

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

Last month we sent our update to you from Colombia where we were attending a conference. That night we attended our Zapotec church service (in Tlacolula) from Colombia via Zoom, on a borrowed big TV screen. A few people who were going by stopped to watch it for a bit with us; one fellow wanted to know if we were watching a movie! It was interesting to “be” in the service via Zoom since we are almost always there in person and this gave Nicasio some ideas of how to make it better for those who attend by Zoom.*

The next day we went with about 100 other conference people on a tour, mostly to see and climb the Piedra del Peñol, but also to see some sights near there. That rock is enormous, with more than 700 steps to the top! Candy and I debated about going up and finally decided we should at least try—and we made it to the top!, as did Nicasio and Beto, of course.



On our way back to Mexico, we had a 10 hour lay-over in Panama City. We hired a taxi to take us to a park on the other side of the city where we could hike and maybe see some sloths and monkeys. We didn't see any of either but had a good time hiking, talking and relaxing—in spite of the heat and humidity! And we got to see Panama City as we went there and back.

About a week later, we were in Quiatoni for Nicasio to give a presentation on why Quiatoni Zapotec should be preserved and encouraged. This first-time program was put on by one of the bilingual schools along with the town authorities. Nicasio was hesitant about accepting the invitation to make the presentation because he has not been involved in the (unpaid) town service that all males who are registered in Quiatoni are required to give throughout their adult life. The organizers talked with the town authorities who gave permission for Nicasio to participate without any problems from them.

Nicasio's presentation was one of four; Nicasio and an acquaintance of ours did theirs in Zapotec, the other two didn't speak Zapotec and gave theirs in Spanish. Others who participated in the program were a group of students who sang the National Anthem in Zapotec, two school girls who each read a story in Zapotec, and our acquaintance presented his new book, an old Quiatoni story in both Zapotec and Spanish. On the way home, Nicasio and I marveled at how our “seed-planting” is growing! The stories the girls read were from our primer, Nicasio and Beto were instrumental in translating the National Anthem, we had worked with our acquaintance on his book (proof-reading, formatting, and illustrations), and that there are written materials available in

*The regular attenders via Zoom are a lady in Mexico City, a couple in Quiatoni and a lady in Oaxaca City.

Zapotec! We are thankful to God for allowing us to see these results. Some may wonder why we spend so much time on secular activities like this; these students are growing up with a pride in their language and culture, and they'll be able to easily read the New Testament in their own language when it's published.

About 10 days after that event, we took the Zapotec music group and a few extras, including our son Rusty, to a small Quiatoni town to distribute more Kulumis audio devices. The Zapotec group was asked to do all the music for the service and we saw that quite a few people know most of the Zapotec songs now, from listening to the Kulumis. Nicasio was asked to preach; he always has a sermon ready "just in case." Afterwards the pastor said that it was so easy and good to understand his sermon, all in Zapotec! We continue to pray for the day that the pastors will want to preach in Zapotec.

After the service, Nicasio gave Kulumis** to anyone who wanted one. Quite a few people already had one since the pastor and assistant pastor (Josefina, more about her in just a minute) had been at the pastors meeting and taken some Kulumis back to their church. Shortly after that, Josefina asked Nicasio if they could have 10 more for the church people! That evening, after Nicasio finished giving out the Kulumis, the pastor thanked him for them and then Josefina said, "We really appreciate you giving us the Kulumis! People are listening to them and discussing the Bible stories that are on them!"



This little gal asked Nicasio for her very own "radio."

The Zapotec music group was invited to play in the church in one of Quiatoni's little towns for their New Year's Eve service. We will be three cars very full of people, instruments and sound equipment. Nicasio has a sermon ready, just in case he's asked to preach. The service starts at 5 pm; New Year's Eve services often go to midnight with a meal following. We appreciate your prayers for trip there and back as well as our time there.

We have enjoyed having Rusty with us for almost two weeks—although it is a challenge to get in a year's worth of activities that he likes to do, food he wants to eat, and people he wants to visit! We are very grateful to Tara for all the photos and video clips she sends us to keep us up-to-date on what she, Mike and Royan are doing, and especially how Royan is growing! We are blessed with such thoughtful kids!

We trust that you had a good Christmas time and are anticipating a good 2024! We thank you for remembering our ministry of translating God's Word into Quiatoni Zapotec and remembering all those who speak it. Thank you for your prayers and support.

Love, Valerie and Nicasio

www.cten.org/NicasioMartinez

**The Kulumis have been donated to us. If you would like to know more about them or donate to them, see this page: <https://www.thecahayafoundation.org/>