

News from Peter and Sally Bartlett preparing to go to Paraguay



17.2.09

Dear Friends,

Moving from St Helens in December was harder and sadder than we had expected (after 3 years we had become very fond of many people in St Helens). Christmas was shared with Karen and Matt, and David and Catherine, and we had an excellent time together. Karen, Catherine and Sally excelled at the board game - Twaddle, David invented living room golf, Matt organised DVD showings and Pete kept the kitchen functioning as chief bottle washer. Then we spent a peaceful New Year with Sally's parents in St Andrews.

We have enjoyed visits all over the country. Having contact with several people who are linked to Mission Paraguay has been useful. It was good to be part of the SAMS Sussex house party in January: meeting CMS personnel as SAMS and CMS merge and work together and also catching up with some of the SAMSGB Mission Partners who work in Paraguay. It has also been a delight to meet with Bishop Doug Milmine and Bishop John and Judy Ellison, previous Bishops in Paraguay, enabling us to learn from their collective wisdom. Flying from snowy Robin Hood airport to George Best airport was special as we spent a weekend in N. Ireland for SAMS Ireland's Friday Night Live. Visits spending precious time with family have given us the opportunity to sample rail travel which so far has always been on time.

Visiting churches in Plymouth, Birmingham, St Helens, Cardiff, Swindon, Chester, Rotherham and the Dobbin (N. Ireland) has been a true blessing. We have really appreciated the warm welcome and thoughtfulness of the churches that are linking with us and supporting us both financially and in prayer.

There isn't space to include all the acts of kindness which have been shown to us – comfortable beds, cuddly hotties; generous gifts of money and promises of ongoing financial support: tea at 'Paul and Barney's'; a tour of Cardiff by night; a visit to Caerphilly castle; the gift of a beautiful hand-embroidered stole; the receiving of a peace candle which has been to the USA and Zimbabwe; friends attending services at which we were speaking; lovely meals in the homes of vicars, church members and SAMS link secretaries; bottles of wine; a thoughtful gentleman who went and searched shops for a wind-up torch; a most memorable indoor BBQ for 150 people complete with succulent steaks cooked under a gazebo and with snow on the ground; the gift of pottery for our new home in Paraguay; being taken to see the house in which Sally had lived as a child in Belfast; the privilege of forming new friendships and the comfortableness of established friendships, sharing sorrows, joys, laughter and prayer.

On Sunday 22nd February Bishop Henry Scriven, representing SAMS / CMS, will commission us as Associate Mission Partners during the 10:45 morning service at St Mark's, Haydock. Peter will be consecrated as Bishop in Saint Andrew's Anglican Cathedral in Asunción, Paraguay on Sunday the 29th of March. So we aim to arrive in Asunción by the middle of March. At the moment our documents are being legalised at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and then require legalisation at the Paraguayan Embassy in London. Britain these days seems to be just as bureaucratic as South America.

We still have some final maintenance work and decorating to do on our house in Doncaster before it can be rented out again. Polish tenants who appeared to have been subletting meant that the house had suffered a lot of wear and tear. One of our main challenges is that we still need to reduce our personal belongings quite a bit as we plan to take 3 or 4 suitcases each and seem to have rather more effects than will fit into this amount of space! It was amazing just how much clutter we had accumulated in 3 years and we thought that we had got shot of much of it in the move from St Helens to Doncaster, but clearly not enough!

It has also been great to catch up with many friends from all over the country and we are very grateful for all those who have written, e mailed, and visited us or invited us to their homes. Sally has joined Facebook which is proving to be a good way to keep up to speed with what lots of our family, friends and several of our Godchildren are up to! It's a great way to share photos. Thank you also to all who have emailed us; we will be carrying on using the hotmail address when we first get to Paraguay. Listening to a lady who had been a missionary many years ago in South America when snail mail by boat was the only form of contact with the UK, we were reminded of just what a great innovation the web has been, enabling us to keep in contact with people from all over the world and just down the road, parents, children and family, friends and colleagues from way back and more recently St Helens and Paraguay, Link churches and prayer partners.

If you'd like to join us in praying we've attached some ideas below. Thank you for your friendship which we really value.

Yours, *Peter and Sally*

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Gratefully giving thanks for

- the support of family and friends and churches
- kindnesses and generosity received
- good health
- hospitality received
- things coming together time-wise
- the new home being prepared for us in Asunción

Humbly asking God for

- wisdom
- St Peter's search for a new vicar
- the ability to use time wisely and fruitfully
- quality time with family as we prepare to move
- documentation and paperwork to be completed
- packing of the necessary gear