



# Feed my sheep

Being, making and growing disciples  
(Pages 4-5)



Shepherds near Cusco, Peru (Photo: Ruth Turner)

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**Latin Link**  
COMMUNITY WITH A CALLING

## What is Latin Link?

**Latin Link's vision is to see vibrant, Bible-believing Christian communities in every part of Latin America, impacting their neighbours, their societies and the wider world.**

**We work in partnership with churches to send and receive individuals, families and teams, to or from Latin American communities, to share the love of God. We do this through three programmes:**

**STEP** is Latin Link's short-term mission and discipleship programme for teams. Step provides hands-on, practical experience of living and working with local church communities in Latin America or Spain. We select and send teams for three to seven weeks during the summer, and for four months each spring. We welcome applications from individuals of all ages, and from groups wanting to create a team from their church or university.

**STRIDE** is an opportunity for individuals, couples or families to spend six months to two years putting their faith into practice in Latin America, working with a church or Christian-run project. It's a chance to use and develop skills during a gap year, career break, university language year, sabbatical or early retirement.

A two-year Stride is also the pathway into longer-term service with Latin Link.

**STAY.** We currently have over 100 members of 14 nationalities living and working in Latin America and Europe on a longer-term basis, from three years upwards. Their work varies from training church leaders to caring for children at risk, from supporting university students to generating employment opportunities. Members are based in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Britain, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Ireland, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Peru, Spain, and Switzerland. See [latinlink.org.uk](http://latinlink.org.uk) for a taste of current opportunities, or contact your nearest Latin Link office.

**Latinfile** can be viewed online at [issuu.com/latin-link/docs/latinfile\\_autumn\\_2019](http://issuu.com/latin-link/docs/latinfile_autumn_2019)



Download the Latin Link App from all the usual stores (Apple, Google, etc) to keep right up-to-date with all things Latin Link.

# A warm welcome

*Meet Neil Brighton,  
the new Team Leader  
for Latin Link  
Britain and Ireland!  
Formerly the senior  
minister of Poynton  
Baptist Church, Neil  
has been involved  
in Peru since 2010.*



I'm really excited to be joining Latin Link, in my latest step as a follower of Christ. Our belief as a Christian community is that every one of us is called to be and to make disciples. But what does this look like in the context of cross-cultural mission?

The past couple of years have given me first-hand experience of the hunger for discipleship in parts of Latin America. I've been helping redevelop a training course for pastors and other leaders in the Peruvian Amazon; equipping them to lead churches, to develop communities, to grow as disciples, and to help others follow Jesus too.

In this edition of *Latinfile*, you'll discover some of the unique approaches and activities that Latin Link members are involved in – from a whole-church discipleship programme in Salta, Argentina, to a youth discipleship and football project in Trinidad, Bolivia (pages 4-5).

Next, we find ways in which Latin Link members in Colombia are responding to the needs of Venezuelan refugees in and around Bogotá (pages 6-9).

There's a fascinating article looking at the dynamics of cross-cultural church planting in Brazil (pages 12-14). Meanwhile, on pages 16-17, we meet Brazilians Lelmer and Renata Campos, who have been helping make disciples here in the UK for over five years. We love multidirectional mission!

Thank you for all you do to help make these ministries flourish. The Financial Review of the year on page 11 shows what a vital impact your giving has had! On pages 18-19 you'll also find lots of other ways to be involved with Latin Link across the UK, including Spanish Praise Nights, a special brunch, fundraising events, and lots of local mobilisers you can connect with.

I'm very keen that we all take every opportunity to support Latin Link members, wherever they serve, and that all of us live out God's call to follow him. Thank you for doing your part. I look forward to getting to know more of you and this wonderful community of disciples in the months and years ahead.

*Neil Brighton*

**Neil Brighton**  
Britain and Ireland Team Leader

# Feed my sheep

## Being, making and growing disciples

Latin Link members are passionate about working alongside local churches in order to be, to make, and to grow disciples. Here's an overview from San Andrés church in Salta, Argentina, where the ministry team includes Latin Link's Hans and Priscilla Breekveldt, Daniel and Flavia Lescano, and Paula and Matías Rigau.

**Hans explains:**

Making and being disciples. That's what San Andrés Anglican church in Salta is all about. As leaders, we're working hard to be an example and to instil a culture of learning and growing as followers of Christ. That's what the word 'disciple' really means. People who learn and follow the life of Jesus, in word and deed – trying to become living representations of who he is.

In San Andrés we focus on three aspects of discipleship: Head, Heart and Hands. All three feature prominently in church life and we're intentional about exploring them:

*Street outreach: having given her some food, Luciano encourages Martina*



Studying the Bible is essential for those who love Jesus and desire to follow him. It forms and shapes how we think and live. Through his word,

we come to know God's nature and attributes; his plan in history, his sovereignty, his providence, his love, and more.

Once every two weeks, around 11 groups (for men, women, young people, and mixed groups) meet together in the church building for systematic Bible study. Some work through a course on the gospel of Matthew, others take an in-depth look at a part of the Old Testament.



