

FEBRUARY 2019



It is official. It is probably officially official. We are the worst missionaries EVER. At least as far as prayer letters go. So this one comes with huge apologies that it has been almost a year since our last letter, and a huge sigh of relief that our gospel is one of grace and not of works!

Apologies over, let's get down to business. Grab a cup of tea, or cinnamon latte (if you're so inclined) and read on to find out about life back in Argy, a right Philippian youth camp, where we're headed next, and (new in Nature Corner) what to do if a humming bird gate-crashes your sermon or a scorpion runs over your hand.

Back to life, back to reality

For those of you who have been keeping track, we are back (after our six month UK home assignment) in lovely Lomas, Buenos Aires, for one more year, while Andrew finishes his curacy with Senior Pastor, Mario.

Coming back to a place we already know has huge benefits. Lots of friends and neighbours in our block of flats, have been really welcoming. Several families even organised a huge asado (barbecue) for us and then asked us (juicy steak in one hand, glass of Malbec in the other, sun shining down) 'so, was it difficult leaving England?' Hmmm....

Aside from nice weather and good food though, we have experienced a bit of a clunky gear shift on our return, and very blatant reminders of some of the more tricky aspects of Argentine living. Not least inflation at a staggering 48%, which means prices have DOUBLED since we were last here. But, we asked for prayers for contentment on our return, and thus far your prayers are being answered (and much helped by a new washing machine!!). Please do pray on!

Kenosis: a question of attitude

Los Cocos youth camp is always a highlight of our year. This year around 60 teens/students and 25 leaders and cooks jumped on the bus for that beloved 10-hour overnight ride to the hills of Cordoba. Not dissimilar to the hilly bits of Wales, it's a sanctuary for everyone from Buenos Aires (especially as it was 40°C on the day we left!). In Cordoba it's cooler, there are fewer mosquitoes and it's only the scorpions and stray dogs that really cause any bother. And sometimes the campers.

This year, Andrew led the camp with Hernán (another pastor) and Jony and Jenny (close friends who are back in Argentina and leading a church after studying at Cornhill and Oakhill). This year, we worked through Philipians. Our prayer is that together we would form a generation united in contending for the faith of the gospel. I particularly enjoyed Andrew dumping a bag of horse manure over all the things in which he might be tempted to put his confidence (see Phil 3:1-10). It definitely caused a murmur, especially as his phone, his birth documents and degree certificates were in the pile!



Cocos leaders: Andy with (from left) Hernán, Jony and José (from Mendoza)

A second highlight was the launching of a new training track, called Project Timothy. Four of the older leaders were given a passage from Timothy to preach, and then given lots of training, encouragement and help as they prepared. On giving the talk, they then received feedback and were able to reflect on how they did and how they could improve. This may not sound like much, but to us it was a HUGE step forward in training for expositional preaching, the importance of speaking from the passage and letting Scripture guide the talk.



Andy's talk on camp

This being our fourth year helped a great deal in relationships with leaders and campers and we had some really fruitful chats. It was obvious that this year there was a lot more intentional discipleship of the leaders, which was thrilling to see. Even so, there is so much more that could be improved, and a year is a long time between camps.

Mendoza, Mendoza, Mendoza!

You have to chant that title. You can pump your fist if you like too. It's fun. 2020 is coming and in January 2020 we'll be moving to Mendoza. Suddenly we're planning dates when Andrew can go and learn everything he can about the church with Hernán, the pastor who currently oversees the congregation there. We're also planning dates to go as a whole family to look at schools and places to live. Please pray! There is no house attached to the church and so it feels like we can literally choose our lifestyle! Do we want to live in a gated community, semi gated, or just wild outlaws on a real street?! Bilingual school, private or state school? Near the church or near the city centre? All rather overwhelming questions for foreigners who don't know the city. So please pray for us as we tentatively dip our toes into the Mendozaan waters. Pray for discernment as we listen to advice from many different sources and prayerfully evaluate different possible visions of ministry. Please also pray we would not be anxious about anything but present our requests to God in prayer with thanksgiving.

Nature Corner

Highlights this month include a hummingbird flittering into our church service. So much more charming than a pigeon, but just as distracting! What did we do? Nothing, except appreciate how incredible humming birds are. No one saw it leave, so I'm hoping it's made a nest and we'll have a family next time! At Los Cocos, we saw a praying mantis (very appropriate), a boring beetle (who was enormous and very interesting), an elephant moth (definitely more moth than elephant), a grey fox and finally, a sneaky scorpion who ran across a leader's hand. She deftly captured it in a cup and then the offending beast was put into a jar and passed round, until someone took pity on it and released it into the bushes. And to think we sometimes worry about the kids' education!

That's it for now. Please see some summarised prayer points below. Thank you for your continued faithfulness to us in prayer and the immense encouragement many of you were while we were back in the UK. To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever! (Phil 4:20)

Love, Andrew, Bethanie, Maia, Emilio and Lucy xxxxx

Prayer points

- **Please pray as Andrew settles back into routine in the church in Lomas. This year there are plans to preach through Romans 9-16. Please pray we would have much opportunity to grow as we serve so that we would be better prepared for ministry in Mendoza.**
- **Praise God for a wonderfully encouraging youth camp. Pray for those who came that they would continue to reflect on Philippians and would begin to see why Jesus is so surpassingly great, and long for his righteousness rather than their own.**
- **We are so excited about Project Timothy. Pray that opportunities would arise to continue investing in these leaders and expand it so that others can be trained too. Pray for wisdom for Jony and Andrew as they juggle local church commitments with this wider church ministry.**
- **Please pray as we prepare for Mendoza, for wisdom and patience and discernment. We are so thankful that God is sovereign and goes ahead of us in all this. Pray we'll remember that despite the circumstances.**
- **Please pray for Maia and Emilio as they restart school at the end of Feb. Please especially pray for their Spanish and for their adaptation into Argy school life. Lucy will be staying with me and she's currently potty training! So prayers for patience would be appreciated too!!**