

# Latinfile

THE MAGAZINE OF CONTEMPORARY LATIN MISSION



Latin Link  
COMMUNITY WITH A CALLING

ISSUE NO 54

Whatever you do,  
work at it with all your heart,  
as working for the Lord

COLOSSIANS 3:23

wholehearted

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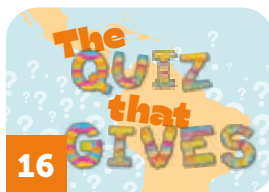
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## WHO ARE LATIN LINK?

Latin Link works in partnership with churches to send and receive individuals, families and teams, to or from Latin America, to share God's love and hope. We do this through three pathways: Step, Stride, and Stay. You can read about these pathways and how to get involved at [latinlink.org.uk/go-with-us](http://latinlink.org.uk/go-with-us)

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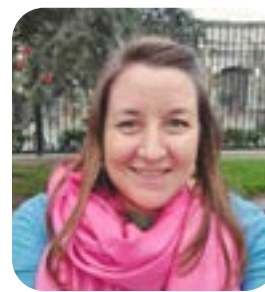
**Prayer resources** can be found here: [latinlink.org.uk/ways-to-support/pray/](http://latinlink.org.uk/ways-to-support/pray/)

Editors: Sharon Jones, Kathie Davis-Bater, Catharine Turton, and Esther Stansfield.  
Design: Sharon Jones Print: Yeomans. *Latinfile* is printed on paper from sustainable sources.  
Images: All photos are from Latin Link members and used with permission. Images on p8 and p16 used under licence from Adobe Stock. Graphic on p9 used with permission from Everwell Counselling.

Latin Link is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England 2811525.  
Registered office: 87 London Street, Reading RG1 4QA. Registered charity no. 1020826  
and in Scotland, registered charity no. SC052161. © Latin Link, June 2026.



# whatever YOU DO



I didn't think that our Latin Link verse for 2026 would impact my own life too much, but recently I have found myself saying "I'm washing up for Jesus" or "I'm preparing the *Latinfile* magazine for Jesus"! The change of perspective that Colossians 3:23 brings

is that our heart attitude is more valuable than our activity. We are all called to serve faithfully (whatever you do), having the right motives (work at it with all your heart), and with the correct focus (as working for the Lord).

It has made me think even more about the 'whatevers' in mission life and specifically within our Latin Link community. There may be many debates around what constitutes 'mission' but when I look at our members, serving in many different contexts, for varying amounts of time and through a myriad of expressions of service, I see wholehearted people, living for an incredibly wholehearted God, in a world in great need. As I look further, I see all those connected to this vision: those who send, pray, give, fundraise, mobilise, as well as all those with whom we serve alongside locally.

In this edition of *Latinfile* you'll read about wholeheartedness in many different forms. From the reasons for choosing to go on mission, to reflection on long-term commitment. From recognising wholeheartedness in local friends and colleagues, to understanding more of what it means to be a family on mission. From seeing how our Member Care Team are supporting those in a season of grief, to celebrating the learning achievements of members. From what it means to partner with us in sending someone, to how you can fundraise with our new quiz (it's great fun by the way!)

I hope that these testimonies inspire you to be faithful in your 'whatever'. We at Latin Link pray you may be stirred to step into the story of God's mission with us, to help us continue to partner with churches to share the love and hope of Jesus in Latin America and Europe. Maybe you too could find yourself saying "I'm learning Spanish for Jesus" or "I'm sharing about Latin Link with others for Jesus" or "I'm building a roof for Jesus!" However God may lead you, I pray that you will know the precious joy of journeying with him with a wholehearted attitude.

Blessings,

*Sharon Jones*

**Sharon Jones**  
Communications Manager

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,  
as working for the Lord...

*Colossians 3:23*

# wholehearted FRIENDS

Ask any of our members about a local friend or colleague who exemplifies wholeheartedness, and they won't struggle to think of someone! Here at Latin Link, we work in partnership with churches and local projects and, time after time, we are inspired and challenged by the commitment, faithfulness and perseverance of those we serve alongside.

## WHOLEHEARTED TEAMWORK: SHARON JONES, PERU

Have you ever thought about what happens to a local ministry when a missionary leaves? The truth is that any number of things can happen. However, the hope of those who move away is that God will continue to bless and use the national workers who carry on serving, so that they and the ministry will thrive.

