



Bolivian Community Project



Vol. 3 Issue 5 Winter 2003-04

PROGRESS AT LA PALMERA

school, church, health centre, football school and camp

The secondary school has started, with 40 pupils in the first intake. Following a 12 month gap, parents of children graduating from primary school were anxious that their children would be able to continue with the ethos, values and quality of the primary school, and made a sacrificial personal commitment to provide new computers for the secondary school. Enough building work has been completed for this first class, but there is more to be done and a lot of curriculum and staff development to follow, and more equipment to be obtained. More funds are urgently needed for all of this. Victor Elias Ramos is secondary

head, and Ericka Salvatierra de Gauna is primary head.

Larger premises for meetings of the church and the school are being built, and the project has now been recognised as a Bolivian Charity in its own right. This will enable succession and wider ownership of longer term planning and responsibility. Lucho and Lorna Velez are on this board as well as representatives of the boards in the UK and North America. Development of the Chaco (campsite) is also under way – see inside for pictures – and the football school and health centre continue to touch lives.



The first columns for the new meeting hall are erected

Would you like to visit the La Palmera project in Bolivia in Autumn 2004?

An organised trip from the UK is being considered, led by Neil and May Young.

Contact them on **0141 357 3566** if you are interested.

This is the bus



We hope to have sufficient funds soon to acquire this magnificent coach. Ever since a group of children were stranded in the jungle when a hired coach let us down, it has been a priority to have reliable transport for the project. Many of the roads in the area are now suitable for this type of vehicle.

Visit our new website at **www.bcpfield.org**



FAITH THROUGH FOOTBALL

Praise the Lord for the amazing ways in which God has been blessing the lives of those involved in the work of the Football School.

During 2003, the work has continued to develop with the introduction of new activities and programmes.

The first new activity was the start of a weekly Bible study for the coaches which provides them with a time to meet as a group to study God's Word and pray together. The Lord has blessed us all through these sessions and we would appreciate your prayers that we would continue to be challenged and encouraged by Him. The coaches this year are Rufino, Roboham, Wldberto and Maicol.

A Bible study has also been started for some of the teenage members of the Football School. It started in the month of February, for 2 young players, Alex and Luis Castro. The Lord greatly blessed the work in an amazing way and Alex gave his life to the Lord in a short time. Luis had made a commitment to the Lord in 2002.



On hearing of the Bible study, Raúl Mafaile and Wilson Menacho, another two young men from the Football School asked if they could also be involved in the activities. Within a few weeks the Lord challenged these two young men and both came to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. Kenny also invited Luis Fernando Trigo, a young man who had shown interest in the Bible activities to come along and he too gave his life to the Lord. The group continues to meet on a Saturday evening and it has been a joy to see the way in which these young men are growing in their knowledge and faith in the Lord.

Please pray also for Jose Luis (13), Jorge (13), Juan Pablo (15), David (14) and Maicol (15). During a time of evangelism after a "Football Workshop" with the children of Villa Alba, a small town near Trinidad, these 5 young lads came to know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. Edson (15), Edgar (14) and Yeremi (10) have also made similar commitments to the Lord during the camps organised by the local church.

We are also using excellent outreach material published by CEF called the "Wonder Book" to share the gospel message with all the children and teenagers who attend the Football School. The lessons continued until the end of November.

On the football side things are going very well. We have 7 teams this year with the under 7, 9, 11 and 18 teams in good positions to qualify for the later stages of their respective championships. This year we have over 130 children and young men taking part in the Football School activities.

On behalf of the workers in the Recreation Centre, I would like to thank you for your continued prayers and support.

Kenny Holt



Thank you for your visits

The summer months (winter for Bolivia) found a large number of visitors here at CCC La Palmera. We hosted over 50 people during the months of June, July and August. These visitors came from all over the world – from Australia, Scotland, Canada, USA, Colombia, England, Ireland. 7 people came with "International Teams" and helped in camp work. Then from Canada we had a team of 22! This was a special team for Lucho and Lorna Velez because some of the team members, years ago, had played a role in the salvation of Lucho.



