

States. These strong family ties are usually consistent with the teachings of the gospel. They should find it easy to accept your teachings about the eternal nature of the family and the importance of helping each other attain exaltation. As a missionary you should be sensitive to ways to make the gospel message interesting to all members of the family. This applies especially to teenagers in areas of strong Latin influence. If the family is progressing well in the conversion process, but a son or daughter is not, this may tend to break up the family -- something the father often will not allow. They may then choose to discontinue the discussions rather than break up the family. Make a special effort, then, to make the gospel message meaningful in the lives of all the family members.

MACHISMO - THE CONCEPT OF MASCULINITY

All cultures have masculine and feminine roles, but in Latin America this contrast has assumed unusually dramatic dimensions. It is possibly more accentuated in Mexico than in other parts of Latin America, but it expresses itself among the Latins in Guatemala nonetheless. (Read pages 64-65 in *Culture for Missionaries: Mexico and Central America*.)

Most Indians, however, are not influenced much by the concept of *machismo*, as it is not a traditional cultural theme with them. For the Indians, marriage is more an economic cooperation than a conquest. As Indians, especially those of the younger generation, begin to shift towards adoption of Latin culture, the concept of *machismo* is beginning to manifest itself among them. Many teen-agers attempt to show their masculinity by smoking and drinking. *Machismo* is also reflected in their dress.

Teen-agers often develop close relationships with each other. These relationships may become particularly deep and meaningful. You should not be shocked to see two young men holding hands; it is just a normal expression of their friendship.

NATIONALISM - NATIONAL PRIDE

The Indians are very proud of their country and their heritage. Many of them realize that some of their ways may be backward and that the ways of some other country may be better, but they generally do not wish to adopt the ways of that culture. For them, the simple life is the best.

For most of the Indians, the government is remote. Although tribal governments exist in some towns, there is always an established legal government. The Latins hold most of the administrative positions in the local governments; the secretaries, assistants, policemen, and often the mayor are Latins. Even when the mayor is Indian, the secretary will almost always be a Latin. Nevertheless, the Indians do feel a certain loyalty toward the local government; when asked to help the police or participate in local service projects, they are usually happy to cooperate. Government sanction or official recognition is, however, usually not as meaningful to them as is the approval of the townspeople. Their loyalty to the government itself is usually not as strong as the loyalty and pride for the country and the land.

This feeling of nationalism can be beneficial to you as a missionary. Use it as a basis to teach the people of their heritage as brought forth in the Book of Mormon. You can then help them see their individual abilities and work toward their divine potential. Thus, the prophecy can be fulfilled wherein they will "blossom as the rose."

CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS - OPPORTUNITY TO PROGRESS

In the histories at the beginning of this book, you read about the Spanish conquest and the Christianization of the Indians. This led to a stratified social structure, with the Spaniards dominating the Indians. That system has continued until today, leaving a clear distinction between the Latins, the upper class, and the Indians, the lower class. Social and economic exclusion, racial discrimination, fraud, and exclusion from credit are some of the injustices that have kept the Indians in the lower class. Some legislation has been passed in favor of the Indian, but it has not proved to help his situation much.

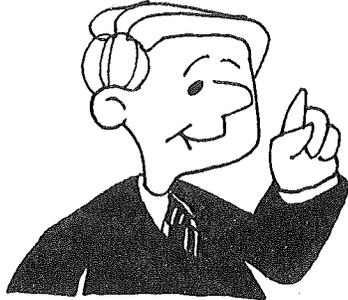
In the Latin-oriented business world, for example, the Guatemalan Indian finds it extremely hard, if not impossible, to get credit. Today's Guatemalan military, which by law all Guatemalans are obligated to serve in, regardless of race, is composed of Indian soldiers, with Latin officials and higher superiors.

This class division also can be seen in the fact that the Latins, being descendents of the Spaniards who took over the whole of Guatemala, own much of the land today and rent it to the Indians to work. The Latin sector runs the government, controlling all the high government offices. The judicial system often favors those who are rich and influential. This is unfortunate for the Indians, who become the exploited through such a system.

Although unfortunate for the Indian, this class division has served to make him more humble, submissive, and teachable. The Lord loves all his children and wants them all to hear the gospel, regardless of race or social position.

FATALISM - LACK OF FAITH IN THE FUTURE

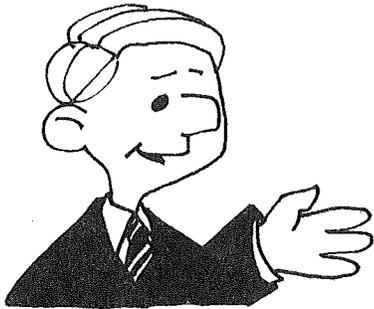
Because opportunities for the Indians are so limited, many of them develop a fatalistic attitude about themselves and their futures.



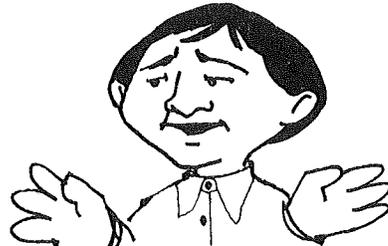
Brother, I know the Lord loves you and will answer your prayers as you ask him sincerely.



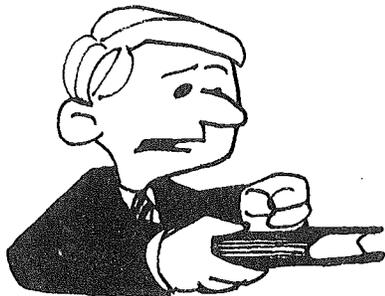
But God is great, and I am just a poor farmer. Why should he listen to me?



Brother, you and your family have great potential. If you obey the commandments you will progress.



We are just poor, ignorant people. We are uneducated and not very smart.



I know that the book of Mormon is true, and they prophecy that your people will blossom as the rose.



But I don't see how we can ever change. We are poor, brother. All we have is what God has given us.

The previous section described the class distinction that exists between the Latins and the Indians. As a result, the opportunities for the lower classes are quite limited. The Latins consider themselves superior to the Indians and seldom question the fact. This oppression has produced an attitude of pessimism.

This pessimism, or fatalism, expresses itself in many ways. The Indians are very modest about their self-worth; they are often self-critical and thus find it hard to accept the prophecies in the Book of Mormon about their future. They often inhibit their own progress because of a lack of faith in their own potential. Expressions such as "If God wills it so" are representative of their resignation to fate.

This attitude makes people more tolerant and patient in their trials. Humility is a great virtue to possess. Yet you as a missionary must help build their self-image and to help them see the great possibilities they possess. You must help them to appreciate their heritage and blessings to come. The gospel helps these people to recognize their divine and eternal abilities and to start down the road to achieving that potential.

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

THE "IN-GROUP" AND THE "OUT-GROUP"

It is quite understandable that the Indian is withdrawn, resistant, and defensive. Had he not been so, he would have been overrun years ago. Only by withdrawing could he protect himself. As a means of self-preservation, he has developed two faces to wear in social relations. The one he wears with those of the dominant Latin culture is unconcerned and uncommunicating; the other is friendly and open, and is worn in relationships with Indians of the same "in-group." The "in-group" usually consists of family, friends, and other Indians. North Americans are not generally in the Indian "in-group," nor are non-Indian members of the Church. Those who are successful among the Indians are those who have gained their confidence and who have overcome the barriers and have experienced the friendly, open face of the "in-group."

VIEW OF NATURE

DON'T OFFEND MOTHER NATURE

The Indians believe in Mother Nature and make a conscious effort to conserve the balance in nature. Their concern against offending Mother Nature is shown in expressions such as:

Ta-bana' cuenta pa bey.	(Cakchiquel)	Be careful in the road.
Matt'ane 'k sa' be.	(Kekchí)	Don't fall on the road.
Man ca-tzak pa bey.	(Cakchiquel)	Don't fall on the road.
Matzak la pa be.	(Quiché)	Don't fall on the road.

Eugene Nida, a man who has worked with the Indians in Guatemala and understands their problems, describes it this way:

One must not scratch the belly of mother earth too deeply, or destroy the protecting humus compost that lies rotting about, or dig out the trickling spring, for to violate nature is to destroy her capacity to continue nourishing the people who are dependent on her. Thus one does not conquer nature or exploit it. Rather, one must work carefully with nature, lest the spirits be angry and the fields no longer produce. (*Communication of the Gospel in Latin America*, p. 131.)

As a missionary, you should be careful not to offend the people because of their concern for nature. We should all maintain a high respect for the beauties of nature and not intentionally harm anything God has created for our use. (Consider the conference talks by Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, May 1978, pp. 47-48 and *Ensign*, November 1978, pp. 44-45.)

For Further Reading

Communication of the Gospel in Latin America, Eugene A. Nida.

Crucifixion by Power, Richard Newbold Adams

Culture for Missionaries: Mexico and Central America, pp. 53-74.

Customs and Cultures, Eugene A. Nida.

El Problema Indígena en Guatemala en Función de la Democracia, Aquiles Linares M.

Protestantism in Guatemala, Gennet Maxon Emery.

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him (Acts 10:34-35).

Problems arising from cultural prejudice are not new to our dispensation. After His resurrection, the Lord commanded Peter and the other apostles to “teach all nations,” as Matthew and Mark record (*Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15*). The vision of this commandment was not immediately recognized by the first missionaries, it seems, because in Acts is recorded their reluctance to take the gospel to the Gentiles, who were viewed, even by the Christian Jews, as outsiders and unclean.

Even after Peter received revelation to take the gospel to the Gentiles, a great contention was raised over the issue of circumcision (*Acts 15:1-31*). The apostle Paul contended that “circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God” (*1 Corinthians 7:19*). However, this was not the feeling of many of the converted Jews. They insisted on clinging to their tradition that they were the only chosen of God and the belief that for a man to be a good Christian he must first become a Jew through circumcision. Originally God had made the house of Israel his chosen people, and promised that through them and their posterity all the world would be blessed; many of the Jews in Christ’s day had forgotten this and thought instead that they were chosen in a different sense, in a sense of being better than anyone else. This false concept is called “ethnocentrism”: To picture yourself in the center of the universe, to believe yourself to live in the best city, to consider yourself a member of the elite race, are all common expressions of ethnocentrism. Prejudice against others can come from extreme ethnocentrism. Overcoming elitist feelings is important if you are to do the Lord’s work. If you catch yourself saying, “Why do they do this?” or “I think that this is stupid; it makes so much more sense the way we do it back home,” you must repent of it.

Ethnocentrism is the bad side of something good; namely, tradition. All nations have traditions that they cherish. Traditions symbolize national identity. The cowboy with his freedom of movement and strong independent nature is a symbol of the American spirit. Americans identify themselves with Independence Hall, the flag, baseball, and other such traditional symbols.

But you must be aware that other nations have traditions, too. To a visitor from another culture, these traditions are often strange and hard to understand; however, behind them lie ideas that are part of the national character. Learning about such ideas can greatly enhance your understanding of, and ability to work with, the people you have been called to serve.