That was my greatest desire when I moved back to the UK last year, after being part of Latin Link in Peru since 2006. I was blessed to work with a wonderful team at *Editorial Buena Tierra* (Good Soil Publishing) and spent the last ten years training, equipping and encouraging them - doing my best to do myself out of a job! Transition out of ministry is hard, but they made it easier. From the outset they were clear that their commitment was to the work and not to me (which can sometimes be an issue in mission). Just because I was going didn't mean they couldn't continue, and we worked well together to achieve an effective handover.

*It has been a joy to see their wholehearted faithfulness to the continuation of the ministry since I left.*

It hasn't always been easy, yet they have found a new confidence in their own capabilities and a stronger dependence upon the Lord, exemplifying serving him wholeheartedly. From my perspective, wholehearted doesn't mean perfect, it doesn't mean no struggles or doubts. In the case of my fantastic friends, it means letting themselves be an instrument in God's hands, allowing him to use their unique skills as they persevere through the ups and downs.

I feel so privileged to have served alongside these Peruvians, and they continue to inspire me and teach me to do my 'whatever' only for the Lord.

*Jomara, third from right, visiting a young person who had been supported by her ministry leading to work experience as a chef.*



*Celebrating Buena Tierra's 21st birthday in 2022  
L-R: Regina, Sara, María del Carmen, Sharon, Moisés*

## WHOLEHEARTED COMPASSION: SUZANNE POTTER, GUATEMALA

**My friend, Jomara, is an example of wholehearted service and incredible impact.** For years she has worked amongst children who live and/or work on the streets, starting a project working in La Terminal area of Guatemala City. It's the main bus station and market in the city, where many children work in selling sweets and other things on the buses, and many live inside some of the small market stalls with parents or others. The project she runs offers homework support, activities, and Bible teaching to the kids. But they often also get involved in supporting parents in getting the right paperwork to enrol their children in education, or access medical services.

*Jomara has always been able to connect with kids and has great insight into their situations.*

During COVID 19, when there was a lockdown and curfew rules in Guatemala City, Jomara quickly realised that there was a group of adult rough sleepers in the area who were not only in need of support, but who were now also at risk of being arrested for not being indoors during the hours of curfew. She was able to rally various contacts and supporters, and reorganise the building they had used for the children's activities,



into a hostel for these adult rough sleepers, providing them with a safe place to stay in the midst of the pandemic.

*I sometimes think that Jomara has a limitless store of compassion! But more than that, she is also always ready to turn that compassion into action, providing for the specific physical and social needs of those she serves.*

She is not well off, but manages to invite others into these acts of compassion and service, so that together the body of Christ responds to the hearts, social and physical needs of those on the margins of society. It's a wholehearted, and whole-bodied response, which I think comes from Jesus' example in the gospels.

## WHOLEHEARTED SACRIFICE: BRENDA DARKE, COSTA RICA

**I call Daisy my friend, colleague, fellow believer and inspiration. For many years we taught in the same Bible college, but I really got to know her through working together in a small ministry supporting families of people with disabilities.** She teaches church history and is mother to Pablo, who lives with a cognitive disability. She's also a passionate orchid grower!

As the main caregiver for her son since he was born more than 40 years ago, she has experienced many struggles. As in many families where a child is born with disability, there were tensions in her marriage. Sadly, Daisy had little support from her wider family, and it was she who went to all the appointments and found a school where Pablo could have an appropriate education.

Many caregivers have similar lives, but what makes Daisy stand out from the rest is her desire to help other caregivers. She empathises strongly with other mothers, many of whom have been abandoned and have far fewer resources, both spiritually and economically. Instead of feeling sorry for herself, she



*Jomara, left, sorting and distributing school resources*



*Daisy with some of the support group*

reaches out to comfort and support other mothers. She is ready to teach them some of the lessons she has learnt over the years and displays a steady patience when times are particularly hard.

*What does this teach us about caring? How can we all accept some responsibility for caring for others?*

It is a true measure of Christian love, in the sense of laying down her life for others. Daisy, who is a gifted teacher, has not been able to accept all the invitations she receives as she steadfastly prioritises her son. She has had to put aside her own desires and wishes.

Daisy admits that she sometimes struggles to cope with high levels of stress and anxiety. She has had to learn to practice some self-care. Her passion for orchids is evident if you visit her home and see her beautiful collection, especially when they are in flower. She tells me that this gives her a space to simply enjoy God's creation and be renewed.

