

News from Tim Curtis in the Paraguayan Chaco

Dear folks,

This is just to let you know that the Synod [31 May] voted overwhelmingly to invite Peter Bartlett to be the new Diocesan Bishop of Paraguay. Peter and Sally will, I presume, take up the post before the end of this year, perhaps as early as September [depending on Provincial agreement and their own acceptance].

The votes were 46 in favour, one against, and one spoiled ballot paper. The Enxet delegates made up nearly half the delegates! They all returned to the Chaco this afternoon, after the Synod. This was the shortest Synod I ever attended. This time I was just an observer.

The translation team had a good meeting with Enxet-speaking church leaders in Río Verde last week to clear up some points about the spelling of Enxet words, and to discuss the possibility of introducing one more letter to the Enxet alphabet (which I have been wanting to do for years). We are pleased that we have had a very positive and constructive relationship with them. We now have to consult separately with most of the Enxet-speaking schoolteachers. One or two teachers were, in fact, delegates at the Synod and so were present at the pre-Synod Río Verde meetings last week, which was excellent.

I have asked [United Bible Societies' Translation Consultant] Tito Lahaye, Bishop Andrés Rodríguez, and our diocesan administrator Teodosio Rivas, to look into the pay and employment terms etc. of the Enxet translators. Asunción and Juan seem to be quite happy with their salaries, but Martín, with his nine children, has been complaining incessantly since I got back from the UK. Apparently there is a family allowance (which I did not know existed until recently) which is supposed to be paid by employers and is 5% of salary per month per child. We would value your prayers as this review takes place, and for Martín, who is not happy with things as they are and making life somewhat awkward for me.

We continue to make good progress with the translation work. Working with the team, I have checked up to Ezekiel 20 since I got back from the UK. Asunción has done a good draft. We have also finished looking at Juan's draft of Lamentations. I am doing some individual checking with Juan on Job 10 - 20, before we look at the draft of Job as a team. This was the book that Juan found the hardest last year. We have checked through Psalms 23 - 34 since the end of April. We were able to give a copy of Martín's draft of Psalm 34 to the pre-Synod delegates in Río Verde, and have the Psalm read in their presence, which was good for PR.

With greetings to all from a cold and wintry Asunción on the day that Peter Bartlett was elected diocesan Bishop.

Tim