TOLERANCE AND TRADITIONS

**An ambassador
knows and
appreciates the
traditions of the
people.**

Here are some suggestions that may help you:

1. From your reading and interviews make a list of symbols of national or area identity. Such symbols might include the following:
 - a. The king or queen
 - b. A famous building which symbolizes national pride or spirit
 - c. Legendary figures that symbolize national spirit, e.g., pioneer, minuteman, revolutionary, saint, etc.
 - d. National flag, national emblems, sacred shrines, etc.
2. Make a list of national and traditional holidays and festivals and research the background of each.
3. Make a list of national or area sports and pastimes. Learn the background of each.
4. Note how people of the area commemorate special events (i.e., marriage, birth, death, etc.) and research the traditions surrounding these events. Find out why the people consider these traditions important.
5. Learn why their national personalities are famous.
6. Study the art and literature of the people and make an effort to understand how the national spirit is reflected in it. Find also how themes of universal significance are dealt with in the various artistic media.

TRADITIONS OF GUATEMALA

All nations have traditions. The United States has the cowboy, old glory, baseball, Mom's apple pie, and the 4th of July. Traditions give a nation its personality and its identity.

Many of the traditions of Guatemala date back to the ancient Mayan empire, although most have some Spanish influence. Traditions are an integral part of Guatemalan Indian life. They are more than just practices; they are life itself. Tradition lives deep within the soul of an Indian. You cannot make an Indian remove his native dress, for example, and expect him to remain an Indian. If you change his traditions, you change him. His entire lifestyle is guided by custom and tradition.

As a missionary in the Indian areas of Guatemala, you will encounter traditions. Many will be pleasant, some strange. Your place is not to try to change their traditions or ways of life, except where they may go contrary to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

This section will introduce several traditions you will encounter as a missionary in Indian Guatemala:

1. Dress
2. Literature
3. Ritual Dance
4. Music
5. Instruments
6. Marriage
7. Funerals
8. Acquiring Land
9. Holidays and Celebrations

DRESS

One of the world's most outstanding folk arts is the costumes and textiles of the Guatemalan Indian. There are about 275 different costumes comprising the everyday attire of the Indians. Because it is distinct in every Indian town, you can tell where an Indian is from by his dress, which distinguishes him from the Latins and gives him a sense of value and identity.

The traditional dress of each Indian village is distinct from that of other villages by the colors, designs and patterns, or by the way of wearing the clothing. Traditionally, the Indian women weave their own *huipil* (comparable to a blouse, it is a square piece of cloth with a hole cut for the head, and joined under the arms). The *huipil* is the most distinctive feature of the dress. Having no set rules to work by other than their own memory, they will weave in old tribal symbols and colors. The more modern *huipiles* carry embroidered designs of flowers, birds, and animals.

As a rule, the clothing is heavy and modest. In Patzicía, San Martín Jilotepeque, and other cold places, an extra *huipil* is worn for warmth. The *huipiles*, skirts, belts, and sashes are all symbolic, but the meaning has been forgotten in most cases.

The skirts have no doubt maintained their originality throughout the ages. They are of varying lengths: short, to knee length (as in Chichicastenango and Zunil); half-way down the calf (as in Sacapulas and Palín Soloá); long, to the ankle (as in Tonicapán, Nahualá, and San Antonio Aguas Calientes); or long, to the heels (as in Santa María Chiquimula, San Pedro La Laguna, and Santiago Atitlán). Some are overlapped in the front (El Quiché), overlapped on the side (San Antonio Aguas Calientes), overlapped on the back (Palín), twisted and rolled around the waist (Santiago Atitlán, Nahualá), or even pleated (Xelajú, Cobán, Senahú Alta Verapáz). In Todos Santos, the sash overlaps to form an extra three-quarter skirt.

The women often wear colored cloth twisted and braided in their hair. In Chichicastenango, the women wear one single strand of black wool twisted tight around the braid of hair. In traditional Tomahú costume, the colored cloth is worn in turban style around the head.

The dress of the men is usually not as traditional or as distinctive as that of the women. Many Indian men have adopted the Latin way of dress—a shirt and trousers. In some of the villages, however, the traditional dress for the men is still used. In Patzún and Sololá, for example, the men wear heavy woolen aprons over their long pants. The pants may be of varied lengths, designs, and colors. In Todos Santos, the trousers are striped. In Santiago Atitlán, the trousers are only knee-length and are striped in purple and white. The men in all towns almost always wear a hat that is used to keep off the hot sun during the day and is worn as a matter of habit during the evening. They are usually of an inexpensive factory-made variety. There are also ceremonial hats, such as those in Sololá and Chichicastenango, which are made of black tinted palm-leaf with a flower-embroidered black ribbon that dangles from the hat.

Some, like the men of Almolonga, wear native shirts; others such as the natives of Todos Santos wear capes. In some places, such as Nahualá, men fold a piece of cloth crossways, roll it, and tie it around their hats. In Todos Santos, San Pablo La Laguna, and San Antonio Palopó, the men roll a piece of cloth and tie it around their heads.

Depending upon the area, Indians traditionally either walk barefoot or wear sandals. These are often crude and home-made, but in some towns they are quite elaborate works of craft, like those of Sololá. In recent years inexpensive rubber boots have become popular footwear in some of the wetter regions.

Some towns have typical coats, such as the short ones in Sololá or the long ones of Aguacatán. The coats of San Pedro Sacatapéquez are as red as those of a hotel bellhop.

LITERATURE

The ancient Mayans had a literature long before the Spanish conquest, expressed in hieroglyphs and symbolic figures carved into their buildings and temples, woven into their textiles, and painted onto their ceramics. Later, the Mayans recorded their literature on animal skin, bark, and lime-coated paper. With the conquest, these records of their rituals, traditions, and legends were destroyed by the Spaniards in an attempt to Christianize them. Only a few of these "books" exist today.

Although these records were destroyed, the Mayans continued their history, passing it from generation to generation by word of mouth. The legends and histories that exist today, therefore, have no doubt been changed through the years from their original form and have been influenced greatly by the Christian teachings the Indians received from the Spaniards, although they do still contain threads of truth.

The most outstanding piece of literature we have today from the Mayans is the *Popol Vuh*, the national book of Guatemala. It is sometimes referred to as the Maya-Quiché Bible, because it relates the story of the origin of the universe, including man and the animals, as the Mayans believed it. It also includes many of the ancient traditions and a chronology of their kings down to the year 1550.

The name of the original author of the *Popol Vuh* is unknown. Shortly after the Spanish conquest, this original manuscript in Quiché was reduced to writing in Latin characters by an educated Quiché Indian. This manuscript was kept in hiding for more than a century.

Then, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Father Francisco Ximénez of the Dominican Order, living in the convent at Chichicastenango, Guatemala, learned the Quiché language exceptionally well. Consequently, he gained the confidence and trust of the Indians, and they related to him many of their legends and traditions. Because of this trust they finally brought the *Popol Vuh* out of hiding and permitted him to translate it into

Spanish. A transcription of the manuscript in his own handwriting in the Quiché language is still preserved today, but no information exists as to the fate of the original manuscript. From Father Ximénez's translation, the first version in Spanish was published in Vienna in 1857 by Carl Scherzer. It has since been translated into English and several other languages.

Another invaluable Indian record is *Annals of the Cakchiqueles*, or *Records of Tecpán-Atitlán*. It was written in Cakchiquel by Francisco Hernandez Arana Xajilá, a native of Sololá and a descendant of the ruling House of the Bats. *Annals of the Cakchiqueles* relates the chronology of the ruling houses both before and after the Spanish conquest. It tells the history of the Indians, their social struggles, and their sufferings during the conquest. It also relates many legends and traditions of the Cakchiqueles. Upon the death of Francisco Hernandez Arana Xajilá, the narrative was continued by Don Francisco Diaz Xebuta Quej until the year 1619.

Other records exist today which give us significant historical information. Two of the more significant are *Territorial Titles of the Nobles of Totonicapán* and *Título de Totonicapán y Otzoya*. The former are records of territorial grants of the period; the latter was written in Quiché by the hand of Diego Reinoso. It deals in part with the conquest and the death of the Quiché prince Tecún Umán by the hand of the Spanish captain Pedro de Alvarado. It also contains a narrative of "those who arrived from beyond the seas where the sun rises" and of their migration to Guatemala.

The Books of Chilam Balam, written in the Maya language, is another important set of ancient Indian records. These sacred books were named after Chilam Balam, a man who lived at the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth century. *Chilam* means "mouth-piece" or "interpreter of the gods," and *balam* is a surname meaning "jaguar." Thus, the title of these records could well be translated as the "Books of the Prophet Balam." Balam was considered a prophet, and once even predicted that strangers would come from the east and establish a new religion among them. His many prophecies recorded in these books include one about Quetzalcoatl. His religious writings include descriptions of their rituals, and also accounts of the creation of the world. Besides religious subjects we find histories, brief chronicles, almanacs, and medical and astrological information. In one part, we even find a segment of a Spanish romance translated into Maya.

Besides historical and religious literature, the Mayans wrote drama and other creative literature. The theatrical piece entitled *Rabinal Achí* was written in Quiché and staged for the first time in January of 1556 by Bartolomé Ziz, a native of the city of Rabinal. *Rabinal Achí* is based on an epic legend of the Rabinaleros. The warrior-prince Rabinal Achí captures the prince Queché Achí after a long battle, and Queché Achí is sentenced to be sacrificed to the Rabinal gods. The drama describes how Queché Achí is sacrificed, complete with details of the sacrificial ceremony.

Little significant literature has been written among the Indians of Guatemala since this time. Although many can read and write, few have tried to interpret their customs and produce a modern literature.

RITUAL DANCES

The pre-Conquest Indians had many dances that have been lost today. The dance was an integral part of their religious worship. They danced before their gods, at the victory of a battle, and at the planting and harvest. However, many of the dances from the colonial times are still known and performed in the Indian towns during religious festivals. The gaudy and pompous costumes and the exaggerated gestures of the dancers might lead one to believe that it is all done for amusement or entertainment; the dancers, however, consider it all quite serious and sacred. All the dances are symbolic and significant, although few of the dancers or spectators today understand their full meaning.

Anciently, the dances were taught and passed down from generation to generation. After the conquest, they were written down. Village leaders own copies of these today, or rent them with the costumes.

It is an honor to be permitted to participate in the ritual dances. Only men may participate; the women's roles are danced by men. The dancers are chosen from the leading men in the community, and their participation in the dance may be part of a religious vow.

The costumes are made of animal skins, or imitations of elaborate and expensive silks and velvets, depending on the role the dancer plays. Masks are made of wood or papier maché, which is elaborately painted with many colors. The community pays for the costumes, which are rented from major costume houses. One of the major houses of costumes in Guatemala is one owned by the Chuj family in Totonicapán, and is known throughout Central America.

The most popular pre-Columbian dances found today are "The Deer Dance," "The Dance of the Jesters," and "the Dance of the Snake." "The Deer Dance" symbolizes the struggle between man and the animals. Although the dance has been known to continue almost non-stop for fifteen days before the animals finally surrender to the domination of man, he usually wins victory over the animals in one to four days. "The Dance of the Jesters" portrays the rivalry of winning the favor of a woman. One at a time, the dancers try to woo her, until a stranger comes on the scene and wins her love. In "the Dance of the Snake" the dancers portray the battle between good and evil by dancing with a live snake, the symbol of evil.