For me, Daisy's life shows how important it can be to accept these experiences as from God. Not many would choose to be a parent of a child living with disabilities, but when it happens, as we can see in her life, this can be redeemed into a wholehearted inspiration for others.

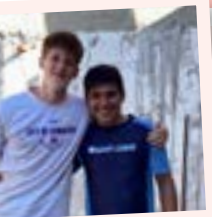


**To hear more stories from our members sign up for our regular emails: [latinlink.org.uk/publications](http://latinlink.org.uk/publications)**

# DO IT FOR THE Lord

Have you ever wondered why someone decides to give themselves wholeheartedly to mission, whether it be short term on a Step team, as an individual on Stride, or committing to longer as a Stay member? Well, we asked a few of our community to share how they stepped into God's story:

"After studying what the Bible says about our call to share the gospel in my student group at church, I felt convicted about how this is a command to each one of us. I was struck by the urgent need for people of all nations to come to Christ. For my degree, I have to spend time in a Spanish-speaking country, and I felt God provided this opportunity to serve him and to teach me more. I'm learning so much from the Christians in Colombia and am constantly amazed by the work God is doing here!" Lois - Stride, Colombia



"Mission has been part of my life for as long as I can remember. and has shaped how I saw the world from a young age. As I got older, I wanted to experience mission for myself."

When I started planning a gap year, God shifted my desires, leading me to go on a three month Latin Link Spring Step team. When God makes something that clear, saying no isn't really an option. Now I'm loving every moment experiencing new cultures, learning new lessons, and growing in ways I didn't expect. I'm excited to take what I've learned back to my local church and continue making Jesus known in my own community."

Oscar - Step, Argentina/Bolivia



For more information visit: [latinlink.org.uk/go-with-us](http://latinlink.org.uk/go-with-us)



"The challenges can be quite great, but the encouragement needed to carry on is to see that the task isn't finished. Just knowing that there's more to do, that there's more needs to be helped with, that's what really encourages me." Joe - Stay, Bolivia

"Being on Step has helped me realise that to fulfil the purpose and calling that God has given us, we must "work at it with all [our] heart, as working for the Lord". So for me, to give myself wholeheartedly to mission means sacrificially loving others, it means serving people even when I am exhausted, it means giving up my time and efforts for the benefit of others, and doing none of it for my own recognition or reward, but solely to bring glory to the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords."

Anna - Step, Argentina/Bolivia



## Our pathways:

**Step** – Short-term mission teams for individuals, groups and churches (Spring - 4 months, Summer - 3-4 weeks)

**Stride** – Tailor-made placements for individuals, couples and families (6-24 months)

**Stay** – Longer-term individual, couple or family placements (2 years plus)

# wholehearted FAMILIES

Two of our families reflect on what wholehearted living means to them

Ruth and Benja Curin Gardner are a cross-cultural family with an 11-year-old daughter and a 9-year-old son. They lead a church plant in southern Chile and train women leaders in the region. They long to see lives transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

One of the greatest blessings is knowing that we serve the Lord as a family, not just as adults. Although we sometimes participate in separate meetings, most of the time we can be together and see how our children, from a young age, become involved in different areas of service.

It is a profound joy to see how God is also working in their lives and shaping them.

A significant challenge is maintaining a healthy balance between family life and ministry. For our children, in particular, it can be more difficult to embrace this lifestyle where there isn't always a clear separation between "work" and home. This leads us to constantly depend on God's grace to care for their hearts and guide them with wisdom.

For us, living wholeheartedly means understanding and embracing that our "work" is not just something we do, but part of who we are. It's about living for Christ in every area of life, seeking to ensure that everything we are and do reflects our love for him and our desire to serve his church.

"I like that we can travel; we go abroad every year, and I also like the friendships I've formed with kids from other teams." Abi

"I like travelling to other places and meeting new friends." Mati



Matías and Paula Rigau, with their children, Santiago and Malena, are in Málaga, Spain, serving with La Luz (The Light) cultural centre. They teach Spanish and English to refugees and migrants.

We've been surprised by how God is using our family in mission.

It has been an icebreaker to get to know people outside of the church environment. Upon our move to Spain in 2023, the director of La Luz asked us to bring along our youngest (two years old at the time!), as she is a little missionary herself. We were amazed at how she made friends with the women! This opened opportunities for us to welcome them into our home, which in turn has given us opportunities to share the hope we have in Jesus.