Being a disciple is more than just information; it is also about character. Walking together: that's how character is

shaped, values are transmitted, and attitudes are transformed.

Once every fortnight, six growth groups meet in different homes. These provide vital opportunities for sharing and pastoral care, cultivating the fruit of the Spirit, and making holiness practical, as we encourage one another.



Jesus served and so should we. He taught his disciples to wash each other's feet. Similarly, our faith needs to be active.

Everyone has something to give.

All members are encouraged to serve – from hospital visitation and school volunteering, to mission trips, or helping smaller congregations. This winter, we've been preparing and distributing 45 meals twice a week to homeless folk, in a programme recognised by the municipality and run in conjunction with two police stations.



## One-to-one

The pastoral team also invest much time and effort in individual relationships. Our aim is for all who lead to replicate the discipleship model and take several 'learners' under their wings. We pray that, in time, a culture of walking together and accountability will become instilled.

**An intrinsic desire to grow should motivate the entire process.**

We don't want to be heavy-handed though. We can only invite folk to come and be nourished with a view to maturing

spiritually. An intrinsic desire to grow should motivate the entire process. And developing a trusting relationship that allows for vulnerability is not always easy or straightforward.

In some cases, by God's grace, this can move from informal discipleship, though mentoring and apprenticeship, into formal ministry training. Over the last four years, San Andrés has sent six young adults to be trained for the ministry.

## Practice what you preach

Discipleship is for life and no one is exempt! All three vicars of San Andrés (including me!) meet weekly in a discipleship group, with our bishop and other colleagues. Distances in the



Hans Breekveldt (second left) and Daniel Lescano (right) help lead San Andrés church

diocese are huge, so physical encounters are few and far between. But when necessary the Internet enables our connection. It's a 21st Century way of growing together, which goes all the way back to Jesus' model of how to be and to make disciples.

## Discipleship goals



Ruddy the church youth worker giving a short devotional

**El Jireh (The Provider) is a church at the heart of a community, on the outskirts of Trinidad, Bolivia. Based upstairs in a mission hospital, they're intentionally seeking to make disciples and have a number of different outreach projects. Strider, Simon Howling, is there for two years:**

I'm mainly involved in youth discipleship – coming alongside young people and supporting them in their personal walk with God and through the complexity of their lives.

In addition to a church youth group, providing teaching and pastoral care, we're running a football outreach project. Across three programmes, a team of volunteers and I are engaging and building relationships with around 50 young people aged 8-15, many of whom aren't from church backgrounds. We talk, get to know them, and evangelise through friendship, all in the context of football.

It's integrated, as we push them to be better footballers, to work harder, train harder, and be more focused and disciplined in different areas of their life, especially their spiritual life. As a result of the project, some have come to the church and heard the good news of the gospel for the first time. We'd love that to happen more!

Overall, we aim to 'create a refuge that impacts and empowers through Christ's love, mercy and grace to bring about holistic restoration, so that they understand their purpose in Christ to impact and empower others'. That's our discipleship goal!

## PLEASE PRAY

for Simon, the church, and the football project – that many young people will experience God, learn more about him and his love, and choose to live as his disciples.

## HOWLING IN BOLIVIA!

Read Simon's blog at:  
[simonhowlingbolivia18.wordpress.com](http://simonhowlingbolivia18.wordpress.com)

# Uprooted and re-planted

## Fleeing Venezuela



Photo: Ruben Alfonzo/shutterstock.com

Venezuela is in crisis. A toxic combination of political conflict, hyperinflation, and a crippling shortage of food and medicine, has forced around 4 million Venezuelans to flee in recent years. Many have sought refuge in the bordering countries of Peru and Colombia, with the latter receiving an estimated 1.5 million people.

Colombians understand the predicament facing their neighbours, having experienced their own long and brutal civil war. Huge numbers of Colombians became migrants in those years and there are still millions of internally displaced people in the country. They remember that Venezuelans showed them hospitality when they desperately needed it.

However, resources for those experiencing poverty in Colombia are scarce and the plight of Venezuelan migrants is by no means over. Churches are trying to help wherever they can and Latin Link members are getting involved.

In August 2018, after serving 13 years in Peru, Ian and Juliana Horne moved to Colombia with their sons Andreas and Daniel. Now (in addition to other ministries), Ian is working with the Mennonite Church in Bogotá to support Venezuelan migrants. He explains:

Many Venezuelan migrants arrive in Colombia through illegal crossing points, where they are prey to criminal gangs. Seeking employment, food and shelter, they come with virtually no resources, often having walked for weeks overland. Typically they spend the first few weeks living on and off the streets.

Having arrived, migrants find a saturated job market, and most do not have the documentation they need to get formal employment, forcing them to beg or get by doing odd jobs. Many end up renting rooms in run-down areas, where drug-pushing, crime and prostitution are rife. It's an especially tough environment for families with young children.

