

Dear people who help us make God's Word available to people in Mazatec,

The question I'm really busy with right now is this: How can we make God's Word *available* and *attractive* and *active* in a society that doesn't read? ("We" = Judy and me and Felix and Lupe and anyone else who gets interested in the question, including you if you start thinking about it.)

The *available* part isn't so very difficult. We use a computer program to make inexpensive booklets of gospels or letters of Paul and give them away with cassette recordings of the gospel or letter in Mazatec. Of course the whole New Testament will be published as a single book before long. That will be expensive and will require some fund raising, but it will be done. Meanwhile, cassettes of single gospels or combinations of letters are much more liable to get the interest of people who so far have not read anything at all.

Making materials *attractive* is more difficult. For starters, a cassette of someone reading in Mazatec does get people's attention because it's something new. Spanish coming out of a radio or recorder is common enough, but hearing something they really and immediately understand (i.e., Mazatec) is new. We try to suit cassettes and booklets to this initial interest.

So think about this with me. What makes a book *attractive*? What gets your attention? Or, for instance, what got your attention among the Christmas cards in that pile you looked at recently?

- What it's about? The gospels and letters are interesting.
- Style? Gospel stories are fairly easy to read or listen to, although some of Jesus' ideas are pretty demanding if you take him seriously. Paul writes awfully long sentences sometimes, and his grammar gets complicated. (We can sort out a lot of that in shorter Mazatec sentences. Sometimes I think Paul must be pleased with how good he sounds in Mazatec. I assume he's part of that cloud of witnesses around us the letter to the Hebrews mentions, and that he's watching what we're doing. Poor Paul. He had to do it in Greek, and he could pack an awful lot of grammar into one sentence in Greek.)
- Pictures? Pictures get attention quicker than words. That works well for the gospels, because you can draw pictures of people doing things. It's harder to make pictures of what Paul writes about. We include pictures of Paul sitting in prison, writing or praying with Timothy or Epahras. That makes Paul real as someone who actually did think about people and pray for them and write them letters.
- What else? Anything occur to you? Colors? Arrangement on the page?

Making God's Word *active* is maybe God's work, and we need to talk with Him about that. Listening or reading long enough, intensively enough, to build a new kind of awareness in one's mind requires time and attention. It's work. ("Line upon line. Precept upon precept.") Moses told his people, "Keep these words I am commanding you today in your hearts. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up." We can show people how it works in our own lives. Moses did that.

Anyway, think about it too, okay? Or better, read and think. And if you have ideas, write back. And meanwhile pray for new listeners/readers. Thank you for being part of this good job with us.

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