

Update and Prayer Requests: March 2024
Valerie and Nicasio Martinez
Translating God's Word with and for the people
who speak Quiatoni Zapotec

We hope you had a lovely Easter, celebrating the resurrection of Jesus!

We were glad that there was only one special event during the first three weeks of March, so we had time to do work that had been put on hold. March highlights:

March 4: Nicasio, Beto, Candy and I went to Salinas, Quiatoni's second largest town, where our friend Rogelio had arranged to present our workbook for Zapotec numbers and another friend's book of a traditional story to the two bilingual schools there. There were about 475 kids (1st-6th grades) sitting around the three sides of a basketball court! Yes, it was hard to keep their attention but Nicasio made a valiant effort and was mobbed by kids wanting to win a copy of our workbook! After the program we sold our Zapotec books. Considering that most of the books cost 5 or 10 pesos, with a few at 15 pesos, the total of 1760 pesos indicates that we sold a lot of books! So many that we ran out of some and I spent the next week reprinting books!

March 23: We took the Zapotec music group to Cerro Culebra (Snake Hill) to participate in their church service and to give the people Kulumi audio devices.

Generally, the services go like this: the local pastor starts the service and then turns it over to our music group and Nicasio. After they do some songs in Zapotec, Nicasio preaches in Zapotec on how to become a child of God. (Unfortunately, because almost all church services are in Spanish, many people attend protestant churches but don't understand the message of salvation.) After a few more songs, Beto teaches on personal evangelism; a topic that's rarely taught in churches. A few more songs and then Nicasio tells about the audio devices, how The Cahaya Foundation has so generously donated them so that we can give them to the people for free. He reminds them that even though they are free for them, that doesn't mean that they should be given to people who aren't interested. But he does encourage them to give them to people who are interested in listening to them and then we will give them another one later. After he explains how to turn them on and use them, people try them out. It's fun to see the smiles as they turn them on and really understand what they are hearing.



At the service in Cerro Culebra, the audio devices were handed out first because the pastor had to leave to attend another event. After Nicasio explained about the devices, the pastor asked if they could ask for an extra one if they knew of someone who would like one. Nicasio agreed to that and many did ask for an extra one, sometimes two!

March 26: Our friend Rogelio had arranged with the Biblioteca de Investigación Juan de Córdova (The Juan de Córdova Research Library), located in Oaxaca City, for Nicasio, Beto,

our friend who wrote the traditional story, Rogelio himself, and me to meet with one of the directors so that we could donate a set of our secular Zapotec books to the library. This library focuses on the cultures, history, peoples and languages of the Americas, especially those of Oaxaca. The director showed us some of the special items the library has, one of which is a copy of a Nahuatl (Aztec) book printed in 1553, one of the first books printed in the Americas! He was very happy to receive our books and was impressed with the number of books we have in Zapotec.



March 30: We took the Zapotec music group to Salinas to distribute more Kulumis. A man asked if he could have 10 extra ones to give to a church in a nearby town. Since we want to work with and through the local churches and pastors, Nicasio asked him to talk to the pastor and then contact us about visiting the church.

Andrés, another man in the church, had visited the Quiatoni church when Nicasio was about 8 years old. Nicasio's family lived right next door to the church, so they heard everything, even when they weren't in church! During that visit, Andrés had sung a song in Zapotec, a rare event in those days! That impressed Nicasio so much that he would make up songs in Zapotec while he was taking care of the burros. At the service in Salinas, he thanked Andrés for showing that church songs can be sung in Zapotec and said, "Who would have thought that some day I would be writing and singing songs in Zapotec?!"

One couple, new believers, received Kulumis audio devices when we visited Reforma in February. They live in another town and walk 1.5 hours to Reforma to go to church. After listening to the Kulumis, they have lots of questions, so one of the younger men was visiting them at their home and having a Bible study with them. The pastor put a stop to it because the young man hadn't been "anointed with oil for preaching." The pastor himself is now visiting the new believers once a week. Please pray for them, the pastor, the young man and the church, that they will all grow through hearing God's Word in their own language. We appreciate your prayers for all those who are hearing God's Word in their own language.

In April we will visit two more Quiatoni area churches to distribute Kulumis. The plan had been one church a month but God is giving us more opportunities!

Rusty says, "I am excited that the weather is finally turning so I can play more pickleball outside! I continue to be in good health three years after my cancer surgery!"

Mike writes, "We are doing well and keeping busy! Tara has decided to go back to school to get a degree in accounting, and is halfway through her first set of classes. Royan has started speech therapy and continues to expand his vocabulary every day. Mike is staying busy with work." (In case you missed it in a previous update, when Mike and Tara couldn't sell their house, so they decided to stay there for a year or two before moving to Oaxaca.)

Thank you for standing with us, supporting us in your prayers, and giving God's Word to those who speak Quiatoni Zapotec.

Love, Valerie and Nicasio

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