### Prey to criminal gangs

As a response to this crisis, I'm leading a small team of volunteers from the Mennonite church in Bogotá, reaching out to Venezuelan migrants. This church already had decades of experience, ministering to those displaced by conflict in Colombia, which has made them sensitive and open to outsiders.

A loving and supportive faith community can be so attractive to those who have been uprooted and are struggling to survive in a challenging environment.



## Pastoral and holistic

As a team, our ministry is pastoral and holistic: receiving people with love, taking time to listen, giving practical orientation, helping them consider their options, and encouraging them to trust in God.

Migrants are at their most vulnerable during the first few months, so where needed we provide food packets and some help with accommodation and medical expenses. Small children often fall ill with the change to a cooler climate and some we know have even spent time in hospital.

We're conscious of the danger of creating dependency, so we encourage migrants to be proactive and to develop income-generating activities, linking them with organisations who offer more specialised support. We also make a point of inviting them to take part in the different meetings, discipleship groups and events run by the church.

Every Wednesday, the church hosts an event called *El Momento por la Paz* (A Moment for Peace), offering biblical reflection on a topical issue, as well as prayer, and a nutritious meal that is free to those who need it. This has been a natural space to get to know Venezuelans, who participate alongside other marginalised and needy folk and local Christians.

## Mission workers are by nature migrants

### Parallel lives

Mission workers are by nature migrants and we have found that our own experience of uprooting and relocation can give us a special sensitivity to the needs of Venezuelan migrants. As a family, we arrived in Colombia and started attending the church at the same time as Venezuelans Carlos and Jenny and their two children and granddaughter. In a sense, we feel that we have been living parallel lives.



Ian, Juliana, Andreas and Daniel moved from Peru to Colombia last year

### Leaving friends and colleagues and moving from the semi-rural Peruvian highlands to an enormous city in Colombia was quite a challenge for us.

Alongside my work with migrants, I continue to promote food security and healthy nutrition in churches and elsewhere. Juliana (who's originally from Colombia) initially spent lot of time supporting the family and tying things up in Peru. But now, she's glad to be focusing more on ministry, promoting creation care, both locally and across the region, through awareness-raising, training, production of materials and practical actions. The boys also had to adapt to a very different school system, but they have done really well and we are very proud of them.

God has provided amazingly along the way, opening doors and bringing us into a 'spacious place' in ministry and helping each one of us to grow.

We had found moving really difficult and were also adjusting to life in Colombia. But Carlos and Jenny left their home town of Yaracuy, Venezuela, because things were so tough. As Carlos says: 'We knew we had to leave when we just didn't have any resources to be able to help others.'

Carlos and Jenny were involved in Christian ministry in Venezuela and, on arrival, they were given accommodation in our church building. Now they're involved in service in the church, as well as running a small coffee shop.



A loving and supportive faith community can be so attractive to those who have been uprooted and are struggling to survive



Andreas and Daniel Horne with former agriculturalist Amilcar (right)



Ian (centre), with Gabriel (left) and Abram (right), who have returned to Venezuela

## Replanted

Others have had a much harder transition. Amilcar (pictured above) was an agriculturalist, whose farming equipment was stolen in Venezuela. He received no state help, as he was a vocal opponent of the government, and had to migrate. He spent his first couple of weeks in Bogotá, living on the streets, then started selling sweets, drinks, and bin liners, to cover his food and rent each day.

Amilcar says this has been a time when God has humbled and spoken to him, leading to a real deepening of his faith. He was recently baptised, in June, along with another Venezuelan, Anyer. And he has been given the opportunity to go and work on the Mennonite farm to the north of Bogotá.

## ARMS TO AREPAS

One Christian family – Juan and his wife Pilar [names changed for their security] and their two-year-old son – arrived at the church in the middle of the year. Juan was a soldier who refused allegiance to the Maduro regime when he saw the oppression wielded against street protests and the suffering of the poor in his country.

His bank accounts were frozen and he and his wife were forced to flee, taking only their youngest child and two suitcases.

Juan is a natural leader, who has an amazing heart for helping his own people here. Alongside making and selling arepas (corn flour rolls) to make ends meet, he and his wife are running a weekly Bible study and occasional food distributions for needy folk in the populous suburb of Bogotá where they live.



## Truth and consequences

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges of working with migrants is getting to the truth. Some try to invent a new identity when they get to Colombia and can be economical with the truth, if they think it will help them. So we seek to demonstrate God's love and compassion, but also need considerable wisdom and discernment.

## Some have made the difficult decision to return to Venezuela

We have had the joy of seeing God work in people's lives, but ultimately, some people we've been helping have found things just too tough in Colombia, and have made the difficult decision to return to Venezuela. After crossing into Colombia in Cúcuta, Abram and Gabriel (pictured above) walked for weeks to get to Bogotá, becoming friends along the way. They showed me the worn-out soles on their shoes.





They are both fathers of small children and, in the end, found it really hard emotionally being far from their families, while they couldn't earn enough to support them. In the end, both took the difficult decision to return to Venezuela. The reality is that the 'vocation to stay' of migrants is tested during their first few months here and many decide to return.

