

# Tim Curtis

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*The call in action*

Dear Friends

Greetings from Rio Verde in the Paraguayan Chaco.

It's good to be back after a slightly longer than expected time in the UK for home ministry.

I had good flights back to Paraguay. I was accepted for a Paraguayan government-chartered "repatriation flight" for the last leg of the journey, as there have not been any commercial flights into the country since March.

I completed the mandatory 14-day quarantine at a government-approved "health hotel" and tested negative for COVID-19 once before leaving the UK and again seven days after I had arrived. We were only allowed out of our rooms to collect our meals during our time in quarantine. The room was comfortable, with an en suite bathroom and air conditioning, but it was a relief to be let out of quarantine after two weeks. I give thanks that I was able to return and for the help from my travel agent in Asuncion in getting together all the relevant documentation for the journey.

Back in Paraguay, my first impressions were that traffic was quite subdued in the capital city, Asuncion, and the shops and supermarkets less busy than usual. Everyone was wearing face masks in the streets and in the shops. There were hand washing facilities outside of every shop and business, hand sanitiser, and somebody to take your temperature.

After I had the car serviced in the city, I drove up to the Chaco on 28 August. Once in Rio Verde, everything struck me as exceptionally dry. In fact there was some unexpected rain in mid-August which eased the drought situation in many communities, so thank you for your prayers, which were promptly answered! Although there is no water in the house, there is some in the translation office underground water storage tanks which is sufficient for washing and showering. I am able to buy drinking water at the local supermarket. Please continue to pray for rain.

The house was just as I had left it, my books were fine and not eaten by termites or nibbled at by mice as feared, and the Bibles in the translation office were also fine. My colleague Victor Gonzalez had seen to it that the house and office were kept clean. I am continuing to look after the centre and I am able to work in the spacious translation office building.

As I have mentioned to some of you, COVID-19 cases have been rising very quickly in Paraguay over



**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 Énxit language and the production of study materials.



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*At Sao Paulo Guarulhos Airport en route to Paraguay*

the last six weeks, and there are reportedly over 30 cases in Rio Verde, which only has several hundred inhabitants. Several of my colleagues have tested positive or have been exposed to the virus, and so are in isolation. Various restrictions have been reintroduced by the government in the Mennonite colonies. For the moment, most trips to indigenous communities have been suspended, as some of them are in semi-lockdown, or local leaders have closed their access roads. The death of a visiting Toba indigenous pastor a few weeks ago from COVID-19 in one of the communities near us in Rio Verde brought home to everyone how serious the situation has become. There have been no pastoral retreats since March and we are not sure when these will take place again. We would value your prayers for wisdom as to how to continue to support the Chaco churches and pastors during this continuing coronavirus crisis. Please pray also for the president, the government, the doctors and nurses and healthcare workers as the pandemic begins to hit Paraguay with full force.

There is good news regarding the much needed improvements to the Trans-Chaco Highway. Tarmac is just beginning to be laid down on the second carriageway north of Rio Verde. A 12km section extending to near where Beryl Baker lives will soon be completed.

Another piece of exciting news is that the first and main stage of the new aqueduct project, a 200km-long water pipeline running from Puerto Casado on the river Paraguay to Loma Plata, has been completed and opened by President Mario Abdo Benitez. It has cost 100 million dollars and taken eight years to build. It is hoped it will benefit the towns, farms and ranches in and around the Mennonite colonies as well as the nearby indigenous communities. It will also be extended to take water to the town of Mariscal Estigarribia, and as far south as Lolita, very near El Estribo, home to a dozen or so Enxet communities.

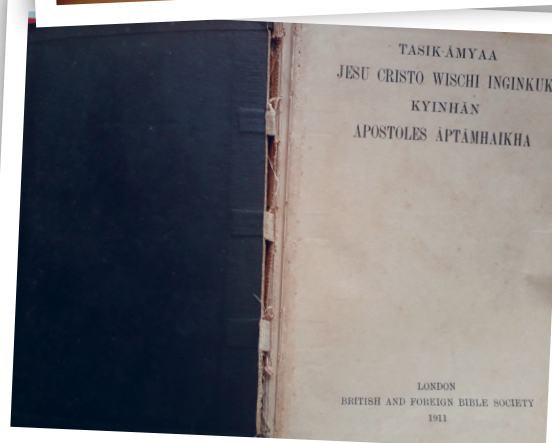
September is Bible Month in the Hispanic world. It is celebrated in September because the first Bible in Spanish, the Reina Valera, was published in September 1569. It is known as the Biblia del Oso, the "Bear Bible", as the illustration on the cover showed a bear trying to reach a container of honeycombs hanging from a tree. It was translated by Casiodoro de Reina and revised in 1602 by Cipriano de Valera. The Reina Valera became the most widely read Protestant Bible. For the Catholic Church, the celebrations in September recall St Jerome's translation of the Vulgate into Latin. The first Scriptures in Enxet or Lengua, as it was then known, were the Gospels and Acts published in 1911 by the British and Foreign Bible Society. The importance of the Bible in the daily life of so many of our indigenous brothers and sisters is a reality, and one only has to look at the messages of encouragement and comfort from the Bible on social media to be reminded of this. Give thanks that for so many people, the words "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth", from Psalm 119:103, are a source of strength and comfort.

Once again, many thanks for your support and prayers.

With love in the Lord Jesus

Tim

*Photos from top to bottom: My home in Rio Verde; Enxet Bibles in the translation office; the Gospels and Acts in Lengua/Enxet 1911*



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**Are you pondering a call to cross-cultural mission?** We'd love to connect and help you discern what God might be saying. Find out more about how we can help you to step into God's mission at [churchmissionsociety.org/explore](https://churchmissionsociety.org/explore)

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](mailto:supporter.care@churchmissionsociety.org) or call 01865 787400

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