Many volunteers came as individuals and were involved in the various areas of the Project's work: the school, the prison ministry, the football school, the church, doing construction work and painting, cleaning, helping in the health centre, supporting the deaf school, being involved in Sunday School and AWANA....just to name a few activities. Nevertheless, we kept our visitors busy and they were a true blessing and encouragement to all of us here at CCC La Palmera. Thank you for your visits!

The school celebrated its 18th anniversary during the third week in October. Visitors during October included Paul Lewis (former short term), his brother Luke and friend Stephen Punton. Also, Project director Alan Cunningham, his wife Ethel and daughter Kirsty. Rachel Peebles from Glasgow returned in early October to join the Project team for a 2 year period.

Our short termers currently comprise Therese Chevalier from Canada, Rachel Peebles, Karen Clark and David McColl from Scotland. The BCP-Field Missionary Team was reduced in early November with the return of Walter and Nikki Vaca to America for a 2 year furlough. Walter and Nikki will use their furlough

to raise support and satisfy the terms of Walter's application for USA residency.



Being at camp is a highlight experience in the life of any youngster – including those from La Palmera. This site was acquired several years ago and is 25 kilometres from the school. It has been used already in an undeveloped state, but work has now begun with the excavation of a lake, which

will hold the water supply and be a recreational feature for kayaking. Two short golf holes are also planned. Traditionally built timber shelters are being constructed, with thatched roofs and wooden posts from which hammocks will be slung for sleeping. Two out of twelve have been completed so far, at a cost of £200/\$300 each. The residential experience at camp is often very fruitful spiritually as well as a time of physical fun and emotional bonding. Sponsorship is needed for 12 kayaks and a trailer. An experienced watersports trainer is also needed.



LET CAMP COMMENCE



Progress at Health Centre

After their time of furlough, the Santana family arrived back in Trinidad in January 2003. Since then, many changes have occurred in the Health Centre. Thanks to generous donations from Scotland, there is a new reception area, new nurses room (the old one is now the Ear Microscope room), an audiology room with soundproof cabin, a clinical laboratory and a counselling/ multipurpose room.

Since the birth of our second daughter, Hilary Esther on 1st August 2003, Jo has gone part-time on her very solicited job as an audiologist (with the only audiometer in the Beni region - the size of the UK). God keeps providing in amazing ways and we now have funding from Canada for our dentist (Dr Miguel Araúz) to work full time from 1st September 2003 and also funding from Scotland to provide a salary for a physiotherapist who grew up in the Project (Ruben Coplot) starting in the near future.

The work keeps growing steadily despite several outbreaks we have suffered this year. The number of people seen at the Centre has nearly trebled since 2001. In 2004, we expect the Health Centre to have amongst its beneficiaries, over 600 children in need of basic health provision. To support this work we are praying for a regular supply of toothbrushes and multivitamins for all the people involved in



the different ministries. This translates into 1,200 toothbrushes per year and over 8,000 multivitamin tablets per month. Several governmental bodies and charities are already working with us for the benefit of the less fortunate, especially the hearing impaired children and youth.

This year we have been blessed with many visitors, among them 2 medical students (Eleanor Service, University of Dundee and Naomi Murphy, University of Edinburgh) and 1 student nurse (Sarah Baillie, Napier University, Edinburgh) on their 8-week elective training. Also Dr Dale Tingley (dentist from Toronto, Canada) on an intense 2 week visit in August 2003.

Our nursing staff continue to split their time between studies and work. At present we have 2 student nurses working part time, Betty Escobar (final year) and Romina Ribera (1st year). Also on our nursing staff we have Laura Cabrera who is in her 1st year of teacher training and two part time volunteer assistants Roselita Mesquita and Claudia López (a law and a teacher student).

Even though there is a lack of fully qualified staff, we are able to call upon a group of willing and dedicated people that the Lord has provided. We keep praying for a full time General Practitioner and/or Paediatrician who would join or help us in the future.

Everything in His perfect timing.