## Welcoming strangers

Migration is a common thread of human (and biblical) history; a phenomenon that God can use for his purposes. While many of the nations around ancient Israel had laws about caring for widows and orphans, the Old Testament teaching about care and justice for the foreigner was unique.

**'The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.'** Leviticus 19:34

This is a reminder and challenge to us all that reaching out to needy migrants, showing hospitality to the stranger, is a key part of God's kingdom agenda.

**Want to go and help migrant communities in Latin America?**

Contact [stride@latinlink.org.uk](mailto:stride@latinlink.org.uk)



# Struggling to survive



**Katie Rowell**

**Katie Rowell is an Occupational Therapist from Oxford, with significant experience in helping people with mental health problems. In January 2019 she began a two-year Stride placement in Colombia and she now works with a church in San Mateo, Soacha, on the outskirts of Bogotá, helping Venezuelan migrants.**

Soacha is a huge settlement with over a million residents, including one of the highest concentrations of internally displaced people in Colombia (over 54,000 registered). The Venezuelan crisis has brought a new wave of economic migrants to this already overcrowded and under-resourced city, seeking shelter and protection.

Katie's church, with help from the International Red Cross (IRC), has been working hard to build a nursery/day care for the families of Venezuelans and Colombians who are struggling and need to find work to support their families. She explains,

*'The aim is to give Venezuelan and Colombian parents the opportunity to look for work, while their children are looked after in the day care. It's exciting to see how God has been providing for the day care, and we pray it will be a help to families and bring more people in contact with the church.'*

*'Recently the IRC in Soacha told us that they have no more budget for this year. We had been referring a lot of families in critical situations to them, but now are unable to do that. However a church in England is supporting our day care centre, which has just opened.'*

Katie and others seek to provide prayer and spiritual support alongside practical help. The work is largescale but also very individual, with many tragic stories and tough circumstances to navigate.

*'This week I'm hoping to meet with a young woman from Venezuela who arrived a few months ago. She has been through some very traumatic situations, including the murder of her partner.'*

*'Another friend, Clara, has a partner, three children and a baby on the way. For the last month or so they have been without work and the family are really struggling to survive. But this week Clara told me that her partner was able to fix a bike in trade for a gas cylinder; hopefully this will mean she can start selling hot street food.'*

# All aboard!

## New Striders in discipleship projects



Andrew  
Robertson

**Previous occupation:** Psychology graduate (University of Strathclyde).

**Stride assignment (2 years):** I will be involved in two projects in Oruro, Bolivia. One is called Restoring Hope, involving discipleship and restorative justice with prisoners and young offenders, including pastoral visiting at San Pedro prison. The other is the Angel Tree Centre, caring for prisoners' children and their families.

**How do you feel?** I am extremely excited about this next step in my journey with God. I'm eager to embrace a different culture and to build relationships. I'm apprehensive about language learning and know I will have to work extremely hard on this, but I'm enthused by the prospect of being required to rely solely on God in this new environment!

**What can we pray for?** Please pray that I will trust that God is in control in all circumstances; that I'll be able to focus on the things he has planned for me; and that I will be servant-hearted.



Suz  
Perkins

**Previous occupation:** Chemistry teacher (Manchester).

**Stride assignment (2 years):** I'm working with a children's centre on the outskirts of Recife, Brazil. (It's the same project as Stay member Paul Crothers, who works with teenage boys.) My role will be running activities for the discipleship of vulnerable teenage girls.

**How do you feel?** I am raring to get going! Nerves haven't set in, as it all feels a little surreal still.

**What can we pray for?** For the last minute preparations to run smoothly and that I am able to communicate and develop language quickly.



Brett  
Dickinson

**Previous occupation:** History graduate (University of Exeter).

**Stride Assignment (9 months):** I'll be working with two projects in Bogotá, Colombia: supporting work in the city's universities with the UCC, and working in a comedor (feeding programme) in one of the most deprived areas of the city. At the comedor I'll be involved in the existing activities, but will also be developing sports as a way to reach others and disciple them.

**How do you feel?** I'm pretty excited to get going at this point! It's going to be new and different and I'm sure it won't be all easy, but I'm looking forward to getting started.

**What can we pray for?** That I will trust God and use my time well, living and working in a new culture and surroundings. That my life may be a witness for him and my time there be used for his glory.



# A bird in the hand

## Financial Review 2018-19

Thank you so much for your vital support this year! Thanks largely to donations from individuals (72%) and churches (23%), Latin Link is able to share God's love with those who desperately need it.

### INCOME

Total: £1,894,642

64.7%

Stay programme:  
£1,225,157

20%

General giving  
and legacies:  
£378,971

11.7%

Step & Stride  
programmes:  
£221,928

3.6%

Other income:  
£68,586

### EXPENDITURE

Total: £1,922,440

76%

Stay programme:  
£1,461,684

15%

Step & Stride  
programmes:  
£287,191

8%

Fundraising,  
publicity & income  
generation:  
£151,097

1%

Governance costs:  
£22,468

As you will see from these figures, finances continue to be tight, but we give thanks this year for God's fresh provision, as we have now started to rent out the newly developed flats above the Reading office. This should help to bridge the gap!

