

Tim Curtis

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The call in action

Dear friends,

Happy New Year from the Rio Verde Anglican Centre in the Paraguayan Chaco!

This has been a very quiet and rather strange Christmas and New Year for me, as I spent around two weeks self-isolating after feeling unwell with a heavy cold and sore throat. I had come into contact with people who tested positive for COVID-19, so I cancelled all my activities and stayed at home in Rio Verde. On 5 January I had my Pfizer booster jab at one of the main Chaco hospitals at Villa Choferes del Chaco, just a short drive from Filadelfia. I am now spending January holding the fort at Rio Verde, with my colleagues away on their summer holidays.

At the beginning of December, the vicar general Agustin Maidana, his wife Teresa, presbyter Gustavo and his wife Rebeca did a marathon tour of indigenous communities. They visited El Estribo, La Herencia, Makxawaya and La Patria. I prepared several evening meals for the team members after they returned from the long and tiring trips to the communities, doing my speciality, the Chaco "guiso", a kind of stew of rice, meat and vegetables. Agustin and Teresa brought Christmas presents for the pastors, and I was also given a large Anglican Church themed thermos flask for cold water with my name on it.

I was able to manage a trip to the Angaité community at Paraiso at the end of November, and was asked to preach in a mixture of Guaraní, Enxet and Spanish at the local church, Iglesia Evangelica La Paz, at the request of its pastor, Gilberto Zavala. There were some lively pentecostal groups present, which was interesting! It was an anniversary service, so there was a huge cake on display at the front of the church. We later ate the cake, which we had as dessert, after a special celebratory lunch together.

The main event of the last couple of months has been the Extraordinary Synod of the Anglican Church of Paraguay, which was held in Asunción in November last year. About half the delegates were indigenous members from the Chaco. This year I took charge of the delegates from La Patria. Some took the bus to Asunción from Rio Verde, and others I drove down in the diocesan vehicle. On the way to Rio Verde from La Patria one of my rear tyres blew out shortly after coming onto the hot tarmac of the main trans Chaco highway. Fortunately I was not driving very fast. After staying overnight at the Anglican Centre at Rio Verde we continued on our journey to Asunción for the short synod, held just to elect the nominating committee whose task it will be to look for a new bishop and to work on a profile for future candidates. Enxet pastor Elvio Cabanas, from La Herencia, was elected as the indigenous representative.



Name: Tim Curtis

Location: Paraguayan Chaco

My call: To promote use of the Holy Scriptures, making people wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

My role: To focus on discipleship training materials within the Enxet language and the production of study materials.



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Receiving my Christmas present from the vicar general

As December progressed, the weather became more extreme and I experienced some of the hottest days I think I have ever known, with temperatures soaring to over 40 C most days. There were days that I did not know what to do with myself. The rain we had in November petered out, so things got very dry again. The tarmac on the trans Chaco Highway was so hot that it was not uncommon to hear loud bangs as tyres exploded as large lorries drove through Rio Verde! There have also been swarms of wasps, bees and other insects searching for water. Hanging out the washing has been quite a perilous occupation, as wasps descend on the wet clothes. We did finally have a welcome drop in temperature on 1 January, and there was some very modest rain in some parts of the Chaco.

The translation work continues. The Northern Enlhet translators Evencio Froise, Brigido Loewen and team coordinator Arnold Boshman finished working on 1 Kings at the beginning of December and continued to make steady if slow progress on Numbers. During November, we met at the centre in Rio Verde for a barbecue and time of fellowship. I showed them around our translation office and took them down to the banks of the Rio Verde to take photographs.

I continued working with Asuncion Rojas on the discipleship training materials, making further copies of the completed Enxet version Peter Faulkner's booklet *The Creator God Keeps his Promises*. Feedback has been very positive, with a number of people saying how helpful and encouraging the Bible-focused booklet is, reminding us that the words of Scripture "are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31).

Finally, regarding the pandemic situation, the government announced the arrival of the Omicron variant on 27 December. We have been warned to brace for an increase in cases after getting used to less than half a dozen deaths reported every day in Paraguay. Some Enxet communities are now reporting that they are being quite hard hit by cases of "flu" and "heavy colds". I ask for your prayers for protection for the indigenous people during the twists and turns of the pandemic.

With every good wish for 2022, thanking you for your prayers and support.

Tim Curtis



Photos from top to bottom: Musicians at La Paz church; The nominating committee at the synod; Brigido and Tim on the banks of the Rio Verde.

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If you would like to discuss your mailings with us or to receive this link letter on a regular basis, please email supporter.care@churchmissionsociety.org or call 01865 787400

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