



Paul and Rachel Elliston

c/o Casilla 35, Chinchá SERPOST, Peru
ellistonp&r@bmsworldmission.org

www.paulandrach.com

www.bmsworldmission.org/prelliston

Newsletter April 2009

It's been a while. We've been delaying this newsletter in order to include news of new housing and construction photos. Maybe next time!

Housing project

This continues to be frustrating. During a design workshop in early November, our architect gave a provisional start date of the end of the month. However, weeks have slipped past whilst the technical team organise themselves and do what's necessary to advance the project. Five months later, we are still waiting, although a recent rumour of an engineer's impending arrival could signal the start of construction at last.

Before this can occur, however, there is still bureaucracy and herein lie our greatest frustrations, since the technical team has the required information and we seem to be currently experiencing a communication blackout with them. What we have heard is second-hand, but could fundamentally affect the project, even at this late stage. Officially, however, we remain in the dark and powerless to act.

English project

At our pastor's request, Rachel ran a summer English course for church youth and their friends. This was poorly supported, but did give Rachel contact with new people outside the church.

After Easter, at their request, she will be starting a twice-weekly evening class for professionals. Having struggled to find genuine friendships in church and the lower-class areas where we work, she is hopeful of developing healthy and mutually encouraging relationships through the course.

Future projects

We're still searching for land to build a church/community centre.

We were recently trained to teach adult literacy and numeracy and were overwhelmed for two reasons: firstly,



by the quality of the materials, which are first class and, secondly, by the length of course. The ideal of three times three hours per week for eight months is far beyond the commitment that anyone, including us, could make in Chinchá. We need to plan carefully.

We have also been trained in teaching household financial management. The material proved far too complex for our target group, but more simple material is currently being developed which we may pilot in the future.

Church life

Since arriving in Chinchá, we have really struggled with church life, with which we have found ourselves heavily involved, despite all our social action commitments. The extent of our struggles were such that we recently had a frank discussion with our bosses and pastor. It became clear throughout the course of these discussions that the local leadership have been disappointed by us (because we are not the do-everything-in-the-church-and-pay-for-it type of missionaries that they had previously received from elsewhere). Expectations have now been reset and our frustrations at a lack of local support heard, so we have hopefully turned a corner. There is always the possibility that this will prove a false dawn, but we pray the shift is just the beginning.

Case study: Luis and Lidia

In the absence of exciting photos of half-built homes, we thought we'd finish by introducing you to a family we'll be building for. Luis (39) and Lidia (42) have six children, ranging from four to 22 years old, and one recent grandchild. Four of the children still live with them.

They have lived on the same land for over 20 years, having built their adobe (mud brick) home by hand over the course of two years. It collapsed on 15 August 2007 – one of many in the earthquake. At the time, only one daughter was at home and she escaped before the walls caved in.

After camping for some days on the street, Luis and Lidia were fortunate enough to receive a temporary wooden house (a six metre squared garden shed) from their local priest, but it's not secure and rarely a comfortable temperature.



Lidia and Luis and their 'garden shed' house

From their 'house', they run a part-time shop selling fruit and vegetables; a furniture workshop mainly producing chairs in the local artisanal style; a community vaso de leche (glass of milk) programme – a government initiative to ensure poor children receive better nutrition; a cotton store for the crop accrued from Luis' work as a tenant farmer; a stable for their working horse; a comedor (communal kitchen) and, finally, they host a church homegroup. In between this, they somehow manage to live, study (in the children's case) and sleep.



The comedor (comunal kitchen)

Prayer Corner (for those who do):

- ◆ Improved communication with our architect
- ◆ Maturing of the church
- ◆ Wisdom over future direction
- ◆ Land for the church centre
- ◆ Our health, which has suffered from recent trouble with worms and parasites
- ◆ Genuine friendships, especially for Rachel
- ◆ For each housing project family to know God's love for them
- ◆ Thanks for improved Pastoral Team dynamics – long may it continue!

They don't sleep much though. Particularly with a daughter at university, the family focus has to be on generating income. Lidia's day, for example, starts at 2.30am when she gets up to find the firewood she needs to make the oaty drink for the vaso de leche. This over, she attends to her family's needs and then the comedor, which occupies her until noon. In the afternoon, she often travels to a nearby town to buy and sell fruit and veg, before returning home to housework or, on three nights a week, a church meeting. She might get to bed at 10pm.

Having a house will mean that there's more room; that they won't be living on top of each other and suffering from the tensions this inevitably brings; that the older children won't have to miss school to safeguard their shack; that they'll have some defences against the all-pervading dust; that their health will improve and, consequently, their earning power and, finally, that their sense of self-worth and dignity will be partially restored.

Paul and Rachel

BMS World Mission supports 350 personnel working in 34 countries of the world. Together they are involved mainly in church planting, development, disaster relief, education, health and media and advocacy.

If you would like to support BMS you can make a one-off donation, or you can become a 24:7 Partner for as little as £2 per month. Visit www.bmsworldmission.org or call 01235 517617 for a 24:7 Partners leaflet, or 01235 517641 for our donation hotline.