

Link Letter no.6 July 2012

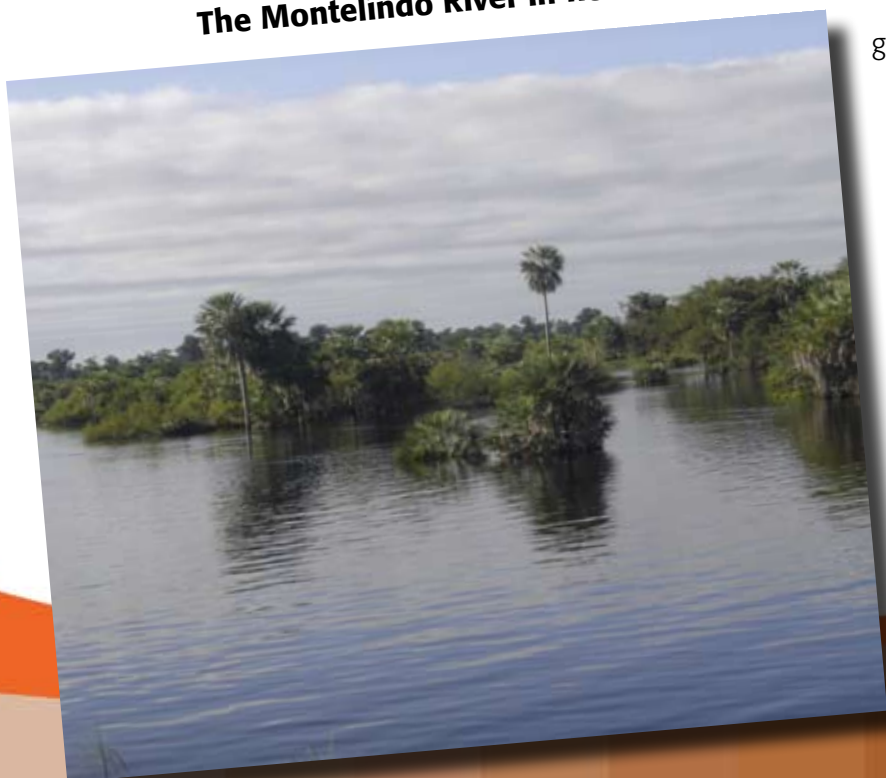
Dear friends,

I find it hard to believe that we are already halfway through 2012, so it's time to keep you updated with our Chaco news.

Floodings

We were blessed with large amounts of rain in Rio Verde during this year after a number of very dry years. Parts of the Chaco and areas near the River Pilcomayo even suffered floods. The Rio Verde was the fullest it has been since 1998, which was the last time there was flooding in the Chaco but communities that were cut off by the flood waters were very promptly assisted by the government. Although our access road to the Trans Chaco – only 500 metres away – was flooded several

The Montelindo River in flood



Tim Curtis

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Tim is the Coordinator of the Enxet Old Testament Translation Team based at the Anglican Centre in Rio Verde, Paraguayan Chaco. He works alongside the translators Juan Martinez and Asuncion Rojas as they translate into the Enxet language and check completed drafts and keeps the Anglican Church of Paraguay, CMS and the United Bible Societies updated on progress.

times during April and early May, we were not really affected at the Rio Verde centre. The translation team was able to keep working normally with hardly any power cuts.

Visiting El Estribo, 60km northwest of Rio Verde, was impossible for me during the floods as roads were under water for several months. The government managed to deliver supplies by helicopter to the communities there. Most roads to El Estribo are still not open for vehicles, but should be open again very soon as we have not had any significant rain in the last three weeks.

Weddings galore...

There has been plenty to keep us busy nearer home in Rio Verde. As usual,

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The Rio Verde full again after the dry years

I have had a number of preaching engagements at local churches, but what I seem to have been doing most of all has been attend weddings at the different Enxet churches, ferrying guests to and from them. Enxet weddings are always very colourful events, with the whole community taking part and helping in the preparations. An army of cheerful village women take charge of the large black cooking pots and get the rice and pasta going. The men tend to get the barbecue ready, killing a cow, digging a pit for the fire, and making the wooden spits for the larger pieces of meat. The women cut

up the smaller sections of meat at a table nearby along with pumpkins, onions and manioc. There is always a large wedding cake, often displayed at the front of the church. The church is always brightly decorated with balloons and streamers. After the service, the young children are usually given the balloons as presents.

