



newsletter 55

june 2009

“The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it.”

Psalm 24 v 1

This is the verse with which Nancy started her April prayer letter. It is a timely reminder when so much of what we read and hear in the media is telling us what might or might not happen to our planet in the next 100 years. The future may be uncertain but we are confident that God has it and us in his hand. What we are certain about is that today there are children in Colombia who need love and care.

Thank you for sharing with them in their need.

Colombian News

Large areas of Colombia had some severe weather at the beginning of the year and there has been flooding and landslides. The affected areas are spread right across the country the worst affected region being in the south near the border with Ecuador. In February, close to Bogotá at Soacha, landslides destroyed houses and left many families homeless.

At the Farm

In March a team of five from Links International visited the farm and Fusa. Nancy reports they shared love and joy with the boys at the farm and families in Fusa.

Neider has now enrolled in university to study systems engineering. During the week he helps out with different activities on the farm,

including milking the cows and helping the younger boys with their homework.

Maicol has to sort out the situation with his military service. His problem with eyesight means he can’t do military service but he still has to gain some papers in order to work.

You will recall that Gabriel and Over left the farm under circumstances that Nancy was not completely happy about. There had been no contact at the writing of the last newsletter but the latest news is not good. Contrary to what Nancy was told the children ended up living with their grandmother who sells drugs from the house and lives with others who use drugs and are involved with the guerrillas. The boys had not been going to school. Recently the police took most of the family to prison leaving Gabriel and Over alone.



Gabriel and Over

Nancy had to go and get them and give them protection once again. Sadly they had been





taking drugs and they had to be put in the home in Fusa for boys who are addicts.

The other boys at the farm are doing well.

Please pray for the boy's studies, that God would keep them safe from bad friendships and problems at school. Pray for Neider in his studies at university, for protection on his life and family, and that he can help them get out of poverty; for Maicol and the papers he needs; for Gabriel and Over for a real transformation in their lives; for the families affected by the landslides and flooding. Pray too for the workers at the farm.

At Altamira

There is not much news from Altamira but one on going problem for everyone there is transport. The vehicle that they have is not up to the job of carrying children safely and a replacement is needed. Nancy sent us these photos which illustrate what a strange topsy-turvy place Colombia can be.



A bus for carrying dogs

(yes, your eyes don't deceive you, that is a tail hanging on the back)



Room for just one more?

Please Pray for a suitable replacement. Also the minibus at the farm is giving problems and is in the garage, please pray that this will be fixed and back in service soon.

In Fusa

Pastor Fernando Dachardi helps the families of the children who come to the Feeding Programme by visiting and talking to them. Recently he and IMiC became entangled in situation that caused some difficulty and discouragement.

A mother of some of the children at the feeding programme was reported to social services because of maltreatment and prostitution. Pastor Fernando was caught up in the situation because of his visits and the police came to the Feeding Programme. This must have been upsetting for the children and the staff had to sort things out so that IMiC's integrity was not damaged.

Please pray for Pastor Fernando for protection in what he does for these families and for the integrity of the Feeding Programme and IMiC not to be damaged by situations like this.

IMC AGM

Sharon Unwin reports:

The AGM was held in Molesey, Surrey for the first time, and we were encouraged in welcoming many committed supporters to reflect, give thanks and look forward together. We missed Carlos Forero, who runs the feeding programme in Fusa, as his visa was not granted in time however it was a privilege to have Nancy Centeno, Colombian Director of IMiC, with us.

Paul Stockley, Chair of UK Trustees, led the meeting through the business section, highlighting the main points of the Annual Report, acknowledging the continued financial and prayer support which enables IMC to continue its work. The current Trustees were re-appointed to their roles, and Carole and Chris Fry were appointed for the first time having worked with the Board over the preceding few months.



Nancy Centeno thanked everyone for their ongoing support and introduced, with pictures, her dedicated, hard-working team, including houseparents, feeding programme team and office staff. Without these “heroes” IMC could not function. The meeting prayed for the team and for Nancy in particular, asking for strength, encouragement, wisdom and blessing.

Carlos sent a message on a DVD in which he explained how he came to work for IMC in 1991, how the work has grown since its small beginnings in Blanca’s front room to feed 80 to 100 children every day as well as providing spiritual, social and educational input and support to families. He also shared IMC’s vision to expand this model from Fusa to other poor areas of Colombia.

David Comley shared his thoughts of his visit to Colombia with the Summer Team in September 2008 and the impact of being warmly welcomed by the boys at Peniel Farm and the boys and girls at Altamira. He reflected how he felt he had received and benefited as much personally as those he had gone out to bless and encourage!