We always pray for you, and we give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all of God's people. This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace.

Colossians 1:3-4,6 (NLT)

### Can you help?

Please consider giving regularly to the work of Latin Link!

[latinlink.org.uk/donate](http://latinlink.org.uk/donate)



# Do you really need us?

## Lessons in church planting



Tim and Hannah Flatman lead a church-planting team in Sabá, northeast Brazil. As many Brazilian evangelicals could be described as experienced - even prolific - church planters, Tim considers an important and potentially uncomfortable question. Are they needed?

### A bit of history

The denomination we work with in Brazil, *Betel Brasileiro*, arrived in Custódia – a city of 40,000 in the semi-arid sertão region of northeast Brazil – 40 years ago, and planted a church in the city centre. 30 years later, that city centre church itself began to plant churches.

One, in a poor neighbourhood on the edge of the city, now has its own leadership team and is almost self-sustaining. Another, in a rural *quilombola* community a short drive away, is still dependent on the city centre church, but has seen many people come to Christ.

Two years ago, the city centre church began to hold monthly services in Sabá, part of another

*quilombola* community up in the hills, north of the city. And we arrived in Custódia a year ago to develop and lead the team planting a church in Sabá.

Before we arrived, God was already at work through *Betel*

*Brasileiro* church in Sabá. Before *Betel Brasileiro* arrived, God was already at work in Sabá. And Brazilians are experienced in church planting. So what are we doing here?! Is there a role for cross-cultural mission workers, church planting in northeast Brazil?



A church service in Sabá with Pr Neto preaching



## What are *quilombolas*?

Earlier, we mentioned *quilombolas*. It's time to explain who they are. *Quilombola* communities are communities of predominantly African descent, formed as an act of resistance to slavery and racist oppression. They have their own social, economic and cultural practices and their relation to their land is an important part of their identity.

### Quilombola communities vary hugely

They vary hugely. Some *quilombola* communities are 400 years old and some are newer. Some practice traditional religions like *Candomblé*, but many don't and never have done. Many are in isolated locations, though many are not. Some have incorporated other marginalised groups over the years, including white slaves. Some mixed with indigenous communities. So is there a role for cross-cultural mission workers in *quilombola* communities? Undoubtedly.

### Is there a role for cross-cultural mission workers? Undoubtedly.

## A world of difference

Brazilian church teams planting churches in *quilombola* communities are themselves cross-cultural mission workers, whether they realise it or not. There's a world of difference between the city centre church in *Custódia* and the *quilombola* community half an hour north of them. One of the dangers for residents of *Custódia* is that they plant a church in their own image that is not authentic or relevant for *quilombolas*. A danger very familiar to European mission workers!

### We grapple daily with issues of privilege and status

As migrants in Brazil, Hannah and I already live an in-between, liminal, existence, constantly navigating issues of cultural difference; adapting but never entirely; always trying to decide what feels wrong because it is wrong, and what feels wrong because it just clashes with our cultural upbringing and worldview.

As white, 'rich' Europeans, we grapple daily with issues of privilege and status. We are afforded more respect and deference than we deserve. We want to practise and prefigure the interculturality we see in Revelation 7, but are always at risk of imposing our own culture, because of the power relations we are a part of.

## Privilege and status

So part of our role is to help middle-class, relatively privileged, white(r) Brazilians already planting a church in a *quilombola* community to recognise and grapple with these issues too. In preaching to the city church, we emphasise humility (Philippians) and the dangers of pride due to status, riches and education (Corinthians).

We challenge stereotypes about what these communities are like. Like many people in poverty, they are often seen as idle, in need of moral education, dependent on benefits, prone to drunkenness. The reality is that they are mostly hard-workers, but with little work available, and the community is characterised by self-help and mutual assistance.

Their poverty is obvious, while their considerable strengths are less visible. One church member giving a talk in *Sabá* asked if people not working at 4pm were lazy. She didn't realise that most

residents rise by 5am to work on the land and have finished working by 4pm, when they socialise for an hour before it gets dark.

These stereotypes feed into poor contextualisation. Instead of offering spiritual resources for life, guest preachers who don't know the community feel they need to focus on morals, or else give the same evangelistic message again and again, in the hope it will result in transformation.



Hannah (and Rita) with the leader of the *quilombola* community and his wife

## Re-imagining evangelism

That message is often given in the way they themselves received it. It is a logical, propositional form of evangelism, based on a series of proof-texts. It exhorts people to separate themselves from the world – a key message in (Brazilian) evangelical subculture. They use it because it worked for them.

Separating yourselves from the world is easier in a city, where people choose their friendships according to common interests. It is more complicated in a rural community, where everyone is a relative of everyone else.

In *Sabá* we have emphasised evangelism through storytelling and methods that don't rely on literacy. We recognise that many people will make decisions about following Christ together with their families and that while conversion must be personal, it is not always individual.