There are two famous dance pageants: "the Flying Pole" and "*Rabinal Achi*." "The Flying Pole" consists of a tall pole around which ropes are tightly wound. Men climb the pole and swing from the ropes. As the ropes unwind, the men circle the pole in ever-widening circles. Originally, four men "flew" at once, dressed in brightly colored bird costumes. Today, this solemn dance has degenerated into something like a carnival merry-go-round. "*Rabinal Achi*," although more famous, has not been presented since 1856. Its elaborate ceremony and expensive costumes put it out of the economic reach of the villages.

Although not native, perhaps the most popular dance is the "Dance of the Conquest," written by a Spanish priest in 1542. The "Dance of the Conquest" commemorates the victory of the Spaniards over the Indians. Another, the "Dance of the Volcano," celebrates the victory of the Spaniards over the Indian insurrection of 1526. The "Dance of the Moors" portrays the Spaniards conquering the Moors.

El Son is also very popular and is considered the national dance of Guatemala. Being a secular dance, it is one of the few which allow women to participate. *El Son* has three variations: *El Son San Juanero* is an exhibition dance of men waving handkerchiefs and women ruffling their skirts. *El Son del Borracho* is a comedy performed by men or couples; the men stagger around with bottles in their hands in real or pretended intoxication. *El Son* may also be a social dance. Traditionally, the men and women dance separately, but the Latin style of dancing in couples is becoming acceptable.

MUSIC

There is much evidence that the Indian had his own musical forms and instruments long before the Spaniards arrived with their guitars, banjos, violins, and harps. The *Popol Vuh*, for example, mentions that the ancient Mayans played different types of flutes. Indian music is undeniably original, having evolved through completely natural sources: the song of birds, the rush of the wind, the crash of ocean waves, or the trickle of small streams. Ancient music was not written down, but transmitted orally from generation to generation.

Indian music is believed to have been inspired greatly by the song of the *cenxontle* bird, or the "Bird of 400 voices," as the Indians call it. The *cenxontle* has a song with a perfect natural scale, using the second through the sixth intervals, the only intervals used in Indian music.

Professor Jesús Castilla of Quetzaltenango, considered the leading authority on Indian music and instruments, has made a 40-year scientific study of Indian music in Guatemala. Professor Castillo has some five complete Indian compositions which have been preserved, as well as numerous fragments. The complete music for the dance-pageants "*Rabinál Achi*" can be found today.

True Indian music is of three types: ritual, Rabinalero, and *Tz'ijolaj*. All are characterized by a complete lack of sensuality, consistent with the high moral standards held by the ancients. All are melancholy. The music is symphonic rather than harmonious or melodious. The ancient ritual, or ceremonial, once used in worship to the gods, greatly resembles the song of native birds. The Rabinalero, now seldom heard, is more warlike and more melodic than the ritual music. The *Tz'ijolaj* is the music of the shepherds and is perhaps the most versatile of the three, using more tones and intervals.

INSTRUMENTS

The following instruments are basically Quiché, although typical of Indian instruments in general.

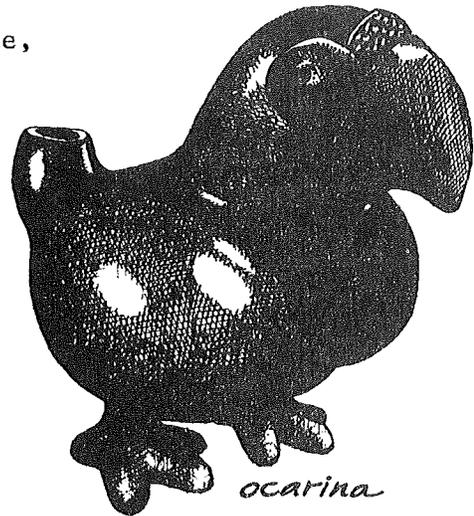
Wind Instruments

The *caracol* is a large shell blown through like a horn. Its sound is similar to that of a bagpipe, although its range is more limited. Indian players from the Cobán area are the most skilled, being able to produce complete melodies. It was originally used to summon warriors to battle.

The *tzijolaj*, or *kolb*, similar to a flute, is made of cane or reed and is used for ritual music.

The *ocarina* is perhaps the most ancient of the wind instruments. It was made of stone or baked clay, shaped in the form of gods, animals, or people. The player would blow through it like a flute.

The *chirimia*, an instrument similar to the oboe, is played during the "Dance of the Conquest."



Percussion Instruments

The *tun* is a cylindrical drum made from a hollowed log, played with two rubber-tipped sticks.

The *tambor* is another ancient drum, covered with deerskin. In *Popol Vuh*, it is called *atabal*, or "kettle drum." In the work "*Rabinäl Achi*" it is called the "war drum."

The *chinchines* are rattles made of gourds filled with seeds, corn, or beans. They are very similar to the *maracas* of Cuba.

The *ayotl* is a drum made of an empty turtle shell.

Another percussion instrument, a type of rasp, whose Indian name has been lost, is a large hollow bone grooved along one side. The sound is produced by rubbing a shell up and down the grooved side of the bone.



MARIMBA

The *marimba* is the most popular of all the percussion instruments in Guatemala today. Although many claim it to be of African origin, it is the national instrument. The simple *marimbas* made of gourds and a single keyboard are now replaced by those composed of sounding tubes made of hormigo wood with a double or half-tone keyboard.

MARRIAGE

Long ago, fathers would betroth their children in infancy or shortly thereafter. Today, however, young Guatemalans choose their own spouses in most areas. There are still places in which the parents choose mates for their children, but in such cases, they often take into consideration the wishes of their children.

When a young man decides to marry, he will sometimes call on a spokesman (called *chinamital* among the Cakchiqueles). This go-between is one respected in the village for his persuasive abilities. He is called to go to the father of the bride-to-be and ask permission for the marriage to take place.

The marriage may take place in one of three ways: by a civil ceremony, either with or without a church wedding, by rituals performed according to local traditions, or by common-law unions. The ceremony may be simple or elaborate, according to the financial situation of the families. Rings are seldom exchanged.

After the wedding, couples will often live at the home of the husband's family for the first few years and later establish a home of their own. Or, if the husband receives a plot of ground from his father as an inheritance, he may build and live there.

The common age for Indian men to marry in Guatemala is in their early 20's, and for the girls, it is about 15-19.

FUNERALS

Many of the funeral customs followed by Latins and Indians alike have Catholic beginnings. The night before the burial, friends will go to the house of the deceased to burn candles and incense, pray, and support the surviving family members during the entire night. Food and beverages are served to the guests. Intoxicating beverages are often served to relieve the grief, and before the night is over, the people often become quite intoxicated.

The Indians will often hold several funeral services at the home of the deceased. Food and beverages are served at each of these meetings. They will often place in the coffin some of the deceased's personal belongings for use in the next life.

A funeral procession accompanies the deceased to the Catholic church for a ceremony if the deceased or his family are Catholic. The procession then continues to the cemetery. Those who can afford to build a sepulchre will bury their dead above ground; the poorer people are buried in the ground.

ACQUIRING LAND

Among the Indians, land is usually acquired by inheritance. The custom is that the father will divide up his land among his sons, and often among the daughters as well. This land will be given to his children as they reach adulthood, or at the death of the father. Such transfers may or may not be legally registered. Most of the Indians claim to own all or part of their land, but many of their documents are not valid. Although such ownerships are often recognized by the local mayor, family members, and local communities, they would not hold up in a court of law were the ownership ever challenged.

Indians prize land ownership, and usually own land in separate plots so that no one will know how much land they actually own. Money and possessions are not flaunted, but are kept secret to avoid the envy of neighbors.

CALENDAR OF GUATEMALAN HOLIDAYS

JANUARY

2	Santa María de Jesús, Sacatepequez: Dulce Nombre de Jesús
6	Salcajá, Quetzaltenango: Día de Reyes
15	San Pedro Sacatepéquez: Cristo de Esquipulas
15	San Jorge La Laguna: Cristo de Esquipulas
12-15	Esquipulas: Cristo de Esquipulas
20	San Sebastián Lemoa, Retalhuleu: San Sebastián
23-25	San Pedro Jocopilas, Suchitepéquez: Local Fair
23-25	San Pablo La Laguna, Sololá: Local Fair
25-29	Rabinal, Baja Verapáz: Local Fair

FEBRUARY

- 1-2 Chiantla, Huehuetenango: Virgen de Candelaria
- 1-2 Santiago Sacatepéquez: Virgen de Candelaria
- 1-3 San Juan Ostuncalco: Virgen de Candelaria
- 1-3 Mixco, Guatemala: Feria de Morenos
- 1-4 Cunén, El Quiché: Virgen de Candelaria
- 6-10 Patzité, El Quiché: Virgen de Candelaria
- 7-10 Santa Apolonia, Chimaltenango: Santa Apolonia

MARCH

- 17-19 San José, Poaquil, Chimaltenango: Señor San José
- 19 San José Pinula, Suchitepéquez: Señor de San José
- (*) San Pedro Sacatepequez: Feria de Dolores
- (*) Sololá: Feria de Dolores
- (*) Panajachel, Sololá: Xocomil (Third Sunday)

APRIL

- (*) Guatemala City, Guatemala: Holy Week
- (*) Antigua: Holy Week
- (*) Chichicastenango: Holy Week (Friday)
- (*) Chiantla: Holy Week (Thursday-Friday)
- (*) Santiago Atitlán: Holy Week (Tuesday-Thursday)
- 23-26 San Marcos La Laguna, Sololá: Apostol San Marcos

MAY

- 1-5 Amatitlán: Feria de la Cruz
- 2 Chichicastenango: Día de la Cruz
- 2-5 Santa Cruz Balanyá, Chimaltenango: Santa Cruz
- 20 Patzún, Chimaltenango: San Bernardino
- 24 San Martín Jilotepeque: María Auxiliadora
- (*) Chichicastenango: Domingo de Pentecostés

JUNE

- (*) Guatemala City, Guatemala: Corpus Christi
- 10-12 Acatenango, Chimaltenango: San Bernabé
- 10-13 San Antonio Aguas Calientes, Suchitepéquez: San Antonio de Padua
- 12-13 San Antonio Palopó, Sololá: San Antonio de Padua
- 23-26 San Juan La Laguna, Sololá: San Juan Bautista
- 24 Olintepeque, Quetzaltenango: San Juan Bautista
- 23-24 San Juan Sacatepéquez: Local Fair (San Juan)
- 24 Comalapa, Chimaltanango: San Juan Bautista
- 27-29 San Pedro Sacatepéquez: Local Fair (San Pedro)
- 28-30 Almolonga, Quetzaltenango: San Pedro and San Pablo
- 29 San Pedro Jocopilas, El Quiché: San Pedro
- 29 San Pedro La Laguna, Sololá: San Pedro
- 29 Chichicastenango: San Pedro