Reflecting on the last year, we are grateful to God for his faithfulness and goodness in the midst of the challenges we have faced, and we look forward with hope and expectancy to the year ahead, trusting in our heavenly Father for his provision and thankful for the ongoing support of our members.

Visa Victory...?

Paul Stockley, Chair of Trustees writes:

It was with much regret that we learned that Carlos’ visa had been refused without reason by the British Embassy in Bogotá. Despite letters and contacts being made, the appeal process frustrated us as the flight dates approached.

As a charity we have invited members of the Colombian board and staff team to the UK fairly regularly in recent years, and have never experienced any problems. Nancy, Alfredo, Isabel, Luz-Dari have all visited, as have former

houseparents Ezequiel and Rocio. As usual we followed due process, and the obstruction of his application made no sense to us, and left us feeling powerless in the hands of the authorities. Surely there had been some mistake.

Carlos did eventually get his appeal hearing, and was finally granted a UK visitor's visa, praise God! However, it was too late for him to attend the AGM. Nonetheless, he now has a six month window in which he may make a visit, and the UK Trustees are considering how best to make use of this opportunity. If you are keen to host Carlos, or to hear him share perspectives on the work, please get in touch by email.

Nancy in Petersfield...

Joan Thraves reports:

As well as coming to the IMC AGM Nancy was principally here for a vacation, by invitation of Seren and Andrew Boyd. However she did have opportunities to speak about the work in Colombia. Nancy revisited Rake CE Primary School near Petersfield, to talk about her work as Director and the difficulties of life for children in Colombia. Seren Boyd, whose two boys Joel and Sam attend the school, acted as interpreter.

The children were very attentive to Nancy’s talk and asked quite penetrating questions. They were clearly challenged by what they heard. Nancy said afterwards, how good it had been for her to meet children from UK as well as people who supported the work.



Nancy with the children at Rake School



Nancy also spoke on two occasions at Petersfield Christian Fellowship. At the first meeting she shared about her personal struggles in directing the work of IMiC Colombia. She gave very moving insights into the demands on her emotionally with so many needs requiring hard decisions.

On the second occasion Nancy spoke to the church, firstly to the children who had collected gifts and presented a cheque. Nancy said how amazing that folk here in the UK, thousands of miles away, were enabling many lives to be rescued and changed because of our faithfulness and generosity. She expressed her sincere thanks on behalf of Colombian children. An extremely generous collection was taken which amounted to some thousands of pounds.

...And Newick

Jeremy Burdett reports:

Nancy arrived at the farm (Jeremy's) on a wet and windy afternoon but we kitted her out for what turned out to be a two hour tour of the farm on foot. She asked many questions about looking after dairy cows and I tried to answer in some sort of Spanglish. Fortunately we had a Nicaraguan friend of our daughter with us on the Tuesday and we cleared up some of the gaps in a two hour conversation over breakfast.

Nancy had been to many beautiful gardens and seen millions of 'beautiful' bluebells over the previous week and so we decided to give her a culture shock and took her to the Pavilion in Brighton. We took advantage of the guided tour recorded in our different languages which was both enlightening about the Prince Regent's lavish lifestyle and very educational about life in general during the early nineteenth century.

On Tuesday evening we met the church congregation in Newick for a time of discussion and prayer. As well as questions about the work of IMC, Nancy also discussed the general social and political situation in Colombia which helped people to understand the increasing need of IMC and other similar projects to help

with the many innocent casualties of the guerrilla and paramilitary campaigns.

Having been asked by Air France to be at Heathrow by 4.30 on Wednesday morning we were greeted by a message board saying the checking in would not start before 5.30! Wonderfully Sharon [Unwin] also came to bid Nancy farewell, so the wait was very sociable even if we were a bit apprehensive about the timing and, as far as I know, she got to Paris in time for her connection to Bogotá.

Please pray for Nancy for a continued blessing from time spent here and strengthening and encouragement when back in Colombia.

And Finally...

To end with Nancy's words from the April prayer letter:

"May the Lord bless you with peace, love and health and strength, it is he the all powerful one who can do everything, because the earth and everything in it belongs to him. The world is in crisis, but his children aren't because he sustains us, his word is truth.

"We are strengthened and encouraged through these promises to continue in the work and we are sure so too are you, our great support, we thank God for you in our prayers for the time you give to the ministry because we know the world is living in the midst of crisis, but you are faithful. We give thanks for your sacrifice and for sowing that which is eternal for the glory of God."

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