



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 friends,

Greetings from the Anglican Centre in Río Verde on a hot January summer's day.

Another eventful year has passed, and I give thanks for the strength that God has supplied and for his many blessings. I look forward to God's grace in helping meet the challenges of 2024.

As I write, I am feeling encouraged and uplifted after taking part in the Dos Palmas 39th anniversary thanksgiving service in El Estribo, which is celebrated every year on 3 January. Pastor Gilberto Martínez had invited me to preach. The celebrations are always a joyful, colourful, Christ-centred occasion, which bring in many visitors from the surrounding communities, including a number of local government officials and Mennonite neighbours. After the open air service, community march and young peoples' dances, several hundred of us sat down to a meal served in and around the school buildings. The Dos Palmas church's consistent witness to people of the surrounding area reminds me of God's promise: "I will honour those who honour me" (1 Samuel 2:30).



Dos Palmas 39th anniversary celebrations, and praying for the founding members.

During the last month of 2023 we enjoyed and gave thanks for God's abundant supply of rain, with our underground water storage tanks, "aljibes" in Spanish, full up and holding the precious water after repairs carried out several months ago. Many thanks for your prayers for rain.

It was good to have bishop elect Ronnie Irene, our administrator Marlene and most of the diocesan office team come up from Asunción to Río Verde in December and visit a number of the Énxet and Angaite communities. Meetings with pastors and church leaders were held in several locations to plan ahead for 2024.

We faced a number of challenges here in Río Verde towards the end of the year. My colleague Victor González, who had been taken on to act as caretaker last July to look after the centre, had to resign after just a few months owing to ill health, and it is not clear if he will be returning to Río Verde in 2024. He is currently on a waiting list for an operation.

Then, just before Christmas, we had a break in at the centre. The "casa pastoral", the house opposite mine, was broken into and various things were taken. There was an attempted break in to my house, but in spite of damage done to my back door, the door held. The following day the diocesan office sent up a team to

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improve security and fit us with some doors with metal bars. The diocese hopes to install security cameras in the near future. Please continue to pray for security for the Rio Verde Centre compound and for Victor's recovery.

My nearest English-speaking neighbour, Beryl Baker, moved permanently to Asunción after many years of living at the El Tejano ranch. I shall miss her fellowship and dropping by for a cup of coffee and prayer every now and again.

Extremely hot weather during November and December in the mid 40 C range, combined with high humidity, was quite a challenge for me, and I had to slow down a bit. I caught up on rereading some of the Christian classics on my bookshelf, including: Holiness – JC Ryle, You are my God – David Watson, A History of Christianity – Paul Johnson.

I continued to very much enjoy working with the Northern Enlhet translation team in Filadelfia, with my colleagues Arnold, Brígido and Evencio. We had a very productive year, checking through Evencio's work on Nehemiah and the Psalms, and Brígido's work on Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs. It was also a pleasure and privilege to continue working with Southern Énxet translator Asunción Rojas on discipleship training materials and the dictionary in the office here at the Centre.

Nearer Rio Verde, I have enjoyed working with pastor Elvio Cabañas and preaching at the Manantial de Vida Eterna church over which he has pastoral oversight in his home village of Yatnáta', La Herencia. At the end of November I was asked to help hand out end of year school certificates at the local school in Yatnáta', where I did some teaching back in 1983.

I have enjoyed being part of the growing indigenous mission group, or "Sínodo Indígena" as it is now called. Please pray for the preparations underway for another Indigenous Anglican Congress, to be held near Temuco, in Southern Chile, in October. The last one was held near Salta, Argentina, in October 2022. The smaller group of coordinators will be meeting during January this year in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Paraguayan representatives are Énxet pastor Elvio Cabañas, and Angaite church member Hermenegildo Torres (see previous link letter 46). Since our last meeting in June last year, Chilean Mapuche representative Joel Millanguir was consecrated bishop of the diocese of Araucanía. Back here in Paraguay, I would value your prayers that connectivity would improve in the many parts of the Chaco where participating in a Zoom meeting, for instance, is still a considerable challenge for many indigenous pastors and leaders

"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." Wishing you all God's richest blessing for 2024

Tim Curtis



Photos from top to bottom: My aljibe or underground water storage tank; the diocesan office team visiting the Chaco in December 2023; end of term at Yatnáta' school, La Herencia; Tim at home on 1 January 2024.



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