(*) Date varies

JULY

12-18 Huehuetenango: Local Fair (Fiestas Julias)
22-27 Chimaltenango: Santa Ana
22-27 Patzicía, Chimaltenango: Santiago Apóstol
23-25 Santiago Atitlán, Sololá: Local Fair (Santiago)
23-25 Santiago Sacatepéquez: Local Fair (Santiago)
23-25 San Cristóbal, Totonicapán: Local Fair (Santiago)
24-26 Santiago Atitlán, Sololá: Santiago Apóstol
28-30 Momostenango, Totonicapán: Santiago Apóstol
29-30 Palín, Escuintla: San Cristóbal

AUGUST

1-6 Cobán, Alta Verapáz: Local Fair (Santo Domingo)
1-4 Sacapulas, El Quiché: Local Fair (Santo Domingo)
9-15 Joyabaj, El Quiché: Virgen del Tránsito
11-17 Sololá: Virgen de la Asunción
12-15 Nebaj, El Quiché: Virgen del Tránsito
14-16 Guatemala City, Guatemala: Feria de la Asunción
14-18 Santa Cruz del Quiché, El Quiché: Feria de la Asunción
15-18 Almolonga, Quetzaltenango: Feria de la Asunción
25 Salcajá, Quetzaltenango: San Luis Rey
28 Sumpango, Sacatepéquez: San Agustín
29-30 Malacatancito: Santa Rosa de Lima

SEPTEMBER

15 Guatemala City, Guatemala: Independence Day
12-18 Quetzaltenango: State Fair
25-30 Totonicapán: State Fair (San Miguel)
27-29 San Miguel Tucurú: San Miguel

OCTOBER

1-4 San Francisco El Alto, Totonicapán: San Francisco
1-4 Panajachel, Sololá: San Francisco
1-4 Tecpán Guatemala, Chimaltenango: San Francisco
10-11 Momostenango: Octava de San Francisco
12 Zaragoza, Chimaltenango: Virgen del Pilar
15 Palín, Escuintla: Santa Teresa
15-18 Aguacatán: San Lucas
18 San Lucas Tolimán, Sololá: San Lucas

NOVEMBER

1 Guatemala City, Guatemala: All Saints' Day
1 Chichicastenango: All Saints' Day
1-2 Todos Santos, Huehuetenango: All Saints' Day
2 Guatemala City, Guatemala: All Soul's Day
2 Chichicastenango: All Soul's Day
10-11 San Martín Chile Verde: San Martín
11 San Martín Jilotepeque, Chimaltenango: San Martín de Tours
21-22 Santa Cruz del Quiché, El Quiché: Santa Cecilia

- 23-26 Nahualá, Sololá: Santa Catarina de Alejandría
- 24-25 Santa Catarina Palopó, Sololá: Santa Catarina
- 25-30 Itzapa, Chimaltenango: Local Fair (San Andrés)
- 25 Zunil, Quetzaltenango: Santa Catalina
- 29-30 San Andrés Semetabaj, Sololá: Apóstol San Andrés

DECEMBER

- 6-8 Ciudad Vieja, Sacatepéquez: Virgen de Concepción
- 8 Guatemala City: Virgen de Concepción
- 8 Chichicastenango: Virgen de Concepción
- 8 Escuintla: Virgen de Concepción
- 12 Guatemala City: Virgen de Guadalupe
- 12-14 Santa Lucía Utatlán, Sololá: Virgen de Guadalupe
- 16-20 Comalapa, Chimaltenango: Local Fair
- 15-21 Chichicastenango: Local Fair (Santo Tomás)
- 24 Antigua: Christmas Eve
- 24 Guatemala City: Christmas Eve
- 31 Chichicastenango: Change of Indian Mayors
- 31 Guatemala City: New Years Eve

HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

Ceremony of Eight Monkey

Momostenango is the center of this celebration, which takes place on the first day of the Tzolkin Calendar year. This calendar is based on a 260-day "year" divided into thirteen months of twenty days each. Each day has both a name and a number. During the Tzolkin year, each name day comes around thirteen times, each time taking on a successive number from one to thirteen. The day of the new year is named *Wajwakib Batz'*, or Eight Monkey.

This ceremony has continued for centuries. Through the remarkable understanding of astronomy that the ancient Mayans possessed, the calculations have been exact; no mistake in naming the correct day has ever been made. The celebration begins on the eve of the new year with a service in the Catholic church. The Indians kneel in the church facing each other, burn candles and incense, and pray aloud.

At the dawn of Eight Monkey, several thousand Indians assemble at Chuitmesabal, about one half mile west of Momostenango. At 9:00 a.m., hundreds gather around each of several altars, or *porobal*. Before each altar stands a priest or witch doctor. Either individually or by families, the Indians approach the altars and place on them pieces of broken pottery. When a dish breaks, they believe it is because the god willed it so. They are returning the broken dish as a symbol that they are there to confess their sins. The broken pottery symbolizes that they themselves are imperfect human beings. They then turn to the witch doctor, whom they consider

their intercessor with the god, and give him their names and the purpose of their prayer: to ask forgiveness or to ask for a special blessing or favor. After giving the priest a small coin, the worshipers turn to the altar and there burn incense, called *kabawil*. This offering, called *sipal*, is to make sure that the request is granted. The priest then prays long and loud for the benefit of the person who has requested a favor of the god. The rites continue until dark, when the crowd moves to the top of the hill Nim Mesabal, or "Big Broom," where the ceremonies continue for two days.

Saint Thomas' Day

This celebration is held annually in the town of Chichicastenango. For three days, religious statues are paraded through the city streets, the sacred incense, *pom*, is burned, and hundreds of Indians kneel on the steps of the Catholic church to pray and burn candles. As in all celebrations, fireworks keep the air filled with excitement.

The *Tz'ijolach*, a small figure of a horse and rider, is paraded through the streets, then hoisted up to the top of the church and lowered several times, representing the messenger who communicates with God for man.

The *Son*, the secular dance of the Indians, and the "Flying Pole" a famous ritual dance, are both performed. On the morning of St. Thomas' Day, all the babies of those living outside of Chichicastenango are taken to the church to be christened. They each, even the girls, receive Tomás as one of their names.

Ceremonies of the Corn

Corn is the main crop of the Indian and the sacred plant of the Mayans. Its planting and harvesting are marked with sacred ceremonies.

On a Sunday before the planting of the corn, a special mass is held to bless the corn seed. The night before and the day of the planting find the people burning candles and incense, and praying. In certain areas such as the Alta Verapaz, planting is accompanied by fasting and abstinence. In some remote villages, they hold ancient fertility rites atop the mountains and volcanos. The witch doctors preside and offer sacrifices to the gods.

When the corn is harvested, more ceremonies are held. Friends and workers gather together to harvest the crop. The selection of the corn seed for the next year is an important event. The ears of corn from the center of the field and joined ears, or "twin ears," are usually chosen.

The Pilgrimage to the Christ of Golgotha

This pilgrimage is second in importance only to the pilgrimage to the Black Christ of Esquipulas (the most famous in Guatemala and renowned in Central and South America). The pilgrimage takes place on the second Friday of Lent. Those who participate travel to El Cristo del Gólgota in Chajul. This is the favorite shrine of the Quichés, and consists of a figure of Christ standing on an altar decorated with gold and silver.

Local Fairs

These annual events are essentially a glorified market day that lasts a week or more, although the excitement is higher and the crowds are larger. All kinds of goods may be purchased during the fair, as merchants from all over the republic come to sell their goods. For days before the fair, vendors come and line the city streets and begin setting up to sell their wares. Along one street may be found water jars from Chinautla, or pottery from Antigua. Another row of merchants may offer baskets from Aguacatán or San Juan Sacatepéquez. Another street offers woolen and cotton goods from Momostenango, Salcajá, or San Cristóbal. Along another street, merchants sell grinding stones from Nahualá, gourds from Rabinal, onions and garlic from Sololá, or painted trunks from Totonicapán. Food both raw and prepared, is one of the most popular items sold.

Most of the purchases are made toward the end of the fair, after everyone has had time to shop and compare everything available. The best bargains may be found during the last hour of the last day. There are no fixed prices. The excitement of making a purchase comes from the fact that the customer must bargain for the merchandise he wants to buy. The more expert the bargainer, the lower the price he will pay. Although it may sound like the customer bargains the price so low that the seller makes nothing, or very little, that is usually not the case. The merchant offers his goods for more than he has paid for them, expecting to bargain with the customer; he has a price below which he will not sell.

All Saint's Day

El día de los muertos, or *el día de todos los santos*, is the Guatemalan equivalent of Memorial Day in the United States. On this November holiday, flowers decorate doorways and gravesides. Since yellow is the color of death for the Indian, yellow flowers are arranged on the graves in the form of a cross. As church bells toll, candles are lit both at the graveside and in the churches, and food is often left at the grave for the spirit of the dead. This holiday is especially popular in Cobán, where the people make altars of leaves from which they hang different kinds of fruit. A spicy turkey soup called *caldo de chunto* is served, and it is a time for family gatherings.

Holy Week

Holy Week is the most widely practiced and grandest celebration of the year. It is celebrated throughout Guatemala with all the pomp and ceremony of the colonial days—a mixture of both Christian and pagan customs and practices. This Easter celebration comes during March or April and coincides with the ancient fertility rites before the gods to win good crops and an abundant rainfall. The activities are usually presided over by Catholic priests, but in some remote villages they may be directed by shamans or witch doctors.

The weeks before Holy Week are spent cleaning and decorating the churches, making costumes, and preparing for the week of activities. The townspeople erect archways in the streets, beautifully decorated with flowers, greenery, and colored paper and ornaments. Sometimes fruits and vegetables or stuffed animals are used. All good Catholics participate in making the arches, and all try to construct the most beautiful archway.

Some villages present a version of the Passion Play, assigning different townspeople to play the part of Christ, Mary, the Apostles, and other characters. The villages go to a great deal of effort and expense to produce a truly remarkable week of festivities. Wednesday is the Easter Market, when the Indians buy the bread they will eat during the week. This week is about the only time during the year that the Indians eat bread. Thursday and Friday are the important ceremonial days.

Friday morning, the image of Christ is taken to the crucifixion. In some towns, a living man may represent Christ and be tied to a cross. A thief may be freed from prison. Friday evening, the image of the dead Christ is returned to the church. Saturday morning, the figure of Mary is taken to visit the tomb.

Scarecrow images identified as Judas Iscariot, Alvarado, or some other person of ridicule, are tied to posts throughout the city. During the week, they are scoffed, jeered, and ridiculed until the end of the week. Then they are accused, condemned, dragged about the streets, stoned, and finally burned.

