



# Anna Sims

Link Letter no. 28 | December 2023



**Location:** Peru



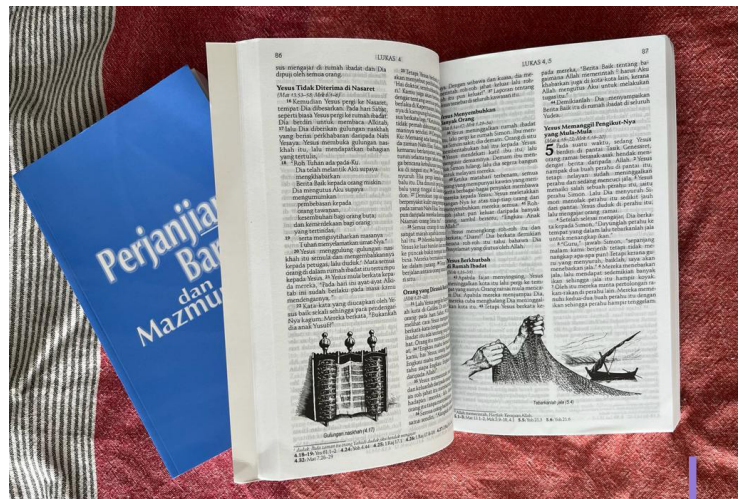
**What I do:** Supporting female, English-speaking inmates and ex-offenders in Lima through prison ministry Walking in Liberty.

Unto you, O Lord, do I lift up my soul  
 Unto you, O Lord, do I lift up my soul  
 Oh my God, I trust in you  
 Let me not be ashamed  
 Let not my enemies triumph over me

Show me your ways, your ways Oh Lord  
 Teach me your paths, your paths Oh Lord  
 Oh my God, I trust in you  
 Let me not be ashamed  
 Let not my enemies triumph over me

Remember not the sins of my youth  
 Remember not the sins of my youth  
 Oh my God, I trust in you  
 Let me not be ashamed  
 Let not my enemies triumph over me

(from Psalm 25)



Malay New Testament

Dear friends,

This afternoon I have been on a very joyful and encouraging visit to Santa Monica women’s prison. It has been the perfect tonic for what has felt like a number of difficult and emotionally taxing weeks regarding prison ministry. We do a lot of singing in our group (all a capella) and even performed as part of National Folklore Day.

One of our current favourites is Unto you O Lord, based on Psalm 25. I have just looked on YouTube to try and find a link to share in this letter, but all the videos that are appearing are INCREDIBLY sedate and gentle compared with our raucous call and response rendition, which normally ends with some very enthusiastic harmonising and shoulder shimmying that puts Whoopi Goldberg in Sister Act to shame.

The Bible study group in Santa Monica has more than doubled in size over the last few months and I had been finding the studies quite draining. One of the women has lost her eyesight over the last year due to mismanaged diabetes and cataracts. She is heavily medicated and often confused. S, who I mentioned in my last letter, had her audience with a judge in November and she has been denied expulsion back to her passport country. It is joyful to see her passion for Jesus, as she freely admits she was initially coming to the group for the monthly packets and had no understanding, or interest, in Christianity until she heard the audible voice of God in her cell one day, as she desperately prayed on her knees for a difficult family situation. We have two

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



women from a cousin background who have very little English, but are excitedly learning the weekly memory verses in their own language, as we were able to acquire New Testaments in Malay for them. Our latest two participants are a middle-class Peruvian woman, who wants to learn English, and a South African Christian from a Roman Catholic background, who converted to evangelical Christianity when she married and was attending a different pastoral group in prison run by a sect, but got fed up as they weren't teaching Christianity, so is giving us a go. She is adamant that God has a plan for her in her prison sentence, so it's exciting to watch that unfold. It's a mixed bag and has a number of challenges as well as joy, but we are currently on our second type of orality studies, which seem to be working better than the first.

I have been wondering if I have the emotional capacity to continue with this ministry, as I have just celebrated arriving in Peru 10 years ago (and have been involved in prison ministry since February 2014). But as my colleague Mary reminds me, God has called us to it and is equipping us with what we need, mainly a lot of patience and compassion. Things are dramatic with the ex-offenders as two of them have recently discovered they're pregnant (both in complicated relationships). One woman returned to her passport country and we accompanied her to the airport three times before they let her leave (she was turned back due to incorrect paperwork). Thankfully she was also accompanied by two loyal, kind and sensible bilingual friends, which made it easier to change plane tickets and progress with the missing paperwork.

Mary and I were also able to visit one of the few women (and her son) who we still support in their passport country. The last time I visited, the son was less than a year old; now, he's just celebrated his fifth birthday. The political situation was difficult, with lots of protests, riots and looting in the city centre, so we were mainly housebound apart from trips to the supermarket, church and dentist. It was an encouraging time, sharing meals, praying together, chatting and playing, although quite intense. The boy is a delight and has a contagious laugh.

We are not sure what 2024 holds, especially with regard to our visits to Santa Monica, as the new director has changed a number of systems and we are yet to find out whether we will be able to renew our pastoral passes or not. My current plans involve a brief visit over Christmas to England to see family and for some routine medical appointments, followed by home assignment later in 2024. I enter this next season with a sense of anticipation, hope and excitement, as I continue to trust God to show me his ways and teach me his paths. I give thanks to God for you all supporting me in this journey and pray that whatever your personal circumstances, you will continue to lift up your souls to him during the Christmas period and beyond.

All my love, Anna

PS: Due to a change in policy, Church Mission Society can no longer accept special personal gifts for mission partners. Any money given through my page on their website will go to my personal support (which covers my stipend, pension, expenses and travel), making it possible for me to serve here. Thanks for your ongoing support.



**Photos from top to bottom:** Newest member of the ex-offenders group; first attempt, airport goodbye; airport sustenance during the final attempt; playing games during our recent pastoral visit



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