It is a blessing to make new friends with people from all over the world, helping them feel part of a community. Yet it is also a challenge. Most refugees come with a lot of different emotions; listening to their stories is tough. Many become friends and it's sad when they are relocated after four months or so. Saying goodbye is never easy!

The children are learning that we love God and others in everything we do, from preparing breakfast for the students, to cleaning classrooms, painting and decorating, gardening and litter picking at the centre.



Feeling called to do mission with your family? Our Stride pathway could be for you: [stride@latinlink.org.uk](mailto:stride@latinlink.org.uk)

# THE LORD IS CLOSE TO THE

# brokenhearted

An often hidden value of being part of a mission organisation is the vital support given during particularly difficult seasons. Ruth Turner, our International Member Care Coordinator, writes about the impact of grief within our community, sharing the experiences of nine of our members to help highlight some of the unique challenges of grieving overseas and how we in Latin Link are supporting them.

During the past 18 months, an unprecedented number of our members have lost a close family member. Death is a reality we all face, and with it comes grief. Scripture reminds us that God draws near to the brokenhearted; Jesus himself wept at Lazarus' tomb, and Paul assumes that grief is part of the human experience.

Yet for those serving in cross-cultural ministry, grief can be especially complex. The losses within our community have varied - most commonly parents, but also unborn babies, siblings, extended family members, and a beloved nephew. Each loss is distinct, and so is each person's journey through grief.

For many serving abroad, being present at the death of a loved one is not always possible. When serious illness or death occurs, members must make quick decisions about travel, often securing expensive last-minute flights and leaving responsibilities behind, unsure when they will return. For those with young children, the situation becomes even more complicated. Phil Rout recalls leaving his mother's bedside, knowing he would not see her again, because he needed to return to his family in Brazil. Another member shared about the pain of saying goodbye to her dad over the phone while he lay in a coma, unable to reach England in time. Such moments often leave people feeling torn.

Abby Murphy chose not to return for her grandpa's funeral, having already said goodbye, yet struggled with guilt, wanting to support her family while knowing they felt her absence. Another member, reflecting on multiple pregnancy losses shared, "I knew my family and friends in the UK were worried about me and, at times, I just wanted to be with them." Paul Turner described how returning to Peru after his dad's funeral had been "the first time I've found it hard to adjust to life back in Peru...six months on from dad's death, part of me is still very much back in Yorkshire."

Many would agree with Abby in saying that "It is one of the times when we all count the cost of following God cross-culturally".

Grief for those who are overseas often includes unique 'secondary losses'. Ian Horne, who lost both parents within a year, speaks of the guilt of not being present in their final years and the burden placed on siblings who had to take on most of the responsibility for their parents. His wife, Juliana, adds that grief when living away from your parents can also include the loss of shared time together, deeper conversations and the chance to hear family stories. For Phil Rout's children, the thought of their grandfather moving out of his house was an additional loss after their grandmother died "because it was a safe place for them and a cherished fixed point of reference in their lives."

Multiple losses can make grief even harder to process. Margo Huamán experienced two sudden deaths followed by her mother's passing, all within a short time. She shares: "What I have found interesting on this grief journey is that I haven't been able to grieve my mum like I should. I have barely cried since it happened which is just over a year now... I believe that God will continue to carry me and will be with me whenever my body feels it's the right time to release the emotions."



Grief itself is deeply personal, shaped by the relationship and the circumstances of the loss.

It may include sadness, denial, anger, shock, or numbness, and often brings a sense of emptiness. The process takes time, frequently longer than expected. Two members shared how they suffered serious physical illness as a consequence of grief, necessitating the need for professional help and a slower rhythm.

Isolation and loneliness are common in grief, especially when living abroad. Many feel disconnected from both home and host communities when those around you didn't know the person who died. Cultural differences may deepen this, particularly when losses like miscarriage aren't recognised. Without shared experiences or proximity to family, the grief process may unfold more slowly. Returning home can then be especially emotional, as the reality of loss is felt more deeply. This is one reason why Latin Link has a Connect Group for those grieving, as it provides a safe space to process what they are experiencing.

Many of our members have shared about how God has enabled them to deepen in empathy and compassion for others and be able to support them better, just as Paul talked about in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4.