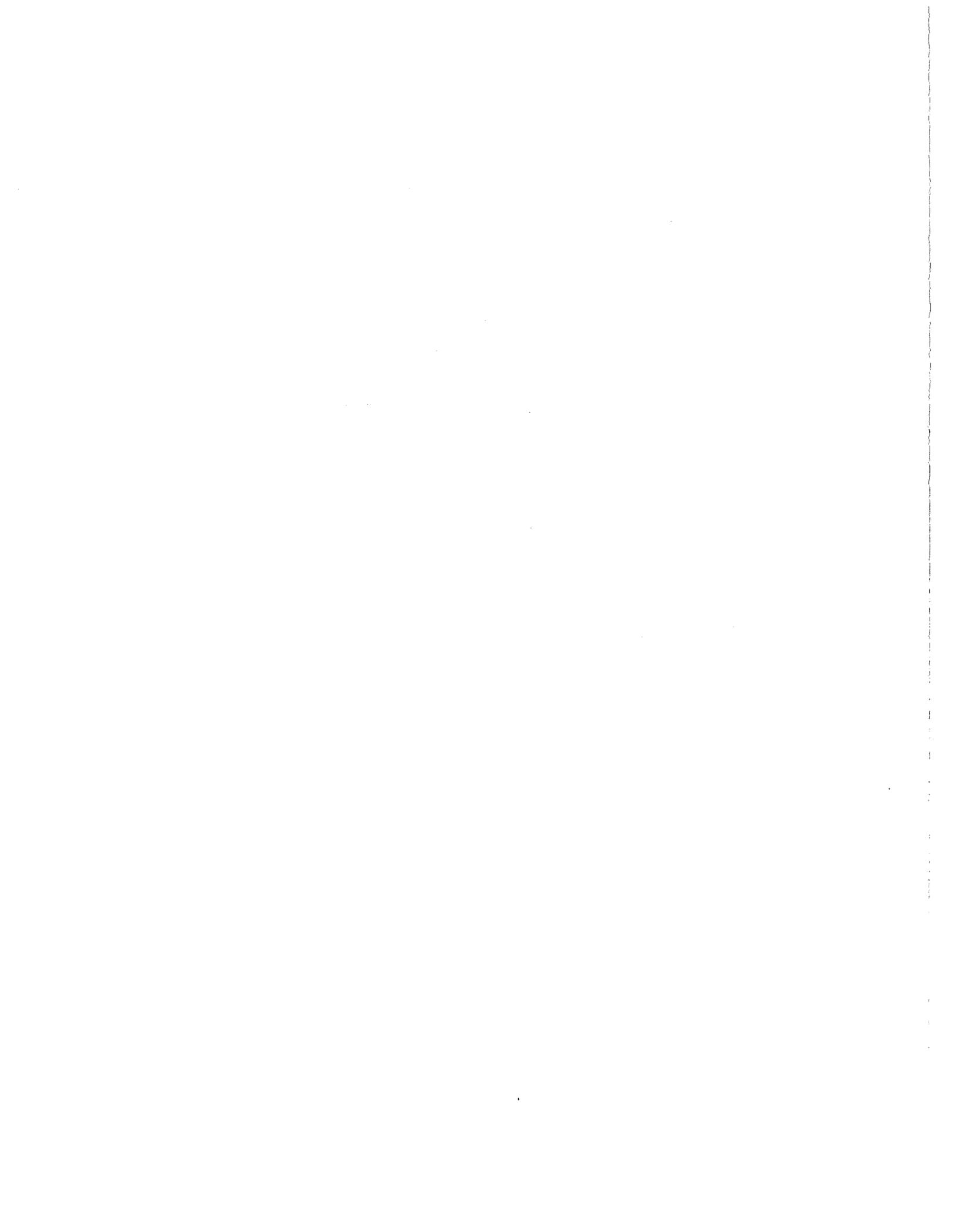
Antigua is noted for its celebrations and processions during Holy Week. People from all over Central America visit Antigua to see the procession of the famous Merced Cathedral. The city streets fill wall-to-wall with people. Those who walk in the processions carry their statues which are representations of Saints and Deity, but which also serve as pagan gods for some. *Kukuruchus*, men dressed in purple robes, walk along with the procession, lining the sides of the streets. During the march, groups of 150 *Kukuruchus* take turns carrying the mammoth Christ.

The people from the city spend days planning and designing the beautiful rugs they will make out of colored sawdust. They take great pride in making these rugs, using grains, beans, and other foods to incorporate designs and figures. These are made in the streets along

the procession route. They guard the rugs carefully until the procession leaves the cathedral and marches around the streets, walking through all the rugs that have been so meticulously prepared.

For Further Reading

- DRESS: *Guatemala: Ancient and Modern*, Joaquín Muñoz and Anna Bell Ward, pp. 171-209.
- LITERATURE: *Guatemala: Mayaland of Eternal Spring*, Raul Sapia Martino, p. XLII.
Four Keys to Guatemala, Vera Kelsey and Lilly de Jongh Osborne, pp. 100-102.
Popol Vuh, Delia Goetz and Sylvanus G. Morley, pp. 61-75.
The Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel, Ralph L. Roys, pp. 29-30.
- DANCES: *Four Keys to Guatemala*, pp. 102-110.
Guatemala: Mayaland of Eternal Spring, pp. XLII-XLIV.
- MUSIC: *Four Keys to Guatemala*, pp. 110-114.
- INSTRUMENTS: *Four Keys to Guatemala*, pp. 114-116.
Guatemala: Mayaland of Eternal Spring, p. XLIV.
- MARRIAGE: *Four Keys to Guatemala*, pp. 26-30.
- FUNERALS: *Four Keys to Guatemala*, pp. 30-32.
- HOLIDAYS: *Four Keys to Guatemala*, pp. 33-54.



Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. (1 Corinthians 13:1).

There are many gifts of the Spirit: faith, prophecy, the gift of tongues, the gift of healings and miracles. The apostle Paul said of these gifts: "... covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way" (*1 Corinthians 12:31*). What could Paul have meant? What gift is greater than faith or prophecy or the gift of tongues or miracles or healings? The *more excellent* way spoken of by the apostle Paul is *charity*.

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Council of the Twelve gave the following story in an address delivered at BYU in April of 1976:

I remember talking with a missionary in Korea who said, "When I came here it was winter and I had a terrible time and I felt no love for the land and could feel no love for the people, and one day I was walking down the street through a storm and I saw a woman trying to seek a little shelter next to a building. She was thin and emaciated and hungry and she held in her arms an emaciated and hungry baby and I heard that child cry and I knew that these were my people." (*Symposia on the Expanding Church*, April 8, 1976).

Missionaries are often told that they must love the people they serve. As with the missionary in the story, sometimes you find it difficult; however, Christ-like love requires you to possess each of the characteristics listed by the prophet Mormon: "... charity suffereth long and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. . . . charity is the pure love of Christ . . ." (*Moroni 7:45-47*),

Charity transcends all cultural boundaries. The literature, folklore and history of every nation extol the qualities listed by the prophet Mormon. All people, no matter what their cultural background, can understand and will respond to love, patience, respect, and courtesy. In the same way, people of all cultures will be offended by sarcasm and envy.

There is no way to fake Christian love, it must be sincere and genuine. You must seek after it "with all the energy of heart" (*Moroni 7:48*). Missionaries who possess this quality do not *have* to teach, they *want* to teach. They don't have to convince the people of their love and concern; the people already feel it by the power of God.

EMPATHY AND CHARITY

**An ambassador
demonstrates that he
loves the people.**

Here are some suggestions that may help you:

1. Read the following scriptures on charity and relate them to missionary work:

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Moroni 7:43-48

Matthew 5:38-48

2. The Savior said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (*John 13:34-35*). As you and your companion go about the Lord's work each day, it is important that you first love each other so that the people you teach will know you have come in the name of Jesus, that you are, in fact, his disciples.

3. Learn how to express love and concern for the people you teach. This can be done in many ways and according to your own personality.

a. Express gratitude and appreciation for people. For example, express gratitude for having been invited into their homes; express gratitude for sharing certain experiences with their families.

b. Be concerned for the family and the people. Without prying, be involved in people's lives. Be worthy of their trust by being a good listener and by not betraying their confidences.

c. Be empathetic with them. Empathy means putting yourself in someone else's shoes. Try to understand the background of each person you teach. When you encounter problems, never criticize or belittle.

d. Serve the people. The gift of Christ-like love comes to those who can lose themselves in the service of their fellowmen.

4. Become familiar with well-known examples of charity and brotherly love in the scriptures. Use these in your teaching.

5. Avoid being sarcastic or making negative remarks about anyone.

6. Be kind and polite. Be kind to children; be kind to animals; even be kind to those who refuse to listen to you or who may even insult you.

CHARITY

One way to summarize the feelings of a culture is through the stories and historical events that have lived on and continue to be retold by the people of that culture. Courage and religious devotion are human themes that have been emphasized by the Indians of Guatemala.

In this section the following stories will be recounted to illustrate the importance Guatemalan Indians attach to these themes:

1. Courage Against Tyranny - Tecún Umán
2. Folklore - The Creation as Related in the Popol Vuh
3. Courage in the Face of Poverty - Three First-hand Accounts
4. Faith and Perseverance - A Father and a Son

COURAGE AGAINST TYRANNY

Tecún Umán

The Quiché prince Tecún Umán (or Tecúm Umám) led the Indian resistance during the Spanish invasion of Guatemala in the year 1524. As commander-in-chief of all the allied Indian forces, he gathered tens of thousands of Indians together on the plains of Olinstepeque, near today's Quetzaltenango.

In this heroic battle, Tecún Umán sought out the Spanish captain Pedro de Alvarado in firece hand-to-hand combat. With a might blow, Tecún Umán cut down Alvarado's horse, but Alvarado put an end to Tecún Umán's life. Although the horses and the guns of the Spaniards were more than the Indians could withstand, they fought bravely. Is is said that the river ran red with the blood of the Indians that day.

Tecún Umán is to the Indians in Guatemala what Cuauhtenoc is to the Aztecs in Mexico (see *Culture for Missionaries: Mexico and Central America*, p. 90). Tecun Uman, considered by many to be the national hero of Guatemala, is certainly the hero of Indian resistance.

PATIENCE IN PREACHING

The Story of the Peaceful Conquest of Verapaz

Although the Spanish Conquest was often savage and violent, not all the spaniards who came to the new world were intent on destroying and subjugating the Indian nations. Some were sincerely dedicated to their welfare, and waged a constant struggle to assure that the Indians were treated fairly. Perhaps the one man who best earned the title of "Protector of the Indians" was Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, a dominican monk who was mentioned in the chapter on The World (see the section on *The Rabinal Nation*, page 5 of this book).

In about 1537, las Casas completed a controversial book entitled, *Del Unico Modo de Atraer a Todos los Pueblos a la Verdadera Religion* (The Only Method of Attracting all People to the True Religion), in which he advocated peaceful persuasion as the only right means of bringing non-believers into the fold of Christianity. The methods he proposed do not seem out of the ordinary to us, but they came in a time when it was generally considered that the only way of subjugating and "christianizing" the Indians was through military conquest. There were even some who believed that the Indians were sub-human, and as such were incapable of learning the doctrines of salvation. What was more, much of the economy of the spanish colonies in the New World depended upon their ability to use the slave labor which the conquered Indians offered them, and they resented Las Casas' outspoken accusations of their system and way of life. Having arrived in Guatemala, Las Casas sought the means whereby he might prove his theories of peaceful conquest.

