

News from Tim Curtis in Paraguay, 4 August 2008

Dear friends,

Greetings from Asunción. I was down for the weekend, invited to preach at the English-speaking service at St Andrew's church.

The translators are back at work after their two-week winter break. We are all well and enjoying the cold but sunny weather we have been having for the past few days.

The Mission Paraguay volunteers from the UK and Ireland arrived in Río Verde yesterday and will be helping rebuild the little Anglican church, San Mateo, which is moving a few hundred metres to a new location. Other members of the group have just arrived in Concepción. Another group has just returned to the UK having been based in Asunción.

The President-elect, Fernando Lugo, was in the Chaco at the weekend and there is a picture of him at the church in Makxawáya with some of the Enxet people. The newspaper referred to the old abandoned workshops from years back, "now in ruins", from the days when Mak used to supply most of the surrounding ranches with leatherwear, saddles, bread, shoes, but those activities were dependent on there being a team of technicians and missionaries and were always loss-making.

There was perhaps a slight anti-Anglican slant in the paper, and a failure to recognize that the Chaco and Paraguay in general are full of abandoned white elephant projects, buildings that were put up recently for some project or community purpose or other by past governments and are now complete ruins.

It is very encouraging that the new government wants to take health, education, and economic development seriously, but there needs to be an honest debate about this.

The production of sesame seeds has been especially encouraging for some of the indigenous communities and resulted in real economic benefit for the Enxet of Karanda and Alegre in El Estribo. Some individual families and clans have been successful in raising cattle as well, so in spite of the Enxet being a "low maintenance culture", there are also positive signs.

Please pray for the new president Fernando Lugo who takes office on August 15th and for an honest debate about the real needs of the Enxet and other indigenous people in Paraguay.

Please pray for Martín as we continue to work on the Psalms. This month we hope to check through Martín's completed drafts of Psalms 48 -60, and Asunción's drafts of Ezekiel from chapter 32 - 40, or more if time permits. I shall be working with Juan on his drafts of Job, looking at chapters 17 - 20.

With best wishes from the team

Tim