In his ministry to migrants experiencing grief, Ian Horne reflects that his personal experience has increased his sensitivity. Others speak of a renewed trust in God, even in the face of unanswered questions, and a heightened awareness of the urgency of sharing their faith and of doing meaningful discipleship. Paul Turner shares how grief reminds us that our identity is in God, not in our ministry.

Pray for those in our community who are journeying through grief.



Some of Latin Link's International Member Care Team, with Ruth Turner (centre)

## Things that have helped:

- Going to the Lord, seeking his help and comfort
- Reading God's word
- Slowing the rhythm of work, taking time to reflect and rest
- Staying connected with family and friends, and sharing feelings and memories openly
- Help and support from Latin Link and the sending church
- Specialised care, such as counselling, Latin Link grief connect group
- Practical support, for example, the loan of a car

## How sending churches and supporters can help:

- Commit to praying for them regularly
- Ask what they need and offer practical help, such as an airport pick up, housing or finances
- Send a card, letter or flowers
- Attend the funeral
- Stay in touch long term and show you care
- Offer pastoral care from the church
- Support the missionary's family in whatever way you can when they can't be with their loved ones

Grief in cross-cultural ministry is layered - shaped by loss, distance, and disruption. Yet it is also a place where God meets his people, sustaining them and forming deeper compassion and faith.

Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Romans 12:15



# wholehearted LEARNING

Many of our community apply themselves to wholehearted learning in order to improve their skills and better inform the working practices of Latin Link. It is important to us that everyone has the opportunity to develop their passions at a deeper level and see how God might use their increased understanding and insights for the strengthening of his people. Let's hear from two members who recently finished further study.

## RUTH TURNER - MA IN MEMBER CARE

In July 2019, I began an exciting new chapter: studying for an MA in Member Care at Redcliffe College. The part-time, largely online format made it possible to continue living and working in Peru. I had first heard about this MA a decade earlier, and the idea stayed with me - especially as my involvement in Member Care deepened. I longed to grow in both knowledge and confidence in my practice.

For me, wholehearted study meant fully immersing myself and working 'with all my heart, as working for the Lord.' I loved the opportunity and challenge to research topics, reflecting on how the writing around Member Care, often developed in the West, could be applied to a Peruvian context.

*My dissertation research gives a depth of insight to the reality of some of the challenges for Peruvian missionaries.*

My study continues to equip me as I carry out my role within Latin Link as International Member Care Coordinator. For my local ministry in Peru it has also been a huge help, as I lead an interdenominational team who are working together to support churches in the sending and care of missionaries.

Like many of the greatest challenges in life, I had to depend on God with all my heart each step of the way, especially as essay deadlines loomed amidst the demands of ministry. I am thankful for his very tangible presence and help.



## LOUIS WOODLEY - MA IN INTERCULTURAL STUDIES

In 2022 my wife, Maribel, and I took a sabbatical to seek God's will for the future, and as part of this I decided to do some further studies. The MA in Intercultural Studies at All Nations Christian College, validated by the Open University, fitted my needs and experience well. I wanted something that would be of benefit to my ministry and the wider church and not just an academic exercise. My final dissertation was on Leadership Transition, specifically from one generation to the next, using the Evangelical Christian Union Church in Potosí, Bolivia, as a case study.

*Wholehearted study, for me, does not mean a certificate or head knowledge, but primarily something that can deepen my relationship with the Lord.*

This study adds a new dimension to work possibilities. As someone in their late fifties entering possibly the last stage of formal ministry, I want to be able to finish well and pass on what I have learnt to the next generation. I have already been invited to form part of a working group to develop a shared theological understanding of leadership in Latin Link. I am also in conversation with different leaders about how to develop the subject of leadership transition within Colombia and other Latin American countries. One of the needs identified was for the mentoring of young pastors and leaders. Now I'm putting my findings into practice by mentoring one young pastor. I hope that I will be able to walk alongside others in the future.

**Could you use your learning or life experience to help strengthen mission work in some way?**

We have kingdom building opportunities for people with all sorts of skills. If this excites you, let's talk!

0118 957 7100 or email: [info@latinlink.org.uk](mailto:info@latinlink.org.uk)



# wholehearted COMMITMENT

## RAY MILLER - PERU/COSTA RICA

Ray Miller has recently retired from Latin Link after an incredible 46 years of committed service. As you will discover below, his story has had its fair share of highs and lows, surprises and disappointments, but his sense of humour and willingness to be obedient to God shines through.

It was late 1979 when my family and I arrived in Costa Rica for language study, with the precursor to Latin Link, RBMU. In 1980, we moved to Peru, where we began the great adventure of our missions' career. For the next four years I worked alongside my Peruvian mate Abelardo Calderón as national leaders of UDEC, the Peruvian Evangelical churches' youth work. I was thrown into mobilising the young people to help finance Abelardo and, later, other regional workers. What an example of generosity; some had tins to fill, others sold llamas and alpacas from their herds, some gave us sacks of coffee beans from their harvest.

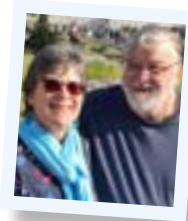
Tentatively, I also started to teach in the night Bible Institute in central Lima. This caused a lot of confusion, as my level of Spanish meant I often had no clear idea of their questions! As a later friend, Pastor Miguel Celi, confided, "you were really enthusiastic, but actually we didn't get a lot from that study of Isaiah!"

*Being a missionary is a career, and the route isn't always straightforward.*

I was eventually promoted, despite my perceived level of incompetence, to Director of the Lima Bible Institute. Incompetent in terms of not having any credentials in theological education, which was what was expected of this post locally, although I had a university honours degree in Sociology, a two-year Missions Diploma from All Nations and two years of a theological degree from Cambridge University! But in education I was an enthusiast!

However, my family situation was deteriorating, and when we eventually left Peru in 1994, it was clear that there was no realistic opportunity of reconciliation. As Dickens said, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times". Sadly, I resigned from the mission and struggled through a painful divorce.

After a time of healing, in 1998 I started with the mission again, mobilising Latin American missionaries to the UK, in what was the start of Latin Link's Incoming Mission programme. I also met and married Bridget Bennett. She oft stated, "The fact that you are a missionary doesn't mean I will join the mission." Thus began a patient four year wait for God to convince her she was destined for Latin America. Meanwhile I completed a PGCE and a Masters in Missions.

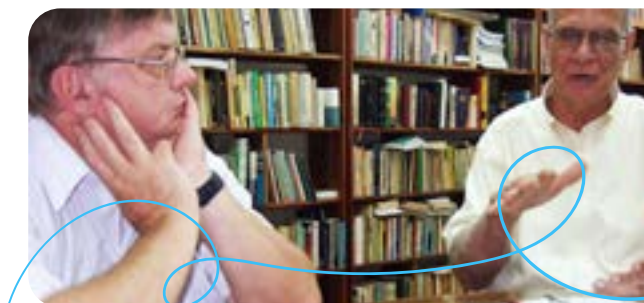


In December 2004 Bridget and I moved to Costa Rica. There we started a new ministry training Latin missionaries, and pioneered a Masters course at the University of the Nations in San José. I was the Dean of the Social Science faculty - in English terms, a mad professor! Later, we were headhunted by ProMETA Online University to set up a department of Intercultural Studies.

*In the past decade we have trained over 100 students from different Latin mission agencies who are now serving all over the world, but mainly in the Middle East.*

At each stage I have practised passing on the baton to competent national leaders. In the case of the ProMETA Intercultural Studies department, my colleague and close friend Aldo Cayuba has now been the Director for several years. I am happy to say that he surpasses his former boss in every area! He too shares the vision of "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord."

**You can read more of Ray's story on our website.**



# WITH ALL YOUR



## \*Trigger warning:

Discussion of crimes including sexual violence. Despite many challenges in the Bolivian youth justice system, Julie Noble and the Prison Fellowship team feel privileged to serve God wholeheartedly, even in the context of so much pain. There's often little progress, but the team's faithfulness to God's heart for restoration is making a difference.

In 2014 a new criminal code for juvenile offenders, including a requirement for restorative justice interventions in all cases, came into effect in Bolivia. A lack of resources in social services has meant that this has been covered by Prison Fellowship Oruro since 2016. The team have worked on over 250 cases with young offenders in detention and on probation.

The work consists of at least six individual sessions with the offender, discussing their crime and responsibility, the damage they caused, and changes for the future. Where possible, we contact victims to listen to them and explain what participation in a restorative justice process would mean.

Victims are offered a face-to-face meeting, indirect communication or a letter from the offender. Most choose not to participate as revisiting what happened feels too painful, or too much time has passed. Some can be aggressive. Although the young offenders receive support, victims often do not. However, in some cases, especially those involving crimes in rural communities or within the family, we are able to hold a restorative conference or hand over an apology letter.

The workbook we have developed includes reflections on repentance and God's forgiveness. Most of the young people have some knowledge of the Bible but very few have a relationship with God or Christian values.

Initially they can be defensive and give justifications for their crime but we generally see some change in them even if no contact with the victim is possible. What follows are some of the difficult realities we face, where, sadly, there are not always easy endings:

*With a group of boys sentenced for gang rape and murder, one activity we did was to prepare a timeline of their lives, with all the ups and downs, achievements and challenges, choosing stickers to represent their emotions, and extending the line to include dreams for the future. After several sessions, we sat with them and, as they watched, we tore up their work. We told them, this is what you did to the victim, she had a life and a future like you, and you destroyed it.*

*Two of the boys repented, coming to a deep understanding of the impact of their crime and were willing to meet with the victim's parents to apologise. We often spoke about God's forgiveness but also about the challenges ahead. The victim's family chose not to meet with the boys or receive a letter.*

*Another young person who killed a family member was able to express clearly their grief and repentance, although not yet willing to seek God's forgiveness.*

*One young man was shocked to hear that the victim of his robbery had thought he was going to rape her, and fell to his knees and apologised to her.*

*A female victim of incest, who blamed herself, wept when the offender assumed responsibility for what had happened.*

The volunteers meet weekly to pray that the offenders would assume responsibility, know forgiveness and that God would transform their lives. **Would you join with us in prayer, aligning your heart with Jesus' mission? "He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners..." (Isaiah 61:1b, NIV)**

This project, like many others we work with, is always in need of help. Please get in touch to find out more: [stride@latinlink.org.uk](mailto:stride@latinlink.org.uk)

# WHEN YOUR 'WHATEVER' IS *sending*



Let's adapt a famous saying slightly... 'Behind every good missionary is a great sending church!' We love working alongside churches to send people to, and receive people from, Latin America and Europe. The value of this partnership is highlighted by these experiences from Colombia and Northern Ireland.

## RASHARKIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NORTHERN IRELAND

Reverend James Porter shares his church's experience as they send Paul and Ruth Turner to Peru.

*We know and believe in the importance of mission and, indeed, in fulfilling the Great Commission. However, when one of 'your own' goes, it brings a new level and appreciation to supporting mission.*

As a congregation we are actively participating in God's work beyond our local mission field, as we financially support and, especially, pray for Paul and Ruth. I believe it truly impacts all of us in the church, from the youngest to the oldest member. Our church family love Paul and Ruth! It helps focus our prayers, not only for the local mission field on our doorstep, but for mission overseas. I feel our partnership really has broadened our church's vision, because it reminds us that we are a part of the Global Church and each one of us has a role to play in supporting that mission.

*It encourages people to pray specifically, to think missionally, and take an active interest in God's work globally.*

Through our partnership with Latin Link, we value the updates and literature that we receive regularly, often concerning Paul and Ruth, but also other missionaries serving with them. I know for Rasharkin, having our partnership with Latin Link has been a real blessing.

**What advice would you give to a church thinking about sending someone, to help them do it wholeheartedly?**

Do it! In all the congregations I have served in we have sent missionaries. If someone is considering going into mission work, they should first seek the Lord's will and how he is calling them. The church leadership should be able to identify the individual's giftings and encourage them to apply. The whole church should also be behind them 100% from the beginning, both prayerfully and financially. Finally, it is important to build a supporting team around them as quite often it can be lonely taking that step of faith - however, as the Lord calls, he equips and empowers us by his Spirit to fulfil his mission on earth until Christ calls or comes again.

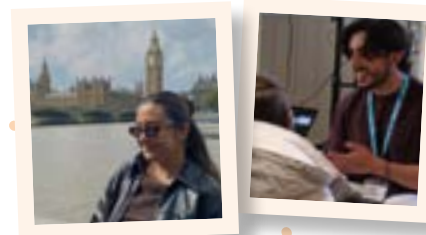
## LA CASA CHURCH, BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

Pastor Egardo Peña leads the sending church of Lucia Rodriguez and Diego Abril, who are on Stride placements in London. He shares with us some thoughts about the value of mission to his church.

We believe that every child of God should see themselves as a missionary, we are all sent and we all have a mission from heaven. There is a task to fulfill and, obviously, there is an authority that supports us. One of the expressions of being sent is in the more traditional understanding of mission: crossing borders or overcoming language or cultural barriers. For us this expression is crucial because it is visible and practical, and it also brings life and positive effects in every direction.

*It is quite remarkable to see how God works and the things that happen when the realm of mission is involved; it strengthens faith, generates encouragement, and awakens the heart.*

The impact of calling others to be part of the missionary experience is notable; those testimonies, those stories that are told upon returning, are invaluable. They produce a lot of life in the church and a lot of encouragement in the heart, even in short-term missions.



Lucia and Diego are both sent from Colombia to the UK

Wouldn't it be amazing to receive a Latin American missionary?! Contact us to find out more: [info@latinlink.org.uk](mailto:info@latinlink.org.uk)



# STEP INTO THE STORY

# wholeheartedly

go!

Would you love to serve God by going to share the love and hope of Jesus in Latin America and Europe?

Latin Link has three mission pathways - Step, Stride and Stay - partnering with the local church to help meet the needs of the communities they serve. Whether going as an individual, couple, family, CU, church, or as part of a team, you can use your gifts to make a difference – and be forever changed in the process.

## Step

Step is our short-term team pathway seeking to share the love of Christ in Latin America by uniting passionate Christians, excited to dedicate their spring or summer to volunteering.

Step is the perfect opportunity for your gap year, sabbatical, holidays, or career break! You'll be in a community or church-based project in one of our partner countries.

Spring Step - 4 months  
Summer Step - 3-4 weeks

We also offer the opportunity for you to take a team from your church or CU!



## Stride

Stride placements offer the perfect opportunity for committed Christians who feel drawn to put their faith into practice in a Latin American culture.

Stride is suitable for individuals, couples and families.

You'll spend 6-24 months working alongside a church or Christian-run project, responding to local needs and getting involved in the local community.

If you don't yet speak Spanish or Portuguese, you'll spend time doing language study at the start of your placement.



## Stay

Stay is for those wanting to serve for several years or more. Stay members are involved in creating lasting change in communities, living out a longer-term calling to mission.

Latin Link is well known across Latin America for sending longer-term workers. Stay members go at the invitation of local churches and Christian organisations with which we partner.

Their work covers a variety of roles, fitting in with Latin Link's focus on integral mission, sharing God's love by addressing both spiritual and physical needs.

# volunteer

We couldn't do what we do without our incredible, wholehearted volunteers who support our team all year round in a myriad of marvellous ways. Would you consider becoming one of them? Read on to find out the ways in which you could use your gifts to ignite a spark in others.

## CHURCH LINK



\* Are you someone with a passion to keep your church engaged with global mission?

\* Could you be the link between your church and Latin Link, and help inspire your church family to step into God's mission story in Latin America and Spain?

## MOBILISER



\* Are you passionate about mobilising people to pray, give, go or welcome a Latin American mission worker at their church?

\* Would you enjoy setting up a fun mission event, pulling together a fundraiser, setting up a prayer group, or creating opportunities to represent Latin Link in your local area?

## STORY SHARER



\* Has your time on Step, Stride or Stay impacted you in a way you would like to share your story with others?

\* Could you speak at your church, a CU or youth group, or chat with people at an exhibition stand?

\* Could you use your creative gifts to ignite a spark for mission in others?

If any of these roles describe you, we'd love you to join our network of volunteers.

Our volunteers receive: a monthly volunteer update, resources to inspire your church about global mission, and opportunities to connect with the Latin Link community online and at local events.

Drop us an email on [info@latinlink.org.uk](mailto:info@latinlink.org.uk) to start the conversation.



Begin your story today! Get in touch: [info@latinlink.org.uk](mailto:info@latinlink.org.uk)

The

QUIZ

that

GIVES



**Give a little.  
Quiz a lot!**

**Wholehearted  
fun for a  
wholehearted  
mission**



Have you been inspired by what you've read in this edition of *Latinfile*?  
Wondering how you can help raise vital funds for Latin Link?

**We've made it easier than ever to organise  
a fab fundraiser with The Quiz that Gives.  
A wonderfully fun quiz that everyone can enjoy!**

We give you everything you need to host the quiz, and all funds raised will be given to supporting mission in Latin America and Europe. Check out [latinlink.org.uk/fundraising-ideas](http://latinlink.org.uk/fundraising-ideas) or scan the QR code to sign up for your quiz pack. You'll find loads of other fundraising ideas there too.