In the northern part of the province of Guatemala there lay a rugged land of hills, rivers and forests which the Indians called *Tuzulutlan*. Perhaps because of its isolated location this region had

never been conquered, and the Indians there, wise to the methods of conquest employed by the spaniards, had a reputation of being ferocious and warlike. Las Casas and his fellow dominicans saw this land as the ideal place to test out their theories of peaceful conversion, so in 1537 they made a secret agreement with Licenciado Maldonado, then acting as governor of Guatemala. A contract was written up, in the which it was agreed that no spaniard would enter the land of *Tuzulutlan* for a period of five years, during which time the dominicans would attempt to convert the inhabitants of that land to Christianity.

Because of conflicting historical accounts and the secrecy which necessarily accompanied this project, it is difficult for us to piece together exactly how the dominicans went about gaining entrance into this "Land of War". It appears that at first they limited their efforts to sending Indian converts from the already conquered areas, to prepare the way and lessen the distrust which the natives had of the spaniards. It is known that the project was abandoned for a number of years while the monks were in Spain recruiting missionaries and seeking support of the king, but they returned to Guatemala in 1541 to continue the process of peaceful conversion which they had begun four years before.

The first of the monks to enter the land of *Tuzulutlan* was Fray Luis Cancer, who despite the danger involved, ventured among the hostile Indians in the company of some friendly chiefs. Gradually the Indian's confidence in the monks grew, until the dominicans were able to enter in force, and many of the Indians were baptized into the Catholic church. The new converts soon developed a considerable reputation for their zeal in the faith and their culture and self-government. Before many years had passed, the Spanish Crown renamed the infamous "Land of War" *Verapaz*, meaning Land of the True Peace.

Perhaps the greatest reason for the success of the dominican mission to the *Verapaz* was the high ideals which the monks both believed and lived, in contrast to the other spanish colonists. Here are some of the elements which they considered necessary to the successful preaching of the gospel, as they were explained by Las Casas in *Del Unico Modo*:

First, the unbelievers must understand that the preachers of the faith have no intention by their preaching of gaining dominion over them.

Second, the unbelievers must be aware that they are not moved to preach by any ambition for wealth.

Third, the preachers should show themselves to be so sweet and humble, so courteous and clam, so loving and kind when talking and conversing with the listeners, that they become willing to hear them gladly, and to hold their doctrine in reverence.

Fourth, more necessary even than the preceding three, the preachers should have the same love and charity with which Paul loved all the men of the earth, and which enabled him to do such great works among them.

Fifth, the preachers themselves should lead exemplary lives, worthy of imitation by the people (2 Thesselonians 3:7).

As the dominican monks put these principles into practice, it is little wonder that they were able to attain so much success among the indians of the *Verapaz*. Perhaps the best thing that can be said of these missionaries was that they lived as they believed, and both they and their converts were faithful to the end in that portion of the gospel which was given them. Many, including Fray Luis Cancer himself, eventually gave their lives in the service of their fellow man.

COURAGE IN THE FACE OF POVERTY

Preface: As a missionary among the Guatemala Indians, you will come in contact with poverty to a degree which you have probably never yet experienced. In order for you to feel love for the people, you will have to come to terms with their way of life and think of them as children of God without regard for their living conditions. The following three narrations express to a certain degree the attitude with which the Indians view their position in life, and might help you to come to an understanding of how their social situation effects their life.

I was born here in Patzicfa on the same land that I have now. I was given the birthdate of April 24, 1907. My parents were named Ciriano and Barbara. The situation into which I was born was very poor from the start.

At this time the government bothered my poor father a lot with military service. He spent much of the time at the military barracks and always left us alone with my mother because of the service that they required all the Indians to give at that time. Sometimes he was gone two and three years. Later, he was gone only 5 or 6 months. He was therefore almost never at home. Since that time we have suffered continually.

The people have not changed much, although today it is not quite like it was before. At that time they didn't bother the ladinos at all. They only obligated the poor Indians for military service. But since the ladinos are mixed with Spanish blood, they never said anything to them and always treated them well. But they are almost of our race. When the Spanish came, they took Indian women. That was how the ladino came to be.

Although very poor, I felt happy in my home because I knew that there was love between my parents and also between my brothers and sisters. We always loved each other and almost never fought or anything like that.

There was a time when I was about ten years old when we nearly died of hunger. That year a great frost fell on the crops and killed all the corn. My father had been in the service nearly five years and we did not know what to do because all of the people were looking for corn for nourishment, but could not find any. My brothers and sisters and mother and I had to suffer from a lot of hunger. We received very little to eat.

It was not always so joyful when my father returned because he like to drink. We had to suffer because of that also. We have always had to rent land because we don't have any property of our own. We have had to work for someone else who almost always is a ladino. The Indian has little land and when he does, he almost never rents it.

But those times as a child were also happy times. At that age, you're always getting into mischief. I went to school once, but it turned out that the teacher had some cows and they sent us to herd the cows instead of teaching us. That was how it used to be before. It hasn't been very long now that the school has been running a little better. Being one of the oldest, I only went that one time because I had to help my mother who couldn't bear the load alone with so many of us.

(*The Maya: Sons and Daughters of the Royal House of Israel*, "That Which is Left For Me to Do is Serve the Lord," chapter seven.)

When I was a boy of about three or four years old, I remember playing with my friends—playing marbles or spinning tops or playing with other toys. Then from the age of 9 or 10 years on, we would still play a lot, but not all day because I went to work with my father. Daily we went to the fields from seven in the morning until when we returned. Sometimes we returned a little early, and I would go play. My heart was happy because I was playing. But since the work was some 7 kilometers away and the custom of my father was that he didn't return if there was still a little sun, he wouldn't return until he saw there was nothing left. Then my father would come home. And there were times in the winter that even if it was raining we would work under the water.

In those days I was very poor because my father wouldn't give me any pennies to buy a few candies. He didn't give me the clothes I had on. They were torn and dirty clothes and my mother didn't wash them. I had those clothes for a long time. And my food was only *quilete* and *coles* and a little bit of beans, and once in a while we would eat a little meat, but only once in a while. The rest of the time it was only tortillas. We hardly drank milk. Maybe we would drink it once by the time we were five years old.

I always went with my father to the fields to help him work. I helped him in the corn harvest, to cut beans, cut wheat, or any other work he had. It was nearly always very late when we would come back. Sometimes we would be working under the rain and we would come home very wet. I would have to take off my clothes that were wet, but I never had clothes to change into. So upon taking off my clothes, I would wrap up in my blanket or go right to sleep, leaving my wet clothes hanging up. The next day when I awakened my clothes would still be wet, and wet I would put them on again. When the sun would come out, then my clothes would dry, but that would be around 11:00 in the morning or near 12:00. That was the suffering I went through.

My father never thought of buying me a new shirt or another pair of pants. I wanted something to change into, but I always had the same clothing throughout the year. The whole year would pass, and when the new year came around he would buy me another shirt and another pair of pants, then that would be it for another year. That was how it was when I grew up with my father. There were times when I didn't feel like working and he would hit me. But when I grew older, about 17 or 18, then I could work my own cuerda of land and I didn't have to go with my father to the fields. I would go out earlier and work my cuerda. Then I would buy my own shirts and pants.

(The Maya: Sons and Daughters of the Royal House of Israel, "Better Than The Clowns," chapter five.)

Now I don't know about the future, because the future is in the hands of God. The saying goes that man proposes and God disposes. I would wish for a better future, but since God doesn't give it, as the saying goes "we are not all born to be rich, nor are we all born to be poor." We know that riches are also fun, and riches are great, but as far as I am concerned, if God granted me something, maybe I would feel more happy because from the beginning I have lived a very hard life.

It comes after one has suffered much. In his childhood, if something falls into his hand, some penny, it will be clutched because he has already learned that it is hard to earn: to earn a hat, to buy some shoes. So I give thanks to my Father in Heaven because I was born poor. Because he who is born rich is conceited; he is devilish and despised by his neighbor. But when one is born in poverty, he is friendly and fears God from the time the sun comes up. He will say, "Lord light my way and I hope that you will accompany me to go and earn the bread and that you will help me see how to make it through this day with my children to earn their bread."

(The Maya: Sons and Daughters of the Royal House of Israel, "That is the Worry One Had," chapter ten.)

FAITH AND PERSEVERANCE

A Father and a Son

The following excerpt is from a story written by a welfare services missionary who was serving with her husband in the town Patzicía. It was written in March 1976, almost two months after the earthquake devastated Guatemala, and tells of the trials and faith of a dynamic father and son pair.

Our dear branch president Pablo Choc, who lost his wife and two little sons in the quake, goes about his duties with a smile on his face. But when we are alone and talking, he says, "Oh, Hermana, I miss my wife so much. My home is so sad. I just hope that I can live worthy and work in the church so that I can be with them again. This life isn't too long. We just have to go on and do the best we can."

His son, Daniel, the first Cakchiquel Indian to go on a full-time mission, came to our tent the other night. He is here with the other missionaries working. He told us that he wanted to talk to us for a little while. After he had paid for his week's food, he said, "I just can't believe that my mother is dead. It is so sad for me, but it is much sadder for my little sisters. They need her so much." But he goes along each day in his missionary work laughing with the other missionaries. Perhaps they don't know the pain that is in his heart.

At the conclusion of her story is added this footnote:

As I type this it is with a heavy heart. I came into the city this morning to type this story up to mimeograph. As I sat down to type, the phone rang in the President's office. It was a call from Patzun. All the missionaries had gone there today to help some of the towns people to clean up their places. This was to be the last day of their labors. Tonight we were going to have a big dinner to reward them for their many weeks of hard work for the people of this area.

The call was to report that Daniel Choc, our first Cakchiquel Indian missionary, was killed when a wall that they were trying to remove had fallen on him. It is with a heavy heart that I return to Patzicía. The thought of seeing the face of his father is almost more than I can bear. He has had nearly two months since the death of his wife and two little sons.

There will be rejoicing on the other side. We will have to go on and work and try to live the best we can. I know he will see them again and great will be their joy together.

The following is a letter published in the Provo *Daily Herald*, entitled "Missionary's Death Prompts Tribute."

Editor Herald:

It was with sorrow that I learned of the death March 29 of Elder Daniel Choc of Patzicia, Guatemala, a full-time missionary in the Guatemala Mission. He was crushed by an adobe wall which fell as he and 60 other missionaries were helping clear away rubble in the earthquake-devastated town of Patzun.

I have seen no notice of his death in the local press, but feel that his passing deserves special tribute. He was an extraordinary missionary, and he and his family are known to many people in Utah.

The first Cakchiquel missionary in the Church, Elder Choc gave distinguished service during his year of labor in Patzun, Comalapa, Sumpango and Patzicia. He was loved and respected by his missionary companions and associates. Patiently he taught them to understand the Cakchiquel people and to speak the difficult Mayan dialect. From his own love and understanding of the native

culture, he was able to communicate with great power and clarity the message that was so precious to him.

Prior to his mission, Daniel Choc had lived for two years with the Cordell Andersen family in Guatemala. It was there that he developed an appreciation of missionary work as he served a local mission among the Pocomchi Indians of Paradise Valley, baptising 24 and serving as a teacher among them.

Our brother, Daniel Choc, now joins his mother and two young brothers who were victims of the tragic earthquake that struck last February.