Diego Santana

SERVING, NOT SUFFERING: *the experience of a short termier*

Visiting Palmera has had me on hundreds of different levels. Many of the lessons I have learned have been for personal growth, things that only God could have arranged for me to discover. However, there are others which seem to be lessons this place and ministry offers to all who visit: especially the opportunity to serve the Lord in an unified community. The warmth and generosity of the Christian family here has made a permanent mark upon my soul. At first, it is a humbling thing to come on a missions trip with lofty notions of all you have to suffer, only to discover the joy of serving. But oh what a blessing to lay down those expectations and allow God to work in a body, rather than in hundreds of unconnected individuals.

So although there were numerous events that I will always remember about my time in Trinidad, it is the people and their enthusiasm for God's purpose which I will always treasure. I guess I will never be the same.

September Teeple – Canada
IT Summer Servant 2003



Policy on direct giving takes effect

The new policy of gift giving in the Sponsorship Relations Department has been implemented with great response! This new policy limits an extra gift to once a year in order to avoid jealousy and misunderstanding among the children.

If you would like to send a gift, then could we suggest that you send something which can be enjoyed by the entire class of your sponsored child. For example, this could be materials for the class to make a scrapbook as illustrated by the above photograph. Remember that you could save postage by sending a cash gift to your respective BCP channel (BCP-UK, BCP-USA or BCP-Canada). Once the money is received in Bolivia, then we can buy gifts such as a birthday cake, pens and pencils or even arrange a pizza party!

The teachers and children have enjoyed being able to share their birthdays and special blessings from their sponsors with one another and thus learn the values of community.

We appreciate your generosity and support of the Bolivian Community Project! We hope that you will understand our the reasons for this gift policy.

Nikki Vaca

Can you help?

**We need Sticky plasters,
multivitamins, lice shampoo,
'2nd line' antibiotics, paracetamol,
medicated creams. Post them to us,
or if you know of someone visiting
the Project, ask if they can take them
(packing the items themselves)**

Bolivia Visit



Alan Cunningham

During October, I had the privilege of visiting Bolivia with my wife Ethel and daughter Kirsty – a late summer holiday. Our flight route into Bolivia was via La Paz, Bolivia's remarkable capital and the world's highest city that sits in the Andes some 12,000 feet above sea level. No one had alerted us to the fact that La Paz was in political turmoil. Within one mile of leaving the airport, our taxi driver drove us into the heart of the El Alto township through streets awash with angry demonstrators, armed police and a substantial military presence. This was a scene for BBC reporter John Simpson and not three jet lagged tourists from Scotland!

We soon discovered that all the main routes out of La Paz were blockaded. The political unrest was due to two issues. Firstly, the Government with the backing of the USA have been curtailing the production of cocaine. Bolivia remains the world's second largest cocaine producer. With their livelihood threatened and no economic alternatives, the farmers were literally "up in arms". The streets of La Paz echoed to the shouts of demonstrators. Hardly the cry of the 80's – "Maggie, Maggie, Out, Out, Out" (a la George Square, Glasgow). Instead, real gunfire with intent to topple the President. Secondly, the Government had declared its intention to export Bolivia's natural gas to the USA via Chile, Bolivia's historic enemy. This was somewhat ironic since fuel was in short supply throughout the city.

Three days later, we left La Paz airport at 9 am for Trinidad. By noon, the army had taken control of the airport. There was no hint of unrest in Trinidad other than wall to wall coverage on cable TV. The Government fell 5 days later, a new President installed and it was back to "business as usual".

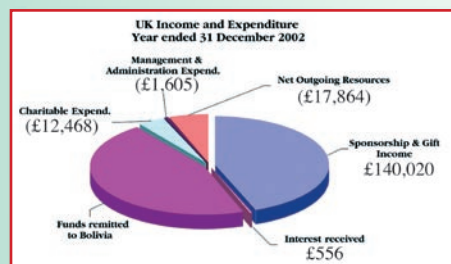
Our visit to Trinidad coincided with "La Palmera's" 18th anniversary celebrations. Lasting a week, this proved to be a feast of creativity with a talent competition, music festival, a sports day, craft displays and traditional Bolivian fare. The sports festival was a news item on Trinidad's local TV. Perhaps the highlight was a torchlight procession of positive Christian witness involving teachers, pupils and parents walking into Trinidad's main square accompanied by a brass quartet band whose repertoire was limited to two tunes!

