



marhenke markings



Hot Springs Village. AR

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Hymn work in Cuenteco closer to the goal

There are now over 250 hymns and choruses in the Cuenteco language. Because of the New Testament translation into that language, the audio recording of it, and the dubbing of the *Jesus* film into Cuenteco, these people now know that God does speak their language. Larry and I believe that it is very important for them to be able to sing prayers and praises to God in their own language as well. To that end, we spent five productive days with the Cuenteco team, Dominga, Rosa, Gilberto, and Domingo, checking the translated hymns and choruses for meaning, theology, consistency, and grammar. Thankfully, they had mastered the difficult element of matching the number of syllables and stress to each line of the music. What a joy to hear them sing the hymns and notice how the words and music went together perfectly!

New venue

Our optimal destination for working with the Cuenteco team is the beautiful valley setting of the town of Cunén. However, health issues for both of us and the deteriorating roads led us to have the team meet us in *La Antigua Guatemala* (“old Guatemala,” a reference to its role as capital of the country after the Spanish Conquest of the 16th century). It was a win-win situation: Working there simplified travel time and difficulty for Larry and me, and provided the team with an opportunity to spend time in one of Guatemala’s national treasures and UNESCO Heritage Site. Located about an hour’s drive from Guatemala City, Antigua is unique for preserving its colonial homes, churches, historic ruins, government buildings, and its cobblestone streets. Indeed, there is a building code that requires new construction to follow the architecture of the 16th century, even to the paint colors! We stayed in a quiet neighborhood in northwest Antigua, where there are a lot of nice *posadas* (small, reasonably priced hotels).

Special visit

A highlight of our time together was a visit from Roberto and Lilian Cuevas whom we have known since 1991 when we first arrived in Antigua for Larry to study Spanish. Since their retirement about three years ago, they have taken a more active interest in our Bible translation project, and during our February visit expressed interest in visiting Cunén on our next trip. We let the team know of this prospective visit when we were with them in February, and they were very excited about having some **Guatemalan** friends visit all of us in Cunén. Sadly, our health issues and the bad road conditions put a damper on that for now.

Since the Cuevases were not able to visit Cunén this time, the team brought a little of Cunén to them! Gilberto brought fresh *xecas* (shekas), a traditional sweet bread that his mother bakes and sells on market days. Domingo gave them (and us) a *chim* from Cunén (cheem: a traditional woven bag used by Mayan men to carry their “stuff” when headed to work or the market), made especially by his mother. Dominga presented a traditional woman’s outfit from Cunén (miniature size) in the historical colors of white blouse and black skirt. “A good time was had by all.” Hopefully we can all be together in Cunén the next time.

What’s next?

We sent the team home to do some final editing on their hymns and choruses, compose introductions for the two hymnals (Catholic and Evangelical), finalize the cover designs, organize the hymns and choruses by themes, and compile an index for each hymnal.

Larry had a good visit with our friend and print shop owner Luis Alfredo Garcia, and brought him up to date with the status of the hymnals. When we get the final computer copies from the team, we'll send them on to Karoline Fisher, our friend who typeset the Cuentecito New Testament. We look forward to the application of her expertise on this project as well. We anticipate having the hard copies of the long-awaited hymnals early next year.

Hard facts

We've known for a long time that this day would come, but it was still very emotional and difficult. We have advised Dominga Hernandez and Rosa Eugenia Pu that the work on the hymnals will be their last official task in the project. Dominga has had another job with *Save the Children* in Cunén for almost two years. Rosa hopes to open a shop in her home offering *cortes* for sale. (A *corte* is the woven yardage of material used for the traditional skirts of Mayan women.) These women have worked for the project for 17 and 10 years respectively, and are like family to us. We know that their informal participation in the project will continue, Dominga with the Catholic Church and Rosa in the Evangelical.

Since Rosa is a widow with no other means of support, and she would need to borrow \$1,000 to start her small business (the local bank charges 25% annual interest), we want to help her. She has been a model coworker. If you would like to help her, we are offering that option on the enclosed donor form.

Larry and I have decided to press on with a dictionary for Cuentecito and work toward the publication of 40 percent of the Old Testament that is already available in rough draft. Gilberto and Domingo have agreed to continue with us part time on those projects. Since it is almost all the stories in the Old Testament and a few Psalms, it should only take a few years to do it.

Praise and Prayer

- Thank the Lord for a blessed and productive work time with the team in Antigua.
- Thank the Lord for the caliber of fellow workers that He has chosen for this project and for their faithful, hard work over the years.
- Thank the Lord for working in the hearts of the Cuentecito people in marvelous ways through the translated Word.
- Pray for the final stages of the hymnal production to go well and for a positive reception of the hymnals by believers in Cunén.
- Pray for God's richest blessings on our treasured sisters in Christ, Dominga and Rosa.
- Pray for God's continued blessings on Gilberto and Domingo and their young families.
- Pray for God's guidance and provision to finish well the dictionary and Old Testament selections.

We praise God for friends like you and wish you His very best during this Season of celebrating our Lord Jesus' birth!



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JESUS IS THE GREATEST GIFT

December 2017

We thank God that the Cunenteco hymns will soon be published, that work has begun on the Cunenteco dictionary, and that we already have a lot of Old Testament material with which to work. We also want to help Rosa start her new home business. Please prayerfully consider supporting one or both of these projects with your prayers and gifts.

JESUS IS THE GREATEST GIFT

-----Cut here-----
(Please detach this portion and mail with your check)

MY CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR THE PROJECT:



\$ _____

MY GIFT TO HELP ROSA SUPPORT HERSELF:



\$ _____

(Make checks payable to Faith Lutheran Church – Guatemala Project)

Mail to: Faith Lutheran Church – Guatemala Project
1196 Desoto Blvd.
Hot Springs Village, AR 71909

Your name: _____

Your address: _____
