

# The Bowen Arrow

## News from Lizet and Andy Bowen

July 2022



### The Best of All...

On several fronts, this past year has been the most difficult we've ever had in ministry. After fourteen years of being country people, in July of 2021 we moved back to the big city of Asunción. As we mentioned in our last newsletter, the agonizing decision to move away from Escobar came at the end of a long process of prayer, conversations, investigation, and consideration. This process led to choosing Asunción Christian Academy as the best place for our boys to continue their schooling.

Because the school was around two hours away from our home in Escobar, we realized we needed to at least temporarily move to Asunción. In July, when we returned from a brief visit to the U.S., we relocated to the World Gospel Mission guest house in Asunción and the boys enrolled in school.

In the later part of the year, Lizet's dad, who has struggled for years with diabetes, came very close to having to have a foot amputated. He was in really bad shape for a while, and was in and out of hospital for months. Finally, early this year, he began dialysis, which he is currently undergoing three times a week.

Andy's mom went into hospital in November for what was to have been a fairly routine heart procedure. Things didn't go as planned and her heart and liver were damaged. She spent two weeks in the ICU, about a month in the hospital and months recovering. We're grateful to God for saving her life and Lizet's dad's.

On April 1st, when we came home from a school function, we discovered that someone had been in the house while we were gone. They took several laptops, cameras and lenses, my binoculars, some cash, and other small electronics. When we posted something about it on Facebook, we were astonished by the immediate generous response—even by some people that we'd never met—to help us replace what we'd lost. We soon had enough to replace everything, and some awesome friends even gave me a new pair of quality binoculars. God also cared for our hearts, giving us peace and a sense of his care and protection. We could tell he was there.



### God is With Us!

If there's one thing we've known through it all, it's just that—Jesus was there. There's the ongoing sense that in each moment, we can trust him. He's got us.

This has been particularly true over the last couple of months as we've gone

through what has been perhaps the hardest struggle of all our years in Paraguay. My sister and brother-in-law, Ruth and Steve Hersey, moved to Paraguay from Haiti in January so that Steve could be the General Director of Asunción Christian Academy, where the boys attend school. It was a joy to have them so close after living far from them for so long. We got

to help them with shopping, apartment hunting, and in all the ways we could think of to help them feel at home and learn how to live here.

So it was a painful shock when in May we discovered that they would be leaving Paraguay with no plans to return. We feel so blessed to have had the time we had with them, but were left bewildered and sad by the way it all

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occurred. They're going with our love and blessing to Acacia International School in Kampala, Uganda.

As John Wesley lay dying in 1791, it's reported that he raised his arms and called out twice, with all the strength he had left, "The best of all is, God is with us!" Through a really hard year that has left us, on occasion, questioning what God has in mind for us, we constantly return to this truth. He's provided a school for the boys; a house to call a home in Asunción; confidence that he has important work for us to do here. He has given us his peace and care in the middle of turmoil and loss, and glimpses of his kind and healing hand. But mostly, he's offered us the certainty that when everything else is shaky ground, he doesn't change, ever. And he's right here.



**City  
Folk  
Now**

When we began to look for a house to rent in Asunción, we expected that the process would be long and involve many visits to different houses. A missionary friend contacted us about a house that had been recently vacated and asked if we'd like to look at it. It was just what we needed and was only about a mile and-a-half from ACA! We moved in in mid-September. This felt like a real gift from God—we were not at all looking forward to the process of finding a house! The landlady is great and the neighborhood is peaceful!

We really miss Escobar—our house, our community, the country. When we built that house, I envisioned the boys growing up there and all the ways it

**Above, left:** Guarani class meets for three hours every day. Twice a week, we have our language helper, Aida Risso, with us. Jerry McLean, Fredy Vásquez, and Bram Buitenhuis, will finish class in August. **Right:** In May a group of six came from Asbury University and we did a three-day trip to 13 First Nations communities in Canindeyú department, doing evangelism and discipleship. In this Avá Guarani community, we sang songs in Guarani. (The chief held the songbook.)

would be part of our life for many years. At the same time, I would often hear a voice saying, hold it loosely. It's not yours. It's on loan. But once it finally came to it, letting go was hard!

We're getting used to the convenience of grocery stores nearby, quick trips to the gas station when our cooking gas runs out, the egg truck that stops by weekly, the fruit and vegetable truck that parks down the street. We're discovering the upsides! The next era of our ministry is in full swing and we're starting to hit our stride!

Letting go, leaving behind, giving up, can be so hard. But without it, there's no way to press on to what's ahead. We pray for the courage to leave behind and strain toward the goal!



**The Same  
But  
Different**

Guarani classes continue here in Asunción. It's very different from classes in Escobar. First, sometimes people here in the city are a little more reluctant to speak with foreigners in Guarani. In fact, some people don't speak it at all. And my students have been involved in all sorts of other ministries while they study the

language, and haven't been able to dedicate the time to learning that they might have.

In mid-August, the current class will finish and we'll start a new one in late September. Pray for sharp minds, attentive ears, and agile mouths!

Please pray also for the Heart to Heart missionary ladies' retreat in September. Lizet is helping organize. Pray for encouragement and renewal for those attending.

Thank you, thank you for being with us in all of this! With our love and gratitude,

*Andy & Lizet  
Timothy & Lucas  
Joseph*