350 pupils now attend "La Palmera" school which provides stable employment for 69 people. Almost 50 employees are involved in the local church. With outstanding support and encouragement from parents, the secondary school now has its first batch of students.

In mixing with the school children, I was hit by a tidal wave of love and affection – children wanting

Thank you for your giving

During the year ended 31 December 2002, BCP received regular financial support from some 310 sponsors. The practical and prayerful commitment of BCP's family of sponsors is deeply appreciated by the Project's team in Bolivia and by BCP's UK based directors. As well as sponsorship income, gifts were received from Trusts, church groups and individuals who are not classified as sponsors. Again, this support is much appreciated and contributed to BCP's total gift income of £140,020 which excluded gifts received specifically for the personal support of



to rehearse their English phrases or see themselves instantly photographed by digital camera. As I walked around the school complex and surveyed the ongoing building development, I thought about the eternal return on investment arising from the financial commitment of sponsors, Trusts, churches and many prayer partners.

Our visit provided many unforgettable moments – the joy of sharing a meal with the family of our sponsored child – visiting homes of local Christians who had nothing in material "things" yet experiencing their gift of hospitality – hearing Carlos Hugo preach, the church's young pastor and one of the first sponsored boys – being taken by Lucho to "El Chaco", La Palmera's 56 acre campsite (bought for £6,000!) now almost cleared of jungle debris and abundant with avocado and mango trees – visiting an indigenous village with Dr Diego Santana (Health Centre director) and Kenny Holt (Football School director) as they shared the compassion and message of Jesus through health care and recreation – spending a morning with Rachel Peebles as she befriends and reaches out to prison children – participating in the vibrant praise of the church's Sunday services – spending time with short term helpers from the UK and Canada and hearing the joy of their involvement. There were many more.

Having been involved with the finances of BCP since its launch, I can assure sponsors and donors about the excellent stewardship of funds sent to Bolivia as well as the integrity and meticulous care of "La Palmera's" administrative team. One UK pound (£) appears to "travel" about 3.5 times its UK length in Bolivia.

Since my return, the question "what is poverty?" has been on my mind. Is it what we are, have or do not have? The chorus of "Give Thanks" has been my response to date – "And now let the weak say "I am strong", let the poor say "I am rich" because of what the Lord has done for us". Indeed, give thanks for all that God is doing through this exciting and thrusting community project in which we are privileged to participate.

BCP's volunteer workers in Bolivia, both short and long term.

BCP's operating expenditure during 2002 amounted to £14,073 (10% of total income) which included the purchase and freight costs of equipment (£4,895) for the use of Dr Diego Santana in the Health Centre. Funds for this equipment had been raised at a special fund raising event.

Funds of £144,367 were remitted to Bolivia via the helpful offices of Interlink, a Glasgow based Missionary Agency and Scottish charity. Total expenditure, including funds remitted to Bolivia, amounted to £158,440 resulting in net outflows (expenditure exceeding income) of £17,854. This operating deficit was financed by the release of cash reserves which BCP held at the start of 2002.

The directors strive to maximize the release of funds to Bolivia and are grateful to the growing number of sponsors and donors who participate in the Gift Aid scheme thereby enabling BCP to benefit from the reclaim of income tax.

The Bolivian Community Project is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. Alan Cunningham CA (Director) maintains the charity's (BCP) monthly accounting and prepares the charity's annual Accounts in a voluntary capacity. The annual Accounts are subject to examination by Alexander Sloan, Chartered Accountants in their appointment as Reporting Accountants. The charity's annual Accounts are filed each year with Companies House in Edinburgh. Copies of BCP's 2002 Accounts, sponsorship forms and Gift Aid Declarations can be obtained on request from Robert McAdam (Secretary) per the UK Address which is disclosed below.

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The Bolivian Community Project

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