



Spanish hymnal nears completion

A Spanish hymnal has been in the works for some 14 years and is, at long last, nearing completion. I first became aware of the project when I was in the Dominican Republic to teach a Deaconess Intensive in January, 2016, but didn't join the committee until April, 2019. The hymnal committee has had more than its share of challenges; perhaps the hugest one being that all the members are pastors with full-time calls. No one is able to make this project their primary focus. Thanks be to God that the LCMS Office of International Mission has demonstrated their commitment to hymnals and music in mission with my call to do this mission work full-time.

The committee is very well-organized, thorough, and professional, and I fully expect this hymnal to be a blessing to Spanish-speaking Lutherans around the world.

Audio recordings for the Spanish hymnal:

Audio recordings are an important part of any hymnal project. They are the primary mode for teaching new material. We are blessed to have the generous assistance of David's Harp, a center for musical development and a Recognized Service Organization within the LCMS with this part of the project. The first recording session is planned for late summer, using the sound studio at St. Paul's Music Conservatory in Council Bluffs, Iowa. St. Paul's is a founding member of David's Harp.

Language group comparisons:

The Swahili hymnal *Ibada Takatifu* is the official hymnal for the Lutheran Church in Kenya. Swahili is an official language (along with English) of Kenya. Children typically learn their tribal tongue at home, and learn both Swahili and English in schools. Perhaps 30% of the Kenyan Lutheran Churches worship in Swahili, and are able to use this hymnal.

The Amharic hymnal ስብሐት ለክምላክ (*Sebhat LeAmlak*) is for the Ethiopian Church Mekane Yesus. While Amharic is the official language of the country, only 29% of the population speak it. Oromo is spoken by 34%, and there are over 80 total languages.

In contrast, this Spanish hymnal could potentially serve Lutheran churches in nineteen countries! In addition, fourteen of those church bodies have already committed to adopting it once it is printed! This fact, by itself, demonstrates the prayerful care and wisdom the committee has taken both in choosing content and in communicating along the way.

Hymnal committees meet in person when possible, but must rely primarily on Zoom. Can I just say that meetings are dreadful photo ops?! I promise you the discussions were more interesting and engaging than the looks on our faces seem to imply!!

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Some photos from my visits to the Dominican Republic



The rented space used by one congregation for their services.



In the countries I visit, streets and highways are used by pedestrians and bicyclists far more than they are in the U.S.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- *The Spanish hymnal project: for perseverance and patience for those working on it, and for success in the final steps.*
- *Musicians at St. Paul's Conservatory, Council Bluffs, IA, as they assist in the first stage of recordings for the Spanish hymnal.*

People often ask me if I'm related to Missionary Erin Mackenzie. Vice versa for her. We were delighted to finally meet!

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- *The Pastors on the Spanish hymnal committee who have not lost heart through years of work to provide a faithful hymnal for the church in Latin and South America.*



PRAISE GOD FOR:

- *The many congregations and individuals who pray for, encourage, and support missionaries around the world.*

Aclamad con júbilo al SEÑOR, toda la tierra; prorrumpid y cantad con gozo, cantad alabanzas.

Salmos 98:4

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!

Psalm 98:4



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