

communities in the remote areas of South America. Much progress has been made, particularly in Bolivia and Peru, to a large extent in partnership with 'Latin Link' missionaries in those countries.



Cristobal Mangini and Victor Varas

With the retirement of Victor Varas from full-time work for IMM, it has been his (and our) desire to see the work of outreach and witnessing to miners continue in new ways. With his help, along with recommendations of other friends, particularly from the USA, the vision is to move to a different method of outreach – namely to

provide grants to Christian Chilean miners to witness to their fellow miners where they work and where they live. The responsibility of overseeing this change will now be taken over by IMM USA Committee. Already a young keen Christian miner, **Cristobal Mangini** is being encouraged in his work to reach out to his fellow workers in the large copper mine, La Minera Andina not far the town of Los Andes, an hour's drive south of Santiago.

End February/beginning March 2011 members of the IMM Committees from UK and USA are planning a trip to Chile to meet with Victor Varas and Cristobal Mangini, as well as other Christian mine engineers and miners to discuss the way forward. Our prayer is that this may develop into something that bring glory to God and extend the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in Chile.

INTERNATIONAL MINERS' MISSION

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INTERNATIONAL MINERS' MISSION in CHILE



For over two centuries, Chile has been known for the mining of copper. When the Christian founder of the International Miners' Mission, Richard Glynn Vivian, made his will he left funds invested for financing evangelistic outreach to miners in various countries where he had met men living in often squalid and degrading circumstances. One of the countries Richard Glynn Vivian designated in his will was Chile. His family company, Vivian and Sons, were importing large quantities of wrought copper from various parts of the world in the late 19th. and early 20th. centuries to their large works in Hafod, Swansea, South Wales for processing into products being used in the fast-growing electricity industry.

First missionary couple sent out in 1917

Antofagasta in the north was the first centre, but when some mines were closed Curanilahue, south of Concepcion became the

headquarters. Some years later the Pullings handed over the Mission Hall in Curanilahue to American missionaries and returned to Antofagasta. At that time some 200,000 miners worked in the far north of Chile. Mention is made of visits to Punta del Cobre but also Copiapo in Atacama province. The chapel in Rye Lane, Peckham, England made a gift of a portable organ to the Pullings in 1920. Mr. Pulling seems to have done a lot of travelling preaching the Gospel in various mining areas in Chile, including nitrate mines in Antofagasta and mines near Chuquicamata. He also spoke about holding meetings at the Las Condes mine in 1925, which he says was 'one of the wealthiest and at the same time one of most difficult mines in Chile to reach, because of its altitude, and the fact that it can only be got at in certain months of the year because of the cold and snow.' He distributed thousands of Gospel tracts and showed numerous lantern shows. He encountered difficulties and blessings during his travels, with stories of some remarkable conversions.

Rancagua, the world's largest underground copper mine

However in 1927 the Pullings returned to Australia, due to the educational needs of their two young daughters. In 1928 the IMM Committee considered another missionary to restart the work there but his large family ruled out any chances of him being selected for the post! The committee in England preferred unmarried men! However in 1929 a Chilean missionary, Nabor Santana, was found to work amongst the miners at the large El Teniente copper mines in Rancagua. We have a rare picture of Mrs. Santana playing the guitar surrounded by lots of children. This work flourished for two years before the sudden death of Nabor Santana. In 1933 Mr. and Mrs. F.C. Cave set sail from England with their children to recommence the work in Rancagua. Here the Caves established a hostel for miners but this had to be closed in 1942 as Mrs. Cave contracted tuberculosis. The Caves returned to England in 1947 and for some years nothing could be restarted.

However in 1970, Wilhelm Hecke of Christian Literature Crusade (who had a book shop in Santiago) was able to engage Victor and Ana Varas, living in Santiago, as full-time missionaries for IMM. Victor worked for many years in the El Volcan gypsum mine area, where a small meeting hall was erected (cost in 1972 = £200!). We believe it is still there, though it is now run as a Pentecostal Church.

Victor Varas also travelled around the many mines in Chile and one place where a group was formed was in the home of a Christian miner in Saladillo. He also visited the La Minera Andina copper mine nearby, where Victor used a travelling library of Christian books for distribution to miners. In later years Victor concentrated on providing support for two churches in the mining areas of Rancagua, undertaking children's work, door-to-door visiting in the miners estates, training of Christian miners to witness in the mines and hospital visiting. He retired officially at the end of 2010. We have corresponded with Victor over the 40 years of his ministry and hold him as a dear faithful brother in the Lord.

Connection with SAMS/CMS

During much the time that Victor and Ana Varas were working they were very ably supported by several SAMS missionaries, including John Burley (himself an ex-mine engineer), Ray Smith and Paul Inman. To these dear brothers we hold a real debt of gratitude. We are so pleased to be able to continue our long collaboration – now with CMS.

New opportunities in Chile

The IMM now enters a new phase of opportunity in Chile. The real pioneering days have passed and the desire now is to see local Christians in Chile engaging in the work of witnessing to the many miners working in that country. The IMM Committee in the USA was formed in 1992 with the main aim of reaching out to mining