To Daniel's father, Pablo Choc, president of the Patzicia Branch of the LDS Church, who has suffered such a loss, to Daniel's beautiful Indian sweetheart, to the Cordell Andersens, who held him as one of their own family and gave of themselves so unselfishly to bring out the greatness of this young man, to his missionary companions and members of the church who loved Daniel Choc and feel keenly his absence, I send my love and heartfelt sympathy.

May the memory of this remarkable saint and missionary be blessed, and may God raise up others to serve as he did.

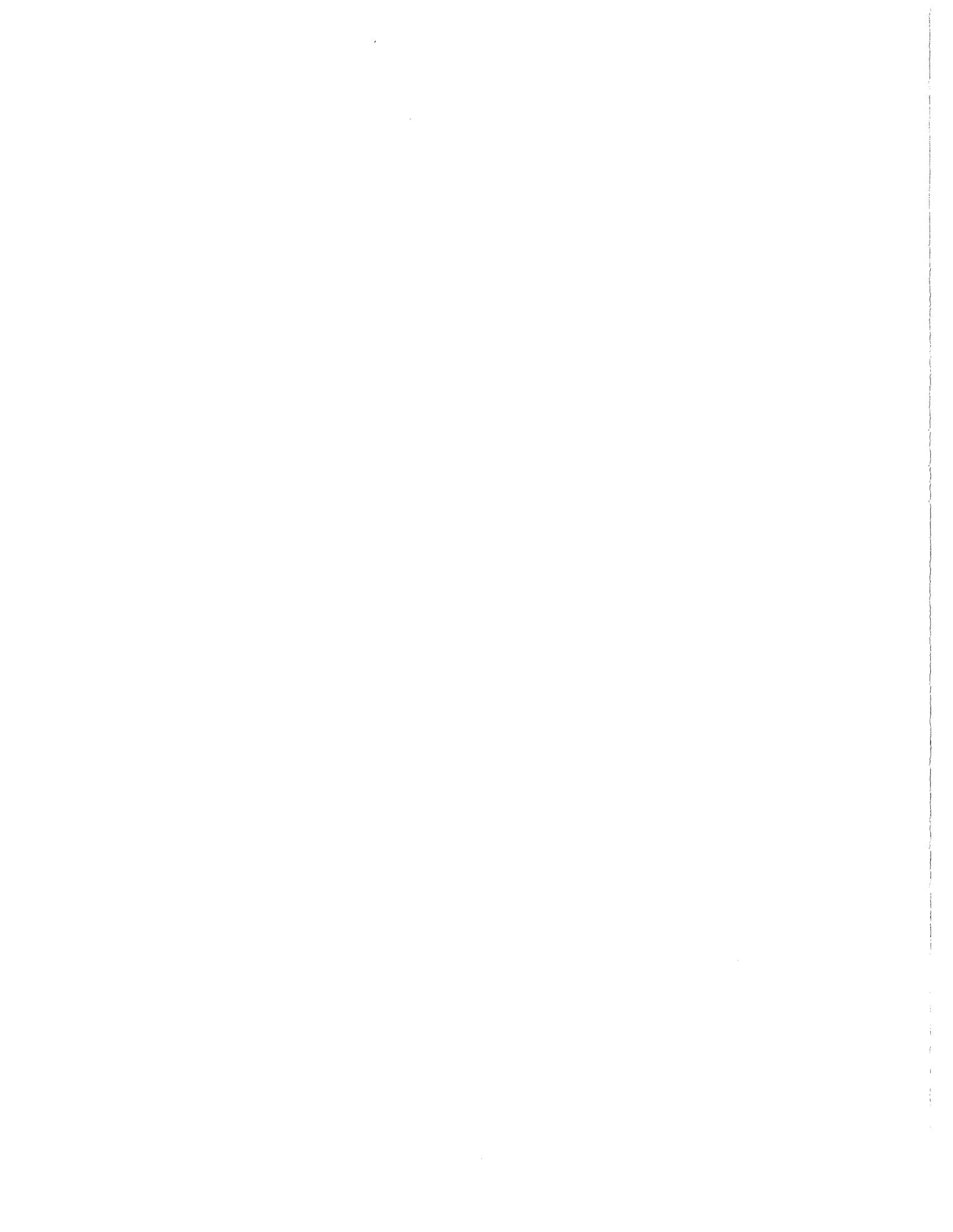
Humbly submitted, Robert Blair
Provo

For Further Reading

The Maya: Sons and Daughters of the Royal House of Israel, members and missionaries of the Guatemala Mission.

Popol Vuh, Delia Goetz and Sylvanus G. Morley.

According to Our Ancestors, edited by Mary Shaw.



For it shall come to pass in that day, that every man shall hear the fulness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language, through those who are ordained unto this power, by the administration of the Comforter, shed forth upon them for the revelation of Jesus Christ (D&C 90:11).

Language and communication are prime concerns of missionaries. The Lord has commanded that every man is to hear the gospel in his own language (D&C 90:11). But language is not merely vocabulary set against grammatical rules; it is strongly related to culture. For example, people often express deference with language by using polite forms, or they can express warm feelings of friendliness or cold aloofness with language.

Different cultures find different ways to make language work for their situations. There are over twenty words for "snow" in the Eskimo language, but only one in the Polynesian languages.

Philosophical and religious ideas are often hard to translate from one language to another. The word "love," for example, is difficult to translate since it has so many meanings. One can be speaking of love of mankind, love of God, or love of doing something. There is also paternal and maternal love. All of these can be rendered "love" in English, but there may be a different word for each concept in another language.

Obviously, you as a missionary must learn how language and culture relate before you can effectively communicate. Communication is primarily served by language, but there are other parts to communication. Non-verbal language, sometimes called "body language," is very important. As you move into a new culture, you may find this non-verbal language sometimes more confusing than the verbal. In the Orient, for example, it is considered impolite to directly refuse a request with the answer "no." Hence, a man from Japan or Korea may say "no" by sucking air through his teeth or by saying, "It is difficult." Sometimes gestures commonly found in one culture are different or have different meanings in another.

Another important part of communication is listening. Being a good listener involves not only your ears but also your heart. Many people don't listen at all; as the other person is talking, they think only of what they will say next. Hence the language may be perfect, but the communication is ineffective.

Communication is one of the most important skills that you as a missionary can acquire. It involves learning the language and discussions as well as you can and learning how language and culture relate. It means that you must learn the non-verbal cues in the culture and

COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

An ambassador is skilled in the art of communication. He is skilled in the language of the people, speaking in public, teaching and listening.

that you must become a good listener. In addition, you must learn to listen to the whisperings of the Spirit, that your communication may be perfect.

Here are some suggestions that may help you:

1. Study the language. Many missionaries have the mistaken idea that they learn the language completely at the Missionary Training Center. Other missionaries believe that because they are called to English-speaking areas that they need not study language at all. In both cases the right attitude toward language is that learning to communicate effectively is a life-long process. There should never be a time when language is not a major course of study, especially during a mission.

2. Make a list of non-verbal communication cues used by the people in your mission field which are different from those familiar to you.

3. Missionaries in English-speaking areas should note words that are used differently. English is full of examples of words that have different meanings in such places as the U.S., Great Britain, Ireland, or Australia. Such differences might even exist, however, in different regions of the same country. For instance, in some parts of northeastern United States, people ask, "Is he strange?" when they mean, "Is he shy with strangers?"

4. Learn and practice the techniques and principles of good listening. Seek to understand, then seek to be understood.

a. Be able to paraphrase the comments of others when discussing gospel truths. "If I understand what you're saying, Mr. O'Hare, you find it difficult to believe that God would appear to men today. Is that right?"

b. Show empathy. "I can certainly understand why you would feel that way, Brother Miller."

c. Ask questions that show concern. Good listeners build trust by proving that they are sincerely interested in what people are saying. "I'm sure you have a reason for feeling that way. Would you mind sharing that reason with us?"

d. Effective listening requires your undivided attention.

5. Always live in such a way that you will be worthy of the guidance of the Spirit. It is only through the influence of the Holy Ghost that you can truly communicate the gospel message. (See *D&C 50:17-22*)

COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

Spanish is the official language of Guatemala—the language of government, politics, legal contracts, education, and newspapers—but it is not spoken by all the people in the country. In fact, it is not the mother tongue for about half of the people.

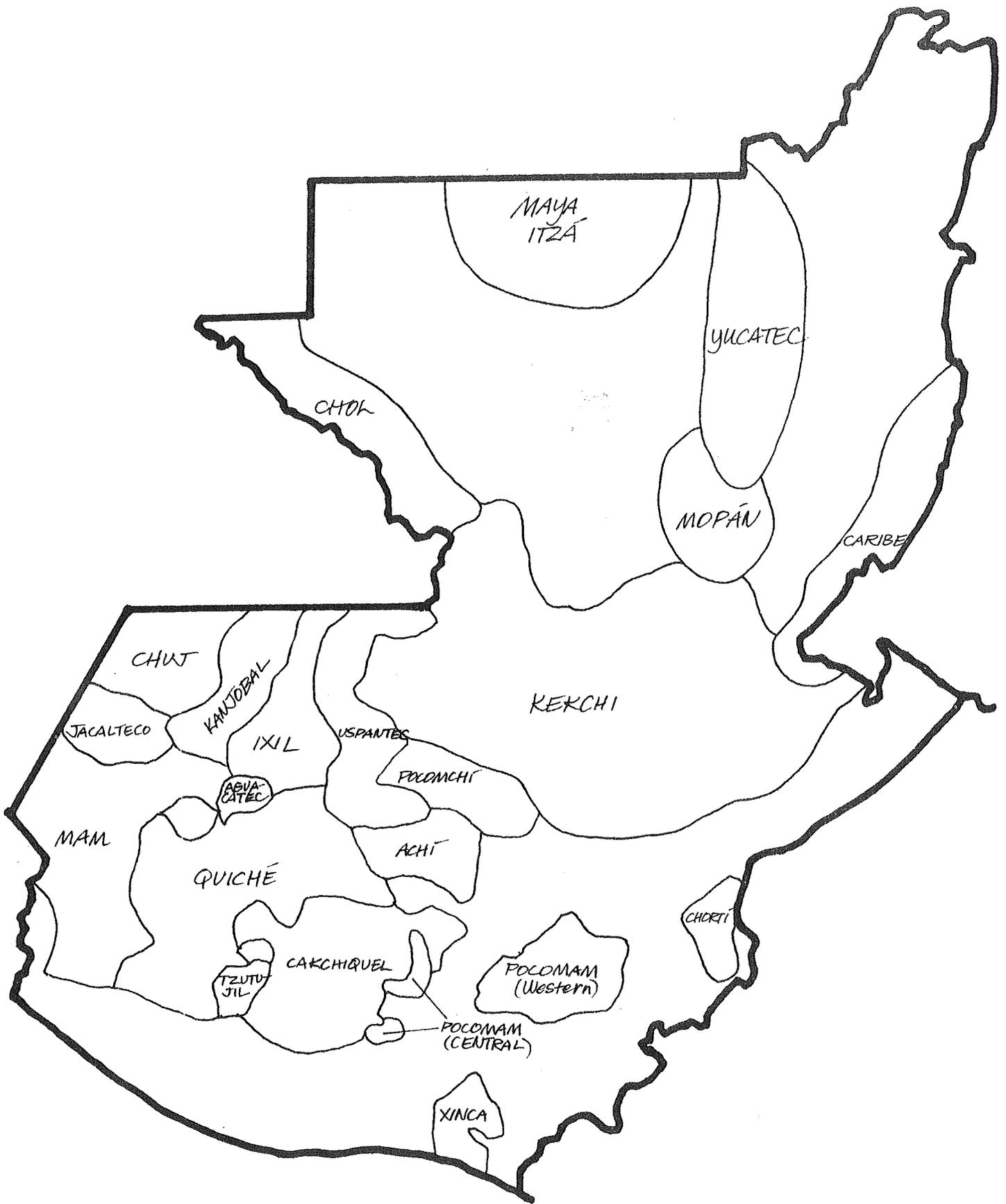
Spanish, spoken mainly by the Latin population, is a Romance language, descended from Latin and related to French, Portuguese, and Italian. Linguists claim that Spanish is one of the easiest languages for an English speaker to learn. Although it has many differences from English, many Spanish words are recognizable to an English speaker based solely on his knowledge of English.