Sometimes services are quite interesting simply because of the mix of different denominations taking part. At one wedding a few weeks ago, a Mennonite Northern Enxet pastor performed the wedding, with

Bernardo and Marta



Ceferino and Adolfina





Juan Arce having his electroencephalogram in Loma Plata

two white Mennonite missionary colleagues sitting up front very quietly next to an extremely fiery Latino Pentecostal pastor, who then went on to preach an extremely lively sermon. Then there was me, representing the Anglican Church, who was asked to do one of the readings, at the last minute. I read Psalm 1 in Enxet, as I had an up to date draft with me.

Recent weddings attended have included the wedding of former New Testament Bible translator Isidro Cabañas' daughter Lourdes. Isidro worked on the New Testament between 1993 and 1997 and live just a few miles from Rio Verde.

Other news

I have been able to keep up my visits to Mak xawaya in recent months in spite of all the rain. The 7km long road into Mak, which branches off from the paved highway to Concepcion, has been much improved in recent years, so was not affected by the flooding.

At the end of May, I was able to take Juan Arce (a Makxawaya church member in his early 30s, who assists pastors Juan Sosa and Romualdo Rojas in the worship at San Pedro church), for his second electroencephalogram at the hospital in the Mennonite town of Loma Plata.

Last year he was able to have tests done at the Loma Plata hospital and see a neurologist.

He was diagnosed as suffering from epilepsy, which in Juan's case apparently started quite late in life. Since then, we have been making sure he has regular check-ups so that he can be adequately supplied with his medicine which can only be obtained with a doctor's receipt. I would value your prayers for Juan, his wife Miriam, and his four year old daughter Nilda.

**Left: Pastor Juan Sosa and his wife Alicia with their two youngest boys in Makxawaya
Right: The Anglican church at Makxawaya**



The checking of the completed drafts of the books of the Old Testament continues. Recent checking has included the parallel texts in 2 Chronicles and 2 Kings. We completed checking of Exodus and Numbers during May. The three of us are usually mentally quite tired by Friday afternoons, but we always feel a sense of satisfaction when we finish checking a book!

We have been delighted that some of the recently completed drafts have been read on one of the radio ZP30's Enxet language programmes, this particular one going out on a Monday. ZP30 is a Christian radio station which broadcasts from the Mennonite town of Filadelfia. Enxet pastor Andrés Martínez, from Espinillo near Makxawaya has been our link there. He has recently been involved in preparing these Bible meditations on the radio station. Espinillo is an Enxet speaking community the team visits from time to time. Recently, Andrés spent a week in the Rio Verde translation office improving his reading skills in readiness for the radio programmes.

I saw Andres again at the beginning of June in Espinillo, at yet another wedding – in fact the one with the fiery Pentecostal preacher just described, and was able to provide him with further biblical texts in Enxet for the radio programmes! As I often mention, regular contact with the Enxet speaking churches, providing them with the Scriptures is so important if they are to grow in maturity, as Christ nourishes and cherishes the church (Ephesians 4:29 RSV)

Points for prayer and praise

- Give thanks for the opportunity to visit different Enxet speaking churches and to involve them in the

translation project, and protection during travel.

- Give thanks for the abundant rain earlier in the year after all the dry years, and for protection given during the floods, and for the prompt assistance given by the Paraguayan government to those worst affected.
- For stamina for Juan, Asuncion and myself as we continue to check parallel passages such as those in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles.
- For Juan Arce and his family, especially for Juan's health. Give thanks for the support he gives to pastors Juan Sosa and Romualdo Rojas and to Christians in Makxawaya.

With greetings from us all on the team

Tim

Did you know that you can now receive link letters by email, as a PDF? If you would like to receive them this way, and help save CMS money, please contact jonathan.self@cms-uk.org or 01865 785527. For any link church enquiries, please contact julie.hinckley@cms-uk.org