

Update and Prayer Requests: November 2023
Valerie and Nicasio Martinez
Translating God's Word with and for the people
who speak Quiatoni Zapotec

Here we are in Colombia! Today (Nov. 30) is the last day of meetings and classes; tomorrow most of the group is going to Piedra del Peñol. (Look at this site, even if it's just for the pictures! https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_Pe%C3%B1%C3%B3n_de_Guatap%C3%A9).

Nicasio, Beto and Candy gave their 90 minute presentation on Indigenous Leadership twice during the four days of meetings. Nicasio spoke about the challenges that indigenous cultures face, such as shame and fear, how that affects leadership in the community and the church, and Nicasio challenged them to follow Jesus' example of mentoring small groups of people. Beto and Candy spoke about their own experiences of being mentored and mentoring others. Their presentations were very well received and got people thinking and asking questions.



This morning Nicasio gave the plenary session on Indigenous Leadership and Building a Community in Christ. This was similar to his part in the 90 presentation, with an emphasis on community. At the end, he had the participants break up into small groups to discuss leadership and mentoring. During the group summaries, we could see that people were really thinking about the points that Nicasio talked about.

We fly home on Saturday but won't actually get home until Sunday morning. Coming to Colombia we had a 10 hour layover in the Panama City airport, which was an adventure in itself! We are glad that the 10 hour layover on our return trip will be during the day instead of at night. We are hopeful that we'll have the energy and adventuresomeness to see something during that time.

The November 2 Quiatoni youth event seems like it was years ago! It all went very well! Candy and Beto taught the children, using their book about the creation and fall of man, including how Jesus came to save us from our sins. Candy says that four of the older children made decisions to follow Jesus!



As we mentioned in our recent newsletter, during the youth event, the pastors had a meeting, too. Nicasio was given time to talk with the pastors about the best way to distribute the Kulumi audio devices that will be arriving towards the end of the year. Since they said it would be best to visit each church, Nicasio is working with our Zapotec music group for them to go with us when we visit each church, too. We're tentatively planning on visiting one church a month—which will take us at least through 2024!

Here in Colombia we were able to spend some time with the man who has been responsible for sending us the Kulumis. It's been great to see him again (we first met him at these same meetings last year in Mexico City) and give him some personal updates on how people are loving the Kulumis. I was pleased that he appreciated my five page letter telling about the results of people listening to God's Word.



The Zapotec church service at our church in Tlacolula is going well. We are delighted to see Fernando (Candy's brother) grow in his abilities to teach during the service. Fernando and Beto have been alternating doing the opening part of the service, reading and teaching on a section of the Gospel of Mark as we study through it, and Nicasio does the main teaching from 1 Peter as we study through it. Since both Beto and Nicasio are here in Colombia, Fernando agreed to do the main teaching for the Zapotec service and our assistant pastor agreed to do the opening part of the service. Thanks to the pandemic, we have been using zoom to share the Zapotec service with those who are not close enough to attend in person. And since we certainly qualify as not close enough to attend in person, we'll be attending via zoom tonight!

Just a few days before we left for Colombia, I was excited to talk with someone who is knowledgeable about Murano glass beads. She thinks that the long glass beads on the traditional Quiatoni necklaces were made in Murano (Venice), Italy, possibly in the 1500s! And through another knowledgeable bead expert, I have learned that some of the smaller beads may be very old Czech beads!



Thank you for making this trip to Colombia possible through your prayers and financial support. We are all learning a lot and of course, Nicasio, Beto and Candy are inspiring people to be more like Jesus in their leadership positions. Thank you for being part of the team to translate the Word of God into Quiatoni Zapotec!

love, Valerie and Nicasio

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