The Indian languages in Guatemala, on the other hand, have descended from an ancient language called Maya. Maya is not related to Spanish or English; therefore, you will not find words that look familiar to you as an English speaker. You will probably find the Indian languages more difficult to learn, but also very rewarding.

Mastering the language, however, is not all that is necessary to communicate effectively with the people. Communication involves much more than verbal language. The Indians use a number of gestures and sign language in communicating. You will also communicate much to them by your attitude, your expressions, and your spirit. If you are at odds with your companion, the people will feel it, and it will be impossible to exemplify love to them. They are masters at communicating and will easily see through any pretence. To communicate effectively, you must be sincere.

In this section we will discuss the following:

1. Spanish and the Indian Languages
2. Languages or Dialects?
3. Mixing Spanish with the Indian Language
4. Is He Understanding Me?
5. Learning the Language
6. The Best Approach to Teaching the Gospel
7. Writing in Indian Languages
8. Writing Systems
9. *Naturales*
10. *Vos*
11. Greetings and Good-byes
12. Meanings of Words
13. The Handshake
14. Gestures



SPANISH AND THE INDIAN LANGUAGES

The Latins speak Spanish and the Indians speak one of the Indian languages depending on where they live. (See map for location of the Indian languages.) Most of the Indians can carry on simple conversations in Spanish, even though it is not their mother tongue. However, don't let this fool you into thinking that they will understand everything you say in Spanish. For most of them, their vocabulary is limited, and anything beyond a general conversation won't be understood.

Most Indian children learn only an Indian language in the home. If they later go to school, they will learn Spanish, but continue speaking the native language in the home. When they are with Latins or North Americans, however, they will often speak Spanish. This they do for several reasons. First, most Latins and North Americans don't know the Indian language. Second, since Indian ways are considered socially lower-class and "uneducated," it is more socially acceptable to speak Spanish. There is also another reason, related to the idea of "in-group" and "out-group" relationships that we discussed in the PERCEPTION AND VALUES section of this book. Indians speak to those in their "in-group" (family, friends, and other Indians) in the Indian language and those in the "out-group" (Latins and all others) in Spanish.

This is not to say that the Indians don't like to speak their language with anyone else; on the contrary, they are very helpful to anyone who sincerely tries to learn it. They will continue that help, however, only if they see a constant effort on the part of the learner. To get in the "in-group" takes a considerable amount of sincere effort and love. The Indians have been suppressed, dominated, and exploited for many years. They are therefore naturally cautious about someone trying to learn their language. Once you convince them that you are genuinely concerned about them as a people, and sincerely want to help, and go to the tedious and painful process of learning their language well, you may someday find yourself in their confidence. You will find that they tell you amazing things. You will find out what an Indian is truly like. They will tell you of prophetic dreams they have had, about their past, and things about their daily lives of which you had no idea. You will discover how they think, why they act the way they do, and how they feel about the world around them. Only then will you be a truly successful missionary. You must love them, pray for them, and work for them with all your might. This sincere effort will cause you to dampen your pillow at night with your tears in behalf of them. If you do this, you will also put forth as much effort as it takes to learn their language well.

Learn more than is expected to just give them the basic discussions. Be able to talk with them on any subject in their language. If you do, you will show them in a genuine way that you really care about them and want to make the effort to learn their language.

Unlike Spanish, you will probably not have an occasion to use the Indian language again after your mission, since the Indian languages are not used outside of the small Guatemalan towns. Your learning it will

probably never earn you any prestige or honor, nor be needed once home from your mission. Your reward will be a burning and lasting satisfaction, knowing that during the short time of your mission you made the sacrifice of learning to communicate with the Lamanites in their own language.

Let us suppose that you have learned the language and can converse very well with an Indian. If you meet him in public where there are Latins present, which should you use, the Indian language or Spanish? There is no clear answer to that question; it will depend entirely on the situation and the person. A good rule of thumb is to let your Indian friend begin the conversation and follow with whichever language he uses. Be sensitive to the situation. He may be offended if you speak to him in the wrong language.

When teaching the gospel, you should always teach in the language spoken in the home. The mother tongue should be used, giving the gospel a "familiar spirit" and not a foreign one.

For it shall come to pass in that day, that every man shall hear the fulness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language....

D&C 90:11

LANGUAGES OR DIALECTS?

The Indian languages in Guatemala are distinct languages. Although many people refer to them as dialects, they are no more dialects of each other than Spanish is a dialect of French. Spanish and French are daughter languages of a common ancestral language called Latin. They are referred to as Romance languages. In much the same way, Quiché, Cakchiquel, Kekchí, Mam, and others are daughter languages of an ancestral language called Common Maya. Thus, they are referred to as Mayan languages.

Due to communication and transportation between the Indian towns, the language between towns may vary slightly or greatly. When there is great variation, we say there are dialects. For example, the people of both Patzicía and Patzún speak the Cakchiquel language, but there are many differences in pronunciation, and sometimes even different words for the same thing. Because of this difference, we say that they are different dialects of the same language: the Patzún dialect and the Patzicía dialect of the language Cakchiquel.

As you work with people from the different Indian towns, you need to be aware of these dialectic differences and adapt your language to fit the dialect of those in your own town. Listen very carefully and pronounce the words the same way the people from that town do. Be careful not to

get into the habit of pronouncing everything just as it is written in books. For example, even though the Cakchiquel word for "he says it" is written "nu-bi'j," in Patzicia you should say "du-bi'ij." Likewise, "nu-ben," "he does it," should be "du-bun." In other towns "job," "rain," is pronounced "jub." You must listen for and adapt to these differences to be able to master the language and communicate effectively.

MIXING SPANISH WITH THE INDIAN LANGUAGES

Many words in the modern Indian languages of Guatemala today have been borrowed from Spanish. Borrowing in languages is a common occurrence. Consider, for example, the Italian words "pizza" and "spaghetti" that we consider just as much "English" as any other word; or consider the Spanish words "patio" or "rodeo." English has borrowed these words and assimilated them into the language. Likewise, the Indian languages also have borrowed and assimilated many Spanish words. All modern inventions, for example, such as the radio, television, and airplane are named with the Spanish name. Sometimes entire Spanish phrases are used in the middle of a sentence. In some cases the language has evolved to the point that the old "pure" Indian word has been entirely forgotten. The missionary must then speak the way the people speak. To use too much Spanish would sound unnatural and may not be understood; to try to be too puristic, using old Indian forms, would also be hard to understand. To find the right mixture, you must listen to the people.

If you already speak Spanish, there is a great temptation to fall back on your Spanish for words for things you don't know how to say in the Indian language. You must be careful about the Spanish words you use; difficult concepts are not likely to be understood in Spanish and should be explained in the language. Since the Indians only understand a surface Spanish, the only Spanish words that should be used are easy, surface words. Any deeper matters should be handled in the language. Certainly any gospel discussion belongs in the latter category.

Not only has Spanish influenced the Indian languages, but they also have greatly influenced the Spanish spoken in Guatemala. You will often hear people say something like *Tiene un su carro muy bonito*—"He has a very beautiful car." The use of "un" along with the possessive pronoun is influenced by the Indian language structure (as in the Cakchiquel phrase *C'o jun ru-ch'ich' yalan jebel*) and is not found in other Spanish-speaking countries. The Guatemalan Spanish "r" is often nearly voiceless, rather than trilled as in most Spanish-speaking countries. This is influenced by the voiceless "r" in the Indian languages. The Spanish word *cuate*, a very close friend or "pal," is from the Aztec word *cuatl*, a snake that always travels in pairs.

IS HE UNDERSTANDING ME?

Don't be lulled into a false sense of security if the person you are talking to continually nods his head, saying "yes," "yes, that's right." It often signals that he isn't understanding and is making frequent, meaningless comments to give the appearance that he is following along in the conversation. Stop and ask him a question when in doubt.

LEARNING THE LANGUAGE

To get a good base in the language you must really put forth an effort while at the Missionary Training Center. Use every minute available to you to the fullest. But remember that when you leave the M.T.C. you have not yet learned the language and must continue to study it throughout your mission.

There are several good resource books available in the different Indian languages. If you were taught an Indian language at the M.T.C., your text will be an excellent learning tool and should be referred to continually throughout your mission. There are several good grammars and some dictionaries published in Quiche, Cakchiquel, Kekchi, and Mam. Other good resource books available to you are scripture translations of the Bible and the Book of Mormon, as well as other Church materials. Read and study these carefully. But as important as these books are, you will find that the best way to learn the language is from the people themselves. The only way you will ever become truly fluent in the language is to throw off your inhibitions and fears and go out and speak the language every chance you get. Carry a notebook with you and write down every word you don't understand. Then later ask someone what the word means.

THE BEST APPROACH TO TEACH THE GOSPEL

There is no easy answer to this problem, because different approaches are needed for peoples in different cultures. Even though a given approach is successful for one group of people, it may not be so for another. Even people within the same culture will need a different approach, depending on their background. You must consider such factors as their education, outlook on life, religion, and social status. Therefore, since many of the Indians in Guatemala are less educated than those from the United States, a less analytical approach is often necessary. Rather than trying to convince them with a formal, logical proof, teach in such a way that the Spirit will be there to testify of the truth to them individually. The Spirit will convince much more than you ever will. Above all, be sure that you are really communicating and not just going through the motions.

WRITING IN INDIAN LANGUAGES

There is comparatively little written in the Indian languages. Almost everything written in Guatemala today is in Spanish. At the time of the conquest nearly every Indian record was destroyed in an effort by the Spaniards to destroy the Indians' pagan beliefs and Christianize them. Today, if a person learns to read and write, he usually does so in Spanish schools. Thus, if someone learns how to write, he learns to write in Spanish. There are, however, some who have begun to write original work in Indian languages. With progressive and innovative ideas in the school systems involving Indian languages, many children are showing amazing creativity in their native languages.

Some groups of people have printed materials in the Indian languages. The Wycliffe Bible Translators, the American Bible Society, the United Bible Society, Summer Institute of Linguistics, and others have published translