



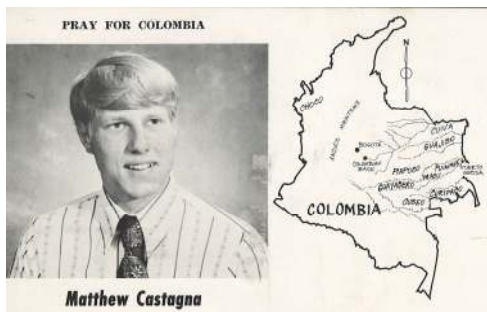
# The Castagnas

Accelerating the spread of the Gospel through the power of media!

June 2, 2021

**Celebrating 45  
years of ministry!  
1976-2021**

In June 1976, I (Matt) finished my three and a half years of missionary training and was ordained for the work of the ministry. My field of service was the country of Colombia. After working for months to obtain a missionary visa and it being denied, I ended up in Bolivia for my first fulltime, overseas assignment.



**Matt's first prayer card.**

1978 found me living and working on a "contact team." What's a contact team? In missionary terms, it's a group of people focused on pacifying a group of totally isolated, hostile, and

remote indigenous people for the purposes of sharing the love of Christ with them. In our case, there were decades of built-up distrust and animosity between the Yuquí Indians and any outsiders.



**The "swamp buggy" was a lightweight and floatable four-wheel-drive machine. That's me in the yellow hat.**

Leslie and I met in 1979 and were married in 1981. Our first assignment as a married couple was back to Bolivia for two



years, where our first child, Amber, was born. We then took an assignment in Belize, where we served for nine years. Our ministry was focused on building a missionary training center as



**The 800-square foot home we built at Machaca Outreach Camp in Belize.**

well as ministries associated with it. The center, dubbed Machaca Outreach Camp, was also used to conduct kids' summer camps and technical training courses.

While in Belize, I became interested in the power of media and what it could mean for the spread of the Gospel. I had produced some videos for the training



**Using an interpreter to communicate the Gospel in a Maya-Kekchi village church.**

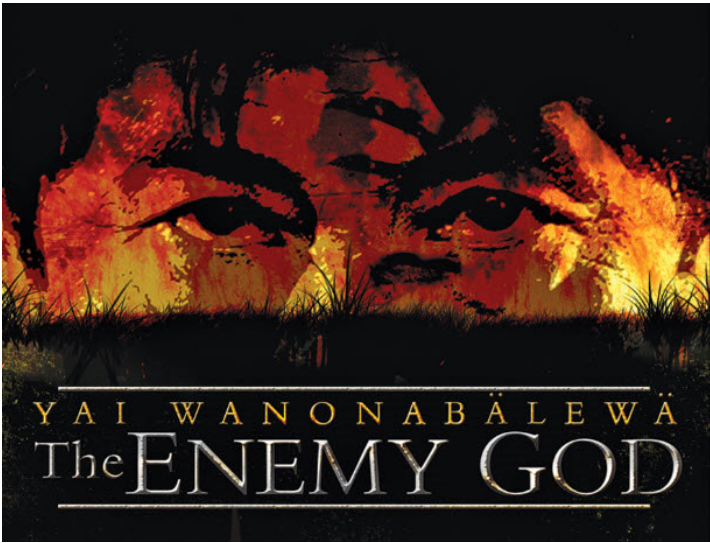
center and wanted to do more. So, in 1995, we moved to Canada for six months where I received a "skills upgrade" at a media production school geared towards ministry. While at the school, God opened the door for us to join Caleb Project, a ministry focused on sharing Jesus with unreached people groups. They were just beginning a media department, which we helped form.



**Indonesia. Madurese unreached people group documentary**



Leslie became involved in writing missions curriculum for children as well as speaking at missions conferences for those working in kids' missions education.



In 2000, God dropped a massive project into our laps. *The Enemy God* film project would pretty much be the only focus of our lives for the next eight years! The concept of spiritual warfare would be a subject we would come to understand better and one that we would need to practice in order to see the film completed.

The film tells the true life faith journey of Shake, an extraordinary Yanomamö shaman (witchdoctor). Shake possesses many spirits, but the spirit all Yanomamö people fear most is the one they call The Enemy God.



Teaching at Indian Bible College in Flagstaff, AZ

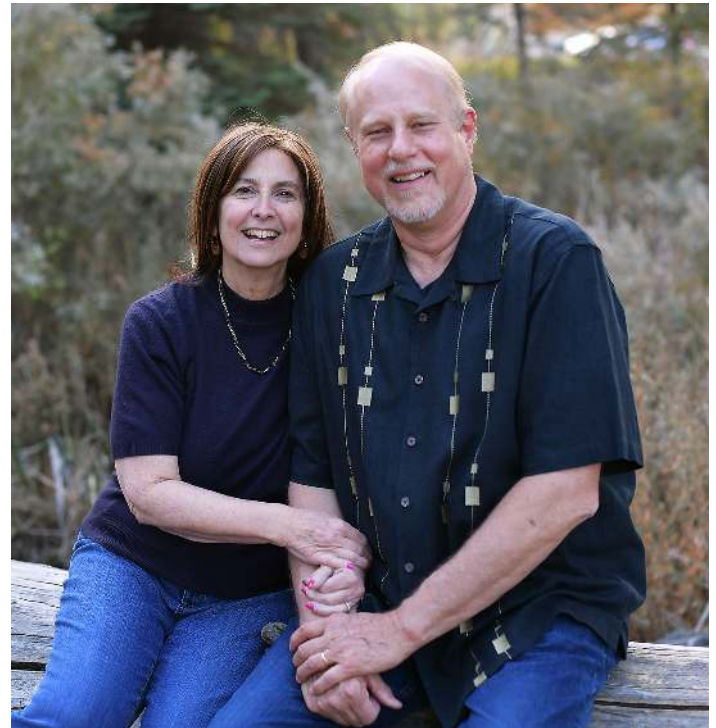
Most of Matt's time is now spent teaching others to use media as a tool in their ministry efforts and outreach, as well as producing videos for various ministries.

Leslie is busy planning, recruiting, training, and leading short-term teams. By the time you receive this prayer letter,

she will have returned from leading a team to Alaska, and I will be leading a men's mission team to Indian Bible College. More on both those trips in our next letter!



Leslie training leaders on how to get their groups involved in short-term missions.



If you'd like to celebrate our 45th with us through giving a gift to our ministry, we are saving up to purchase a new laptop for ministry. My current one is on its last leg. You can give online:

<https://pioneers.org/donate/support-a-missionary>

Our account number is: 110361. Or you can use the enclosed response slip and envelope to send a gift to Pioneers; addresses are in the footer below.



The above stories and more are being told in-depth in a book I am writing, tentatively titled, *Life Song*. I hope to get it out by the end of this year. We'll see!

Our thanks go out to you, our partners, without whom this story never would have been written. Your heart for God and the world has been expressed through us—bless you. We count it a privilege to have served with you!



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