

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



May 2008
The Crab Walk



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

Dear Praying Friends,

Saludos del Perú (greetings from Peru)! Thank you as always for your prayers and for the encouraging e-mails, letters, church magazines etc. We are both well, enjoying working hard but with a holiday in the Andes with Sarah's folks mid June within our sights!



May has been an exciting month in Lima as the city was host to a summit of Latin American, Caribbean and European nations. Flags flew from the buildings in the city centre, there were fireworks, an art festival and lots of traffic diversions! The summit was a success and we hope it will bring more investment into the country. We were hoping to go with our Union Jack to the airport to welcome our PM Gordon, but unfortunately Peru isn't high enough up his agenda and he sent a stand in. With the special bank holidays, we enjoyed a three hour journey up to Matucana, a beautiful village in the foothills of the Andes where we soaked up the green landscape.

Green at last!

Paul has enjoyed this month seeing two youth groups getting started. The group of several young teenagers in Ventanilla are doing Youth Alpha and particularly enjoy the games that Paul and the other leader Juan Carlos organise. Beside football and volleyball, young people play very few organised games, particularly teenagers. The group in Surco that finished Alpha has now moved on to talk about 'hot topics'. The young people are really getting into good discussions and their relationships with each other, the leaders and God seem to be growing. The group now meets in our home (which we love, especially Paul as he gets away with buying (and eating) large amounts of crisps, biscuits and pop). Paul's bad leg turned out to be a 16cm tear in his thigh muscle so he has been having lots of prayer and physio. After four weeks of having to walk up and down the stairs sideways like a crab, he is now able to bend it again. Please keep him in your prayers as he continues with his physio and hopes to get back on the rugby pitch soon. Paul's other big project this month has been organising church members to get the decorating of the new Compassion centre ready for the inauguration (4th June). He has worked with volunteers from the congregation all day on three Sundays sanding and painting. The dedication particularly of one of the chaps Ricardo, really challenged us. He works long hours as a decorator six days a week and yet worked his socks off each Sunday, even offering to come back after work a following Monday to finish a job! In the U.K. would we be willing to sacrifice our only day off for such a project?

Sarah has been continuing to improve the 'El Arca' workshop in the school and in Ventanilla. She is enjoying getting to know the children better so that she can plan activities that challenge and excite them. It has been great this week to see two boys who are usually quite a handful, sitting quietly concentrating on painting their picture. The simple science activities are great for getting the children thinking. The children were so amazed with an egg that's shell had gone soft after a night in vinegar, that it was squeezed a bit too hard and well, you can imagine! Any ideas of fun, simple experiments we can do, please let Sarah know. Ingrid, a teenager friend of a neighbour, has been volunteering with Sarah two days a week which is a huge help. Sarah has been learning the importance of not rushing into new areas with 'El Arca' and prayerfully considering God's timing. For example, for some time now she

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Mother's Day celebrations at school

has wanted to take 'El Arca' to San Pablo, a mission in the shanty town where we worked when previously in Lima. As the mission's service is at a time she couldn't make she has been frustrated that she hasn't had the chance to renew relationships with the people there. This week she heard that the service has now changed to Sunday afternoons and is thrilled that she can now go along. At church, Sarah has become part of the small team of Sunday school teachers and is enjoying putting into practice new ideas and skills learnt at her Monday evening course (as yet she hasn't used the television made from a cardboard box and some toilet roll middles but there's still time!). With the launch of Compassion next week, our prayer is that the Sunday school will really grow (there are currently six regular children).

For your prayers:

Please thank God for:

- The dedication of Church members in preparing the Church for Compassion
- Ingrid's help with 'EL Arca' (Please pray for opportunities to share my faith with her)
- The young people meeting in our home and for the group in Ventanilla
- That Paul's leg is healing

Please continue to pray for:

- The Compassion project at Church starting on 4th June, for the children and staff to settle into their roles and routine
- The Sunday school as it welcomes new children
- Sarah as she goes to San Pablo (there are so many dogs up there!). For wisdom to know how God wants her to contribute to the children's work
- Bishop William (back in Peru) that God would continue to heal him
- For greater movement in Paul's leg
- For the visit of Sarah's parents 12th-28th June. Particularly for safe travels

*Thank you for all your prayers. With 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 7...

Many events in Peru, baptisms, first communions, weddings, special birthday parties etc. have *padrinos* (Godparents). This couple may help organise the event and will usually contribute financially to the party.

It is an honour to be asked to be a *padrino*, but as foreigners it can put you in an awkward situation. For example, within the Church a couple who you barely know may ask you to be Godparents to their baby as they know you will be able to afford to give the child a good gift and financial support. Do you agree to this honour even though you know that there are others within the congregation who have deeper relationships with the couple and were expecting to be asked?

In a culture where 'saving face' is so important, how do you explain that you may not be the best choice for such an honour? If you just agree to be Godparents to friends children where do you draw the line and how seriously do you take your responsibility as a Godparent?