These are not new issues for mission workers. But they are new to a lot of the people from the city centre church involved in the church plant.

## Holistic transformation

We made it clear from the start that our vision is to plant a self-sustaining church in Sabá, which itself reaches out to other *quilombola* (and non-*quilombola*) communities, and which offers holistic transformation to the whole community. Even while our focus is on evangelism and discipleship, we preach and hopefully practise a holistic gospel.

We spent months visiting people in their homes and, together with them, are starting to implement their suggestions: a regular mum and toddler group; a project to build bathrooms in homes with poor sanitation; the construction of a playground; midweek bible studies; music lessons. We want it to be clear from the start that social transformation is part of the gospel and not an add-on.

## Everyone involved

It's also about full involvement. We want baptised Christians to be formally involved in leadership, but in the mean time we are always looking for ways to model and prefigure participative church. That is especially important in *quilombola* communities, because there is a risk that richer Christians coming from the city will treat them as objects of paternalistic charity, instead of

recognising their dignity and building on existing strengths.

We involve everyone present in decisions at the end of services. We encourage everyone to give something in the offering. We provide music lessons and hope that some participants will one day follow Christ and join the worship group. We involve people in Bible readings and encourage testimonies about what God is doing in their lives, whether or not they have yet made a decision to follow Jesus.

Those who have received discipleship classes have already used the materials to disciple family members. Local women volunteer in the mum and toddler group. And local men who work in construction were involved in the construction of a playground with a Latin Link Step team in August (see below).

## We love the Betel Brasileiro church

These are all things that are endorsed in our denomination, but, in the zeal to establish the institution of church with its external trappings, are not always put into practice. We want to emphasise that we love the Betel Brasileiro church – a



denomination with which Latin Link has a long history. It has a mission ethos. It offers excellent theological education. Our pastor and local church are brilliant at giving opportunities to young people and trusting them.

A lot of the challenges we have described are issues with evangelical culture across denominations and in different countries, not specific to Betel Brasileiro. There are also things that members of our church are much better at than us, and there are things they share with *quilombolas* that we don't.

So we believe that we do have a place here in helping understand and implement healthy, holistic and biblical practices in church planting. It's great and so necessary to be part of a diverse team with different gifts and callings: in Sabá, in Betel Brasileiro, in Latin Link, and in the worldwide Body of Christ.



## A report from the Brazil 2019 Summer Step team

'We've been working at a community centre in Sabá for a week now. We've spent our time weeding, shifting building materials, and painting tyres. The reason behind this is that we're building a playground! So far, swings, a seesaw and a slide have been put in. We're looking to level off the ground, and put in some plants in the next few days. We have been very blessed to work alongside local people during this project.

'This trip has been an amazing experience, where we have had the opportunity to serve the local community, and help the local church. Having said this, the whole team recognises that we've gained more than we've given out. We've learnt so much from the church here in Custódia, Tim and Hannah, the communities we've worked alongside, and from God speaking to us directly.'



# Eat, sleep, work, church

## Steppers get stuck in!

If you're going on a Step team, get ready to be fully immersed in church!

When you imagine churches and mission work, you might think of six-hour services, sitting in the blazing heat in a suit and tie, perhaps being spontaneously called to the front to sing a warbling solo of 'Amazing Grace'—the only song you think you know all the words to. (As it turns out, you don't...)

### But what's it actually like?

For Steppers, like all Latin Link mission workers, church life is centrally important. They may even be living and working in the church building, getting involved with a church-led project, or having dinner with members of a congregation.

In any case, they're always linked with a church; an experience that can be enriching, beautiful, challenging, encouraging, frustrating, exciting... Not that dissimilar to church in the UK really!

For the Costa Rica 2019 Summer Step team, church ticked all these boxes, and more! They lived and worked in the church building for their project, so were completely engaged in church life from day one!

*'On our day of arrival there was a worship service in the evening in church (which is approximately eight steps from our beds!). So, running on about five hours sleep, we were immediately immersed into the Costa Rican charismatic church!!'*



The pastor and his wife treat the team to a delicious lunch



Taking Jonah out of church and in to schools

If you want to know what Step is really like, here are some tips from this year's Spring Steppers, who went to Guatemala for four months and had a fantastic time:

### Tip 1: Throw yourself in at the deep end and just have a go

*'They asked us to sing a couple of songs at the service. However, we quickly learnt that they wanted all the songs in Spanish, after we got a slight telling off in front of the church for singing in English. Lesson learnt!'*

### Tip 2: Never let the language barrier get in the way

*'We understand about 1% of what they are saying, but it's*

*amazing to see God's people coming together to worship (even if it is loud, like very loud).'*

### Tip 3: Expect the unexpected

*'We attended one church service where everyone brought food of some kind, and put it at the front of the church. We thought mangos and bananas were a good idea. However we were a bit shocked when, half way through the service, one of the bags of food started moving. And not one, but TWO chicken heads suddenly emerged! Clearly, we weren't being adventurous enough with our fruit!'*

### Tip 4: Remember that, above all, God is there and he's building his church

*'Church services are still going well, and there is continuing growth. What's really encouraging is a lot of younger people are coming along as well... It's great to see such a new church, welcoming new people all the time.'*

## Want to join a Step team?

There's still time to apply for 2020!  
See back cover for details.

