



Tim Curtis

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Location: Paraguay



What I do: Building up the body of Christ through writing, translating and producing discipleship training and study materials in the Énxet language.

Dear praying friends,

Greetings from Rio Verde in the Paraguayan Chaco.

We are at the beginning of a new year once again and I have much to give thanks for as I look back at God's goodness and provision over the last few weeks and months.

As I write, the Chaco summer is at its height, with very high temperatures and humidity. The black carob trees (*prosopis nigra*) have been giving their fruit since November, and the Énxet women have been milling the fruit to produce *echaha ánek*, sweet-tasting black carob flour.

The Anglican conference for indigenous leaders in La Caldera, near Salta, Argentina went ahead as planned in October last year. Twelve delegates from Paraguay took part, joining delegates who came mainly from Argentina and Chile, although there were also representatives from Peru, Bolivia and Panama. There was much discussion on indigenous education, both Christian and secular, as well as the gospel and culture, with each indigenous delegation reporting on their own specific challenges and needs. Then in November, bishop Nick Drayson and his wife Catherine Le Tissier travelled to Paraguay with indigenous Christian leaders Mirna Paulo (Wichí) and Amanda (Toba). They visited various Énxet communities, praying and worshipping with pastors, leaders and Sunday school children, and also gave us an insight into their roles in women's ministry.

The following month, in December, the extraordinary and ordinary synods were held in Asunción. It was decided that no election for a new bishop would take place until mid-2023. Pastor Agustín Maidana agreed to continue in his role as vicar general of the diocese, with the help of his wife Teresa.

I spent Christmas Day 2022 in the Angaité indigenous community of Caroa'i, La Patria. During the service, which was definitely not your typical Christmas Day service, three young couples were married by Anglican pastor Robert Fernández. Afterwards I sat down for lunch under some shady trees with the other wedding guests and people from the village. There were three enormous cakes for each couple, one with bright red icing, another with purple icing, and another with pink icing.

A few days before the New Year I flew to Ushuaia at the tip of South America, in Tierra del Fuego, Argentina for the CMS people in mission Refresh conference. Our Bible study sessions and meditations were led by Anglican ministers Hans and Priscilla Breckveldt from the Diocese of Northern Argentina. I took turns with other interpreters translating from English into Spanish for the Latin American participants. It was a wonderful opportunity for fellowship with over 50 CMS people in mission and Latin American church leaders.



Bishops Crisanto and Mateo
with the certificates

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



I caught up with colleagues I had not seen for many years, such as Ed and Marie Brice, and got to know others I had only met virtually, in Zoom meetings. It was good to see indigenous bishops Crisanto and Mateo. Mirna Paulo and bishop Mateo gave us updates on the indigenous church in the Argentine Chaco. CMS's CEO, Alastair Bateman, and CMS's director of mission, Andy Roberts, were present at the conference, as was Jo Anthony, personnel lead for Latin America. CMS's manager in Latin America, Paul Tester, did an absolutely amazing job organising everything.

The choice of Ushuaia as location for the conference was also deeply significant. It was moving and humbling to be at the place where the earliest work of SAMS began with

such great sacrifice and cost, with the death of Captain Allen Gardiner and his companions in 1851. The city of Ushuaia was basically founded by SAMS missionaries, and the city's maritime museum at the naval base acknowledges the contribution and sacrifice of those early missionaries who followed in the footsteps of Allen Gardiner, such as Bishop W Stirling and Thomas Bridges. Wilfrid Barbrooke Grubb who began the work among the Énxet people of Paraguay in 1889 had also been part of the team working among the indigenous people of Tierra del Fuego. On 5 January we were invited to an Assemblies of God church service in downtown Ushuaia. Many of us were moved to tears when we were each presented with a certificate thanking the Anglican Church for the dedication, passion and commitment of the Anglican missionaries who "gave their lives [literally 'sowed their lives'] as an offering to spread the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the Anglican mission for being the true founders of the city of Ushuaia".

After the Ushuaia conference, CMS representative Andrew Johnson and his wife Becky joined me for a few days in the Chaco at my home in Rio Verde, and we were able to visit several of the indigenous communities and meet some of the pastors and leaders who had been at the indigenous conference in La Caldera.

It's now back to work after the wonderfully refreshing break in Ushuaia, so I am now resuming work on Nehemiah with the Northern Enlhet Bible translation team with translators Evencio, Brígido and coordinator Arnold. From mid-February I shall be the UK for three months of home ministry, so I am very much looking forward to visiting my link churches in the UK.

"Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them". Psalm 111:2

With every blessing for 2023,

Tim Curtis



Photos from top to bottom: Paraguayan delegates in Argentina for the indigenous conference October 2022; at the Beagle Channel; Ed and Marie Brice, Agustin and Teresa Maidana at the conference in Ushuaia; Becky and Andrew Johnson visiting Rio Verde after the Ushuaia conference



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