Leake

Juarez saw some exciting developments as for three months they embraced the Alpha course. Leaders were trained and lives transformed – there is now a twice weekly radio programme led by three young people, two of whom were not even Christians a few months ago! The church now faces the challenge of how to offer appropriate services for welcoming unchurched newcomers.

- Many new members are joining and others are returning to the Anglican Church. On our travels we have been privileged to see over 1,500 new people confirmed (received as members into the church), plus a few new congregations. Many are sensing a new moment and taking the opportunity to reaffirm their belonging, although there are still many breakaway groups, and some confusion about what is essential in the different traditions and styles.

- We attended a conference in Paraguay, and a Synod in Buenos Aires. Beyond the borders of the Argentine Chaco we belong to a wider network of Anglican churches in the Southern Cone of South America. Although the vast majority of church members are Indians, most of the leaders at this level are still of European descent, and we are working hard to define this identity (along with our role in the Anglican Communion, which has been largely misrepresented in the press!) A Chilean presiding bishop was elected, and the decision to ordain women rejected again by a narrow margin.

- We made several major trips round the Chaco, including a visit from women's leaders who helped encourage the women's and Sunday school leaders.

Left: Sunday school training
Right: Future leaders





**Left: Carolina working with children
Right: Children's workshop**

Two areas badly neglected in recent years have been the development of women's and children's work. Following the visit of a group from a church from Buenos Aires in July, two of their ladies offered to come and give some teaching.

Their visit took a lot of organization by Catherine, but was well worth it and full of exciting incidents (see our blog for details!).

■ We finally had our telephone connected and could speak to our family (amongst others!) Both Sam and Stefi are doing really well and working hard. In June Stefanie finishes her B-Tech in Performing Arts and Sam his degree in Dance studies. We thank God so much for them, their love and support and we pray that they will be granted success in all they do. Sam and his girlfriend Sally hope to visit us just before Easter. Sam has been involved in Hillsong church in London and is especially looking forward to a main part in

their Christmas show.

Stefanie goes to the no-less exciting Holy Trinity Church in Guernsey, and is involved in leading worship there as well as in youth activities.

■ We have been building a fence. We were propelled into putting a fence round our "extended" garden and the mission land following some rather alarming developments in local law. (Thank you for financial help Holy Trinity, Guernsey.) This, and the clearing of waste land, has focussed our thinking and praying about future developments in church infrastructure now the regional centre is more focussed on Juarez than Salta. We hope that the fence will be the first phase of a building project which offers a retreat centre to both Indian and Criollo communities.

**Left: Worship at a women's conference
Right: Rocio thought Alpha was cool!**



The main challenges facing us

■ Understanding and communication. As well as the continuing demands of language learning for both of us, we need to get a much clearer grasp of situations, and the need to explain clearly what it is we sense God is saying.

■ What next for families and youth? Both Alpha and the women's conferences have brought into perspective the need to develop the church more along family lines. This is an exciting prospect, but will need some big changes in mentality.

■ Centenary. 2011 marks the hundredth anniversary of the arrival of English missionaries in Northern Argentina, and the start of the Anglican work. It is hoped that the commemorations which are being planned will bring together the need for remembering and history with the opportunity to envision the future and equip the youth.

■ Liturgy, literacy and orality. Each generation and culture presents its challenges in terms of expression and reading, and this has occupied much thought and discussion. Coincidentally the much-loved prayer and hymn book in Wichi has gone out of print, and we may have the possibility of introducing some important changes which will reflect the shift in attitudes in parts of the church, as we look at whether to reprint or revise. Also the use of the various translations of the Bible now available, and the need for real bilingual education in schools.

■ Building a centre (and a team)? Our ideas for a future centre need to be discussed and refined/ developed by a representative group of all cultures and parts of the church community. We have now been joined in Juarez by David and Shelley Stokes

who, together with Rene and Marina Pereira, and local leaders, will help in formulating the vision for the future.

■ Accompanying the Indian church. The next few years will be crucial for the Indian church if it is going to develop in a relevant and sustainable way. Please pray for us to have vision and courage as we find ways of making this possible.

May this Advent time of waiting be one of blessing for you. We do appreciate hearing from you, and of course your prayers and other support.

As ever, in His love,

Many blessings,

Nick and Catherine

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Leap of faith during Youth Alpha



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