

Prayer Letter

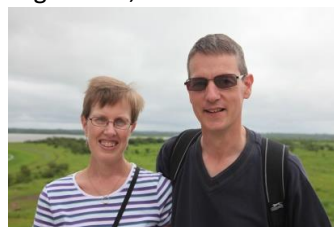
April 2017



A new chapter

After more than ten years as Senior Minister of Poynton Baptist Church Neil is stepping down. For the next couple of years we are going to be free to be more involved in global mission – particularly in Peru.

Our main focus will be working with the Nauta Training Centre, which trains pastors and church leaders from Amazonian River Communities. Neil will be facilitating the creation of a new training program building on the work done over the last five years. Lori will be helping with the organisational work of the centre as well as being involved with local church life, especially among the women.



Why Nauta?

It started, in 2008, when Poynton Baptist Church developed a link with the Baptist Churches in Iquitos. Over subsequent years this partnership has grown, with an emphasis on supporting the Training Centre in Nauta and river missions.



Neil has been involved in the Training Centre since it started, creating training materials and being one of the regular teachers. Initially the pastors came from the main centres of Iquitos and Nauta but recently the majority have been drawn from the river communities. The Centre has also been able to work with other mission organisations to provide training to the local pastors linked to these missions.

In the light of these developments and the potential for future growth, now is the time to update the training course and create a two year training programme.

About Iquitos and Nauta

Iquitos is the regional capital of Maynas province and the Loreto district of Peru; the “capital” of the Peruvian Amazon. Iquitos is a city of about 450,000 people and is the largest city in the world to be landlocked with no roads to the outside world. Everything comes by boat or plane. The only main road is 100km long between Iquitos and Nauta. Nauta is a small town but is the staging post for river traffic for two of the most significant tributaries of the Amazon.

This is a tropical rainforest: the climate is hot and humid all year round with daily maximum temperatures frequently reaching 30°C and humidity of 85% or more. And it rains a lot.



While Peru is doing well economically, particularly in Lima, rural poverty in the Amazon remains at over 70% of the population. Because almost everything must be ‘imported’ (several days travel by boat or by air) costs are higher than other places. According to Compassion International: 75% of the indigenous people in the Peruvian Rainforest live in poverty and more than 50% in extreme poverty. While education (particularly in the towns) is improving so that more than three quarters finish primary school, less than one third finish secondary school - most children drop out of school to help support their families, working as unskilled, temporary labourers. Due to poor water quality children are routinely afflicted with parasites, dysentery, tooth decay and dengue fever.

BMS



We are going as volunteers with BMS: world mission. BMS (Baptist Missionary Society) has roots that go back to 1792 and William Carey’s call to engage in world mission.

The modern BMS has over 350 people working in 35 countries striving to make Jesus known and share the full life He brings. It

works with church ministries to equip, disciple and build up the capacity of local churches; but also through health, education, justice, leadership and development programs. In Peru, BMS partners with the Peruvian Baptist Convention; helping grow the capacity of the convention and its churches. This has included Church Planting, leadership and theological education. In Nauta we have also developed a water project to provide clean water – a project led by BMS worker Laura-Lee Lovering (Peru Team Leader) who we will be working alongside.

The next two years

Starting in September 2017, for the next two years, about two thirds of our time will be spent on work connected with the training centre; most of it living and working in Nauta. While our children are at University in the UK we continue to have responsibilities in England and will spend several months a year here. Neil will use some of this time to make use of libraries and other facilities to develop training materials for the training centre.

As well as serving with BMS in Peru we aim to use some time to learn about mission, mission organisations, church leadership and training in other places. This may include some Short Term Mission trips with opportunities serve as well as learn. We plan to remain involved in UK church life when we are here.



Prayer points

Between now and September there are a number of practical things to sort out.

1. Somewhere to live. For the last decade we have lived in a church manse while we have rented out our house in Nottinghamshire. We hope to sell the house and buy something in South Manchester. Please pray this all works out (quick sale and our locating a suitable house within budget).
2. Health issues. Both Lori and I have had our share of health issues over recent years. At the time of writing we still await final health clearance for Lori. Please pray we both remain physically, mentally and spiritually fit both before we go and whilst in Peru.
3. Spanish. We will need to speak Spanish. Both of us have been learning Spanish for some while but need to improve. We hope to spend some of

our early time in Peru at Language School in Arequipa. Please pray for our language skills; especially since they will be a key part of our ability to work in a team.

4. Finance. More on this below but please pray that the Lord provides what we need.
5. Poynton Baptist Church. The church is also looking to this next chapter and is prayerfully working towards seeking a new Senior Minister. Please pray God would bless them through this process.

Finance and Giving

Inevitably this all requires finance and we are seeking support to cover the 15 months we are involved in Peru. This includes living costs (including house and other costs in the UK) plus flights, insurance, accommodation and other extra costs of being in Peru.

We anticipate the total costs will be about £32,000. We have some savings to put towards this and support from Poynton Baptist Church but we need to raise about £17,000 towards mission in Peru.

If you are able to support us financially, either by monthly giving or a one off gift, we would be very grateful. We are registered recipients with Stewardship who have set up a support fund for us. This means that you are able to gift aid support for us either by going to www.give.net/20221093 or by asking us for a form.



If you would like to give money for something specific, or would like fuller details of the money we need and how our finances will work, please let us know.

Updates and contact details

There are several ways to keep up to date with what we are doing:

- We plan to distribute a prayer letter every three months. You can sign up at <http://eepurl.com/cLtNWH> or let us know and we will add you to the list.
- Our blog distinctreflections.net will have regular updates.
- We are both on Facebook and Twitter @NeilBrighton and @LoriBrighton1
- Or email revneilbrighton@gmail.com & lori.brighton@hotmail.co.uk