



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,

The truth of the words “Here we have no continuing city” (Hebrews 13.14) has been brought home to us in the past few months as we have spent much of the time travelling away from home, both visiting people who have been evacuated from their homes and saying farewell to those who have been “promoted to glory” and reached the city which does last forever! Read on for more details...

Networking in Jamaica

Latin America and the Caribbean have the same number of Anglican dioceses as the Church of England (43), though rather more spread out (in six provinces rather than two). Twenty six of these were represented by their bishops and a selection of clergy and laity for a consultation in Jamaica in October, which looked at leadership, neighbourhood and financial capability.

It was a great opportunity for Nick to network and to appreciate some of the beauty and challenges faced by our neighbours. Although these regions are now separated into three or more languages, it was fascinating to see how many roots we have in common. This is especially the case between

the Caribbean and Central America, where migrant labour led to whole families being spread across the region, from Barbados to Panama, Jamaica and Trinidad to Costa Rica, Cuba and Colombia. There are also shared difficulties, financial struggles, national corruption and injustice, environmental degradation or disaster and the whole question of leadership training.

At the same time, there are marked differences in approach as well as theologically, and so it was helpful to be able to discuss and share as friends. Nick was also privileged to preach in the cathedral in Spanish Town, as well as the university, catch up with a long-lost cousin and do some birdwatching.

Workshops and training

As it happened, the Diocese of Jamaica also held a discipleship workshop which Nick was able to share in. “Whole-life discipleship” is a consultation which has been used worldwide, as part of the Anglican Communion’s



Top: Latin American Anglican leaders

Above: AMARE honorary president Isabel Vilte shares a joke with Catherine





Above left: Catherine's sister Jen with her two eldest children (the child in the photo is a granddaughter).

Above right: Pastors awaiting their carnets



“Jesus shaped life” initiative.

Back here in Argentina, discipleship was also the subject of our urban leaders’ retreat in January (led by Mark Burgess from Lima) and the youth camps held in Northern Argentina and Bolivia also picked up on the theme. We are gradually putting together a strategy for building a culture of intentional discipleship, which we hope will affect the whole diocese.

At the same time, the women of AMARE have been putting into practice what they learnt in the MULO training (Mothers’ Union Listen Observe Act). An event was held in Salta in December with participants from the neighbouring dioceses of Peru, Chile, Bolivia and Argentina. This was then repeated in Juárez for those from areas unable to reach the Salta training.

For more on this see <https://bit.ly/2Jmn3QR>

Family

Family matters have been at the forefront of our minds, not just because our family is spread across the world but because Catherine’s eldest sister Jennifer, who lives in Guernsey, has been battling with cancer for some time. She took a turn for the worse a little before her husband Arthur died in January. We decided that for the remaining

weeks of Jen’s life, Catherine should stay in Guernsey, supporting and sharing in all the rollercoaster of emotions felt by all the family there. Jen’s palliative care and medical attention was excellent and the family accompanied her throughout her journey home with many tears but also fun and laughter. Jen never lost her sense of humour and would test the speed of attention when she rang her bell!

Jen went to be with the Lord very peacefully just after Catherine returned to Argentina in April. Her eldest son, Richard, commented how the family pull together in the face of adversity, but he and his siblings Rebecca and Robert will need our prayers. They have lost both parents in just over three months. Please also pray for Jen’s twin sister Josephine.

Travels

In Catherine’s absence, Nick has done lots of travelling locally, in the process managing to update most of the pastors’ carnets! He had the company of one or more students, as well as colleagues, so was kept busy. The assistant bishops are now each covering five deaneries and gradually getting used to being the point of reference in these areas. Rain prevented some of the journeys, as it always does at this time of year, but in Juárez it has been quite quiet in comparison to last year, with very few incidents. There is a strong police presence, however, and drug abuse continues

to be of great concern in several towns in the area.

Floods

The main news from here though has been the flooding affecting the communities along the Pilcomayo. In the opening weeks of the year, the river burst its banks at a number of points along the border and is now making its way through the forest, leaving a trail of deep mud and evacuated homes wherever it flows. Sadly, beautiful new schools and churches have had to be abandoned despite government efforts to protect the communities by building flood defences. Many people have lost everything, and all have lost something whether it be belongings, animals or land. As the waters recede, the challenge now is working out where people should resettle. Few can return to their villages, and so negotiations are underway, with many of the villages dividing into smaller groups and clearing space elsewhere in the forest, while others wait for the government to allocate them a piece of land.

The churches have a unique opportunity to minister to those in need, with people needing help and orientation readjusting to new places with no buildings. Temporary shelters have been set up at various points along the main road, and new clearings made in the surrounding forest, where schools are beginning to function. The



and transitional move to Salta, but that isn't happening quite yet!

Back to bishops and climate change

At the end of May, the South American bishops and lay delegates will meet to talk about climate change and how to respond to the crises caused by this. For this meeting, we

will be in Peru where there is a good momentum building on environmental issues. Many of the South American countries face the same scenarios where unpredictable weather patterns affect the most vulnerable and, of course, deforestation, contributes hugely to this.

May you know the presence of the risen Lord, and the power of his Spirit! With our love in Christ

Catherine & Nick

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

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

PLEASE PRAY FOR...

- Safety in travel, and good use of the opportunities this affords.
- Our family.
- Training and application.
- The flood relief work.

Above: Temporary housing for those evacuated

pastors and women's groups are pleased to have their neighbours so close at hand, although the cramped conditions are rather testing!

More travels

In April and May we are both off again, Catherine (accompanied by Marina and Mirna) is off to the next part of the MULOA training (in Canada) and Nick to meetings related to discipleship (in Costa Rica, Malaysia and New Zealand). This time Nick will have the opportunity to see family, both Sam, Sally and Cassian (in London) and Stefanie and Rhys (in Christchurch). He will be delighted to meet his grandson for the first time, but he and Catherine will be separated again for several weeks. She will, however, be busy with a Parenting Trainers' course, and adjusting to life back in Argentina.

We continue to pray and plan towards an eventual departure



Left: Toba pastors in dialogue with local authorities

Top: Temporary housing for those evacuated
Above: Rain (in Juárez)