



Name: Catherine Le Tissier & Nick Drayson

Location: Northern Argentina

Our call: To serve God’s kingdom in Latin America, especially through making disciples in the different cultures and enabling people to develop appropriate forms of church to respond to local needs.

Our role: As diocesan bishop, Nick oversees 150 Anglican churches in Northern Argentina, seeking to lead in mission and enable pastoral care in both rural indigenous and urban Latin contexts. Catherine coordinates the work of AMARE, the Argentine branch of Mothers’ Union.

Dear friends,

Women at large

When Hurricane Irma struck the Caribbean in September, a small group of women in Latin America wondered whether it would affect their plans to travel to Barbados for a regional gathering.

Thankfully for them, Catherine, Mirna, Marina and Elizabeth from Argentina, together with Penny and Livia from Peru, were able to fly safely and take part in what would be a life-changing meeting.

MULOA (Mothers’ Union “Listen Observe Act”) was the first of a series of regional gatherings encompassing a new dynamic for the organisation worldwide. Included in this “Americas” region is the fast-growing fledgling AMARE. The three Argentine attendees not only sensed the bigger picture, but found that their own faith and commitment was galvanised and a new vision of how to serve the needs of the family in their context was birthed.

This is a very timely development, as AMARE has in recent months developed both numerically and organisationally, and increasingly needs to become independent as well as fully involved in God’s

work worldwide. The local committee in our diocese is learning to function without the full time chaperoning of mission partners Catherine and Shelley!

That is not to say that it has been without its problems, and there have been some serious power struggles. At the same time, women in different areas have taken exciting initiatives. Carboncito recently received a visit from dozens of Wichi women who got there by public transport. And Barrio Obrero in Juarez witnessed a mission organised by the women and youth leaders at the height of the “troubles”, which resulted in over 100 young people joining the church! The women were also instrumental in stopping the local unrest.

The troubles

We had only been in the UK a few weeks when we heard about the riots, break-ins and incessant rain affecting our home town of Juarez. We were saddened to hear of the mistrust that had grown up between ethnic groups,



Top: Barbados delegates

Above: The trip to Chaco



Above left: The AMARE gathering!

Above right: Worshipping with AMARE

fuelled in part by drug trafficking, and, of course, to also hear of the insecurity felt by those looking after our house and office. When we returned after months visiting churches in the UK, we found that the constant police presence in the neighbourhood had restored the peace but that people were still very nervous.

Not long after our return, a group of adolescents from Salta who specialise in dance and drama to illustrate the gospel paid a visit to the church mentioned above in Barrio Obrero. It was so healing for all to hear the testimonies of young “white” people, who had discovered Jesus’ love and deliverance in a world just as dysfunctional and drug damaged as that faced by the Wichi young people.

Sadly, there are still unresolved issues in some churches and neighbourhoods. Barrio Toba has suffered from infighting between families, and the Bible translators are reluctant to come to the office to work since the break-ins. The Criollo church has suffered a loss of confidence, but is beginning to pick up after visits from the new archdeacon, Hugo Vergara. (NB. He is only “new” in the sense that he has retired from his role as a local pastor, and is now coordinating the work in the urban churches!)

Round the parishes

Further afield, we have managed to visit nearly all the deaneries in the diocese: anniversaries, teaching weekends, conferences and pastoral visits great and small! Despite a moratorium on ordinations, clergy and other leaders are generally encouraged and making the most of the various levels of training that are on offer. This year we have supplemented the residential Bible school with several local courses, including the Abundant Life course in Wichi. David Stokes, Chris Wallis and Ed Brice, together with a handful of local leaders, are seeking to discern the way for this to become more home-grown and appropriate to the communities’ needs.

We are producing a few written materials, such as catechisms and pastoral manuals, which we hope will lead to deeper reflection and understanding and, above all, discipleship. Sunday school materials and the training of teachers are also on the agenda, but we have felt for a long time that the main focus of discipleship and especially children’s work should be on the agenda.

Making disciples in the family

We have recently returned to developing Pastoral

Familiar, which takes in all aspects of pastoral care for the family including AMARE and parenting. We are trying to connect all the different activities, and areas of pastoral care, outreach and training.

Aparicio, a young political leader, said on our recent visit to his community: “We have tended to see raising the family as women’s work. But it’s time for us men to take responsibility.” It is high time something like AMARE came into being for men and fathers; more specifically, it is time to be more intentional in creating the habits that go with helping children to become disciples.

It was noticeable in Aparicio’s community that when we held a service or meeting, the children were either present or having a parallel one of their own (and singing lustily!). There we see a sacrifice of love and time on the

Below: Toba Sunday school





Above: Members of the Peru workshop

part of Sunday school teachers. In most Wichi communities, the adults find it more comfortable to allow the children to play unsupervised outside, whilst the adults do the “important” business of church.

Jesus-shaped life

But for adults as well, the dimension of discipleship is still largely missing. This is why the efforts worldwide to encourage something more intentional are so important. Nick is enjoying belonging to the Anglican Communion working group on Intentional Discipleship and Disciple Making. In the course of researching this he has become familiar with terms such as “the-God-who-is-community”, *Missio Dei*, οἶκος and Family on Mission! It is helpful to share good practice between cultures and churches, and this is why he will also be going to the West Indies later this year.



Left and right: Photos from Stefi's wedding to Rhys, in April

In August he participated in COMIBAM in Bogotá, Colombia – a missionary congress organised by Latin American mission organisations. This was followed by an invitation to do a workshop with Anglican clergy there. We then had a week with leaders in Lima and Arequipa in Peru. Again the themes were intentional discipleship and creation care.

Creation care

This was especially encouraging, as we had had to cancel a regional consultation in Salta. So to hear of the concern felt in Peru meant that as churches we have something to work with for the sustainability of the environment. We had the sense that in Peru not only is there more obvious destruction, but that the church is also more awake to doing something about it.

These same countries – Colombia, Peru and Chile – are experiencing visits around now from the Argentine Pope Francis. He is drawing attention to some of the major issues facing the continent: indigenous rights, environmental destruction, corruption, violence and human trafficking. These are all very real in Northern Argentina as well.

Our family

Our children are now scattered across the globe. Sam and Sally who are in Croydon, London, have produced a little boy, Cassian, whom we enjoy seeing pictures of but miss cuddling! Stefi and Rhys have settled in Christchurch, New Zealand, where he is playing rugby and

PLEASE PRAY FOR...

- Healthy growth for AMARE, including a regional gathering in Salta 7-10 December
- Coordination for Pastoral Familiar
- Wider ministry of intentional discipleship
- Creation care consultation
- Our own family.

working hard, and she is developing a job in schools using theatre to help children's self-confidence.

Our thanks as ever for your thoughts and prayers.

With our love in Christ

Catherine & Nick

You can give online to Catherine and Nick at: churchmissionsociety.org/drayson

Contact details:
catleti@googlemail.com
nicobispo@gmail.com

