



Andrew and Lisa Peart

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Contact details:

lisajweedman@hotmail.com
andrewpeart@protonmail.com



Location: Bolivia



What we do: Partnering with the local church to engage with the community in pioneering mission through generous, creative hospitality



Discovering creative ways to share the hope of Jesus with people unconnected to church

Hello friends!

¡Feliz Navidad y Felices Fiestas!

We send you warm greetings from Bolivia and we'd like to share our gratitude for your generous and prayerful support that allows us to join the Lord in his mission here. It's been an amazing year of God's faithfulness!

This year we're celebrating our 10th Christmas in Santa Cruz. It's been fun to reflect on our previous Bolivian Christmas celebrations; candlelight services and Messy Church in the parks, cookie decorating classes and parties, failed Yorkshire puddings (humidity), Christmases serving in the mission in the north of the city, our first "proper" Bolivian Christmas Eve, when we ate dinner at 12.30am, got home at 3am and attended Christmas Day service at 9am with only 15 people – Christmas Day here isn't like it is in the UK!

Remembering the alternative Christmas trees we've "created" – fairy lights hung on a wall in the shape of a tree, a large fallen tree branch cemented into a pot, spray-painted and decorated by our girls, a large potted palm tree which we covered in fairy lights and later planted in our garden – what beautiful and cherished memories!

With much anticipation and expectation wrapped up in **how** we celebrate Christmas, I've been reflecting on **why** we celebrate the arrival of Emmanuel, God with us, and his anticipated return. "Much more than a countdown," the Bible Project writes, "Advent embraces the way of Jesus and encourages hopeful waiting, courageous peace-making, resilient joy, and self-giving love in our still-suffering world."

In a few of our link letters, I've shared a bit about our friend Adviento (Advent in Spanish), but I've been waiting for this season of Advent to share more about his journey with Jesus.

A Bolivian Advent story...

Last Christmas, in the Bible study community in the toilets hosted by our microfinance partners Jenny and Richard, I shared the meaning of Advent. One of the men, Alejandro, who had only been attending for a few months and hardly said much, exclaimed loudly, "My name is Adviento, yes, that's my name!" while passing around his photo ID card for all to see. He was clearly excited! That day, as he learned the significance of his name, something moved in him. We saw it in his eyes and later, we could all see it in his heart and life.



Liliana and Anayah in front of our first Christmas tree in Bolivia, December 2016

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**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



Richard and Adviento, who have been friends for 35 years, met as teenage boys. Their friendship later embraced a life of drugs, alcohol and living rough on the streets. Many years and difficult trials later, Richard was the first to turn from that life and embrace the way of Jesus. For years, he kept inviting Adviento to do the same. Then one day in late summer 2024, Adviento accepted Richard's invitation to join the Bible study. Upon reflection, I'm deeply impacted by Richard's hope and faith in Jesus, which wouldn't let him give up on his friend, because he knows Jesus didn't give up on him, either.

Sadly, Adviento's many years of life on the streets took a mighty toll on his body, specifically his lungs.

He was in and out of hospital for the eight months that we knew him. We saw him getting thinner, yet he seemed stronger, growing in his knowledge and joy of the Lord as his body weakened. He faithfully attended the Bible study community every Friday when he wasn't in hospital. He couldn't read, but he attentively listened to God's Word. On one occasion when visiting Adviento in the emergency TB ward, as we were about to pray, I noticed a Bible on the bed. When Andrew went in after me – we had to go in separately – Adviento was trying to read the Bible, sounding out each letter like a child, while Andrew listened and helped him. He told Andrew he knew the end of his life was near, but he was ok because he felt the Lord's peace and presence in the midst of his pain and suffering. The Lord was doing a deep work in him and through him. The people in Adviento's street community didn't quite understand the significant change in his life. They knew him as a hopeless, violent drunk, similar to themselves, impossible to change. So when the Bible study community asked them for help in covering his medical costs, they refused. However, weeks later, several went to Richard with money to support Adviento. Through the hope and faith of others, Adviento's street community got a glimpse of the love of Jesus in this still-suffering world, of **why** we celebrate Emmanuel, God with us and as we wait for his promised return.

Our friend and brother in Christ Adviento passed away in May. We miss him, his big smile and his quiet steady faith, but we rejoice in the knowledge that Jesus came to this world as his and our Saviour!

Could you increase your giving?

At this time last year, we shared with you that there was a significant shortfall in our funding. Thank you so much to those who gave in response – we are so grateful! We are pleased to say our funding gap is smaller than it was, but our funding is still not sustainable. However, we know we serve a God who provides. Please pray with us for our funding to increase so that we can continue to serve God at the edges. If you are able to increase your regular giving or give an additional gift this year, we would really appreciate you prayerfully considering it. You can give online at churchmissionsociety.org/Peart, by calling 01865 787489, or if you received this letter by post, by completing the enclosed form. Thank you so much for walking on this mission journey with us.

We pray that you have a very happy Christmas!

With much love,

Andrew, Lisa, Liliana and Anayah x



Photos from top to bottom: Lisa, Adviento, Andrew and Jenny, January 2025; Liliana, Anayah, Daniela and Jack in front of our branch Christmas tree, December 2018; Messy Church in the local park; Bible study in the toilets, one of Adviento's last with us



Discovering creative ways to share the hope of Jesus

It's so encouraging to hear news from other CMS partners sharing the hope of Jesus with people not yet connected to churches. In the UK, CMS's Pioneer Mission Training programme is equipping people to respond creatively to the Holy Spirit beyond the boundaries of traditional church. Read more and get inspired by other stories of hope at churchmissionsociety.org/bringhope

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