



Dear Friends,

We write this following the wettest April on record in Salta and May seems to be heading the same way. Autumn is barely making an appearance, and everywhere seems as green and as humid as can be. Life is good though often very busy, but we are all well. As ever, we share some of our work news and ask for your continued prayers.

Lima Looms Large

Five of the six dioceses that make up the Anglican province of South America nominated delegates to attend what we're now calling the "First Provincial Gathering on Climate Change and the Role of the Church" (25-27 May). So, after a rather long process, we now have an interesting, diverse and motivated group of people, representing Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, and Peru, and all are now booked and ready to travel to Lima.

Our international speakers, Rev. Dr. Jeff Golhier, the Anglican Observer on Environmental matters at the UN, and Dr. Santiago Reyna, a senior academic from the University of Cordoba

(Argentina), have been working with Andrew to shape a programme we feel will give the strongest chances of the church taking some concrete actions. We are also very pleased to have the participation of representatives from the Anglican Alliance, the Lausanne Movement and the Episcopal Diocese of Colombia.



Conference speaker Dr. Santiago Reyna - national University of Cordoba - Argentina



The view that will greet conference delegates

The venue for the gathering is an Old Catholic school/convent in Lima, overlooking the Pacific. Local logistics and admin are being ably handled by a group of volunteers from the Diocese of Peru, under the direction of Bishop Jorge Aguilar.

Churches in Peru are increasingly aware of the issue of climate change. The country is especially vulnerable due to its dependence on glaciers for water, including that used for irrigation and most of the nation's electricity generation. Many glaciers are disappearing.

A third of Peru's population live in Lima, and their water supply relies on glacial melt. There are already water shortages and this will only become greater with increasing demand as Lima's population grows.

Environmental outlook

In our last letter we mentioned Salta's provincial government had named a new Minister for the Environment. To cut costs, this same minister is simultaneously responsible for agricultural and industrial production and labour. This combination does not auger well, and we are already seeing signs of priority being given to agricultural expansion over environment. There is a concerted attempt to make the provincial land use law more flexible, so as to allow for more deforestation in areas that would otherwise be conserved.

We continue to monitor requests for new permits for first clearance, but that is about as much as we can do right now. That requires us to maintain and pay for the paperwork to keep our local charity (Fundación Refugio) registered, which at times seems more trouble than it is worth. Yet at others, often key moments, having that charitable status allows us to speak out and gain access to government information that would otherwise be difficult to get hold of as individuals.

La Caldera

Work on revamping the retreat house in La Caldera continues (slowly). We are now inviting bids for the construction of the proposed new two-storey dormitory that includes two rooms with access for the disabled.

We are also in the final stages of negotiating additional funding for the completion of this project.

At the same time we are embarking on fund raising to purchase some additional land on which to build a multi-purpose conference centre. The asking price is 40 thousand pounds, and we have raised 10 thousand so far. If we can secure the rest, we then have a good chance of raising further funds for the conference centre with a US-based donor.



Artist's impression of the La Caldera building with new, two-story dormitory complex

Compassion International

As part of his work with Compassion International, Andrew recently had the privilege to meet and discuss the topic of youth discipleship with pastors and young people in Kenya, Ethiopia and Togo. This is as part of a design of a broader study of this topic, and will be the focus of his research over the coming months.

Following the Lima conference, Andrew heads back to Manila (June 11-13th), where he is helping run an international workshop in which, together with his colleagues, he will be sharing findings on a study on local church responses to natural disasters. On the way back, he will briefly visit his parents in the UK (14-22 June).

Prayer Pointers

Please pray for the following points:

- Give thanks for funds that were received to cover the costs of the Lima gathering. Continue to pray for the event, for safety in travel and that participants will feel encouraged and motivated to engage in practical action.
- For our health. Tomas recently had severe skin rash, and doctors are still not totally certain what it was caused by. Andrew is having treatment for actinic keratosis, including some minor surgery – but all is well.
- For Ceci and Tomas who will need to define what they do next after they graduate later this year. For the search for a new flat to rent for Carolina to live in next year.

Andrew and Maria Leake
andrewleake@gmail.com