

Adiós 2013...

Some highlights that rounded off our year!

Fabio: IAAF Coach Level 1!

During the middle of the month, Fabio travelled to Mar del Plata to complete the practical part of this internationally recognised coaching course. After an intense few days, he passed with flying colours, and is now formally qualified to coach "Mini Athletics" and oversee the early development of young athletes. This also provided a great opportunity for him to make more connections in the sporting world, notably with some of the coaches of tomorrow.

A visit from Emily

Whilst Fabio was working hard down on the Atlantic Coast, I was absolutely delighted to receive a visit from Emily, a friend since university days and also one of the witnesses at my wedding for those who were there (and remember!). We were able to spend a weekend seeing many of the sights of Buenos Aires, and even managed a trip across the Río de la Plata to Colonia, Uruguay. It was a lovely break for us both, a chance to share in depth and a change from the routine.

Bolt in BAires

The presence of Usain Bolt in Argentina on December 14th provided a great, spontaneous opportunity for friends from church to get together with friends from the athletics scene. Bolt was in Buenos Aires with another couple of Jamaican team mates primarily for a publicity stunt: Bolt vs the Metro Bus, the latest addition to the city's public transport system (think bendy bus and the discovery of bus-only lanes), although he was also present at various athletics clinics. Although the event in itself was a bit of a farce (have a look on You Tube and you'll see what I mean!), it was a good excuse to spend some time with fellow friends and athletes like LF and RG, and as it turns out, some friends from church, like DK and CK. I was so happy that this came about, as I think it is so important for Christians and non-Christians to mix, sharing life and faith, and slowly breaking down the barriers and stereotypes.

Sharing not only the gospel but our lives as well

I was able to meet up again with shot-putter AG, who continues to share openly with me. It was lovely to receive a message from her saying how much she valued my support which although not sought after, is always a great boost as sometimes it can be difficult to know whether you are doing the right thing, not being too pushy but also wanting to show you care!

I was also delighted to see M's father up and about following his bad health, full of gratitude to the Lord for seeing him through the ordeal.

...Bienvenido 2014!

And some highlights that kicked off 2014!

As always, it is a delight to be in Cachi sharing with Pastor M and his wife, A.

Fabio has been extremely consistent in getting alongside his family during this visit, sharing his faith and Christian approach to life with his non-believing father and brothers, and encouraging his mother, MG, in her faith. On one occasion MG came with us to one of M's meetings, a motive for thanksgiving as she is often tied down at home and unable to devote time to much else.

We have been delighted to see some good progress on the house, and have been getting ourselves covered in paint during the decoration process! We would value your prayers for the rather long-winded procedures of getting electricity and drains in place, as there is paperwork to get our heads around and various amounts of to-ing and fro-ing in order to tick the right box for the right person. Please pray that God would go before us- and fill us anew with patience!- as we do this.

On December 31st, I raced in Salta, the first time I have gone down from altitude (from 2400m to 1200m) to compete. It was an experiment and also a shock to the system to adapt from the dry, fresh climate of Cachi to the heat and humidity of Salta city! All the same, I enjoyed the experience and the race, which I was delighted to win. Fabio also travelled and used the 8km circuit as a "walk out" as part of his training. We were joined by my former Latin Link mentors, DL and FL, and PB, with whom it was great to spend time together and share ideas!

And the Christmas Cracker....

We continue to pray over a possible move to Salta, and this has become more of a likelihood over the last month. We are convinced that a move away from the big city of Buenos Aires is the right thing for us sooner or later, and Salta is the obvious option in order to be closer to Fabio's family in Cachi (his father's health continues in a delicate state), and to the town in general as our house continues to progress. There also seem to be greater possibilities of Fabio being able to develop his skills as a coach or something similar, and although leaving friendships and ministry in Buenos Aires would be extremely difficult, we are excited by the idea and pray that God would guide us through His Word and through the peace of His Spirit over the next month; mid-February we would have to either renew or end our contract in Buenos Aires, although there would be some logistical things to sort out before that, like selling furniture, finalising projects here and...saying goodbye!