# Harvest in Dorset

## From Brazil to Weymouth



If you know Latin Link, you'll know we are all about multidirectional mission. God calls workers into his harvest field from everywhere to everywhere!

Since 1999, the Incoming Mission ministry of Latin Link has received and supported many Latin Americans on Stride and Stay placements, serving with churches in the UK and Europe. It's a vibrant and growing trend in mission, which excites us a lot!

Meet Lelmer and Renata Campos, who (along with their children Joshua and Bethany) have worked with Latin Link in Weymouth for the last five years. We sat down with Lelmer to ask about his experience of cross-cultural mission in Dorset.

### What's your role?

I am the Pastoral and Community Worker at Ebenezer Evangelical Church (EEC) in Weymouth, Dorset. I'm responsible for pastoral care, visiting, and supporting church members, especially young people and newcomers. I'm also part of the preaching/teaching team and responsible for child and youth ministry in the church.

Renata, my beautiful wife, is involved in the parent and toddler group and Sunday School teaching, and is also a member of the pastoral team.

### Why mission in the UK?

Since my conversion in 2005 I had a strong sense of calling into full-time ministry, specifically as a mission worker in the UK. In the subsequent year, I met Renata, during a mission trip organised by YWAM in Brazil. She shared the same calling!

So in response to God's call we went to Bible College to start theological training in 2007, married in 2008, and graduated in 2009. We first came to the UK in 2011, sent by our home church to study English and look for mission opportunities.

### 'We believe God designed for us to be here'

Then we joined Latin Link's Incoming Mission programme as Stride members in 2014, placed at EEC. In regards to our calling and present ministry, I believe nobody puts it better than the apostle Paul:

'We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.' Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)



We believe God designed for us to be here, so we're in the UK as a response to his sovereign will for our lives.

## Do you feel you've made an impact?

I feel incredibly privileged to be part of the leadership team at Ebenezer church. In many ways, I'm building on the work of those who served before. The church has an amazing history of faith and mission (over 100 years) and I'm trying to be faithful to what they are entrusting me to do now.

It's been wonderful to see different areas develop – I've seen young people take their first steps of faith, and had the privilege of baptising four new people since joining the church. In the last five years, I've also seen an increasing desire in the church leadership and members to connect with the unchurched and reach out to our local community.

This is my passion and I believe that Ebenezer is going through an organic transition – from isolation and inwardness, to becoming a missional community in Weymouth, joining with Christ in his mission to 'seek and save the lost' (Luke 19:10).



## How has the experience affected you?

Serving in God's mission is a life-transforming experience! And serving in a cross-cultural context has challenged my worldview and enriched my life greatly.

I work alongside the elders and I'm always learning from their many years of experience in leadership, pastoral care and the teaching of God's word. I'm thankful for my time of formal training for ministry in Brazil and in the UK, but serving alongside godly men and women in the local church has made a great impact in my life of faith and on my personal discipleship.

Their love for Christ and his Church has been instrumental in confirming my calling and has increased my passion for the local church.

## Any final thoughts?

Give it a go! Latin Americans are playing an important role in world mission today. With the growth of evangelicalism in Latin America, there's an increasing concern for the decline of Christianity in the West.

## A tough and needy mission field

To be honest, the old view of mission as being only 'from the West to the rest' really is obsolete now! The centre of gravity has shifted to the global South, where churches and mission organisations are trying hard to mobilise and train mission workers to serve in Europe – a tough and needy mission field.

The good news is that the growing trend of Latin Americans serving the western church is adding passion and devotion to the churches where they serve.

## So I'd say – give it a go!

To enquire about hosting a Latin American mission worker in your church, email: [im@latinlink.org.uk](mailto:im@latinlink.org.uk)

## Grateful and glad!

'Lelmer and Renata were first introduced to us as a young married couple by The Pais Movement, to work with a schools team in Weymouth and Portland, and with us at Ebenezer Evangelical Church.

After two years, we employed them as full-time workers in the church. This was a new experience, to have Latin American missionaries working with us.

We praise the Lord that it has been a partnership that has worked well, and Lelmer and Renata and their family are very valued members of the church, and are using their gifts that the Lord has given them to serve.

We are very grateful too for Latin Link, who have helped both us and the family (especially with government legislation and administration matters). Without their help this may not have been possible.

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad!

Gordon Peach, Church Elder

# What can I do?



## Connect with Catharine

We're excited to welcome Catharine Turton as Latin Link's new Supporter Care Coordinator! Catharine, who attends St James Church Woodley, joined the staff team in the Reading office in June.

She has been on Step to Peru (Spring 2007) and spent eight years working for John Lewis in

customer service. She is really looking forward to getting to know and serve Latin Link's lovely supporters.

If you have any questions about Latin Link and how you can get involved, please email Catharine at [catharinet@latinlink.org.uk](mailto:catharinet@latinlink.org.uk) or call her on **0118 957 7117**. She's waiting to hear from you!

## Engage locally with global mission

**We know we are called to love our neighbours as we love ourselves. But in reality, is it's hard enough to love those we see every day, never mind those who we have never met, living on the other side of the world!**

Latin Link's regional mobilisers are here to bridge the gap; to make the link. We want to help you and your church to connect with Latin America. Working with and serving churches is what we do – it's in our DNA. We're always here to have a conversation with you, and adapt our services to cater for your missional goals.

### What can we offer?

Well, that really depends on what you need! We can provide creative prayer resources to help generate a heart for global mission in your church, home groups, or youth groups.

We can send you inspiring speakers, who have served in Latin America, to share their story with your church family.

We can help your church family send a Step team to go meet the neighbours yourselves! Your team could serve a latin church by using your gifts and passions to meet a need – maybe it would be using sport, music, arts and crafts, or building work to serve vulnerable groups.

This can be an amazing experience, which not only helps forge a mutually enriching relationship with a church and community in Latin America, but also fuels a passion for mission locally on your return.

**Why not get in touch with your friendly regional mobiliser today to start the conversation!**



**Esther Stansfield**  
South West England  
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**Jenny Brown**  
South East England  
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**Mike Fernandez**  
Scotland  
E: [scotland@latinlink.org.uk](mailto:scotland@latinlink.org.uk)



**Bethany Barr**  
Ireland (maternity cover)  
E: [bethanyb@latinlink.org.uk](mailto:bethanyb@latinlink.org.uk)



# Challenge accepted!

Four runners took to their feet in the Run Lisburn Coca Cola race in June, raising a fantastic £1,225 for Latin Link's work in Ireland. Between them they covered over 50km and still finished smiling.

According to Action Group member Velma Hayes, 'The race was a simple way for people to support Latin Link, without having to find space for another event in a busy church calendar. And we had great fun!'

Setting up fundraising pages on the Latin Link website made it easy for friends and family to donate and leave encouraging messages.

Thank you Velma, Michael, David and Luke for your efforts to support latin mission – we think you're amazing!



To create your own fundraiser, just go to [latinlink.org.uk/fundraise](http://latinlink.org.uk/fundraise)

## Inspire! East Anglia

**Venue:** Hope Church, Vines Road, Diss IP22 4HG

**Time and Date:** Saturday 16 November 2019, 10am-12:30pm

**In November, we're hosting the next of our regional Inspire! gatherings. And this time, it's coming to East Anglia.**

This brunch event, at Hope Church, Diss, is open to everyone. Whether you like to pray for mission, go on mission, support mission financially, or just think about global mission, it will be a great opportunity to learn more, meet like-minded people, and get inspired!



As well as tucking into a delicious brunch, we'll be hearing how God is using the ordinary passions of mission workers to do extraordinary things across Latin America and beyond. There'll be an opportunity to worship God, hear from those who have served with Latin Link (Step, Stride and Stay), and spend time praying for global mission. Speakers include Margaret Saunderson, and Orly Castro will lead some Spanish and English worship. We can't wait to see you there!

To learn more or sign up: [www.latinlink.org.uk/events](http://www.latinlink.org.uk/events)

## Spanish Praise and Worship nights

These are now a regular feature of the Latin Link calendar in Scotland and Ireland. Whether you're a fluent Spanish speaker or know none at all, everyone is welcome. Join us to sing (in Spanish!), hear (in English!) about what God is doing in Latin America, and pray (in whatever language you like!). And of course enjoy drinks and cakes too.

The next 20s/30s event takes place in Ireland on Thursday 31 October 2019, 8pm - 9.30pm at Crescent Church, 6 University Road, Belfast.

For details about this event and future meetings, visit [www.latinlink.org.uk/events](http://www.latinlink.org.uk/events) or follow us on social media.



# Step: embrace your extraordinary!

Join a  
short-term  
mission team  
in 2020

Pete Greig says: "God is on the move, raising up his church to transform lives. He's using ordinary people to re-write the script in extraordinary ways, shining Jesus into dark places. Latin Link are part of this story, partnering with the local church to send and receive people who share God's hope – from caring for vulnerable children and welcoming refugees, to supporting prisoners and equipping church leaders. **Could God be calling you to join in, to use your 'ordinary' to do something extraordinary for his kingdom?"**

Pete Greig,  
founder of 24/7 Prayer

## Opportunities

**Spring 2020**  
Colombia and Ecuador  
March to July (16 Weeks)

**Summer 2020**  
Costa Rica or  
Guatemala or Peru  
(3-4 weeks)

## Apply today!

**w** [latinlink.org.uk/step](http://latinlink.org.uk/step)  
**e** [step@latinlink.org.uk](mailto:step@latinlink.org.uk)  
**t** +44 (0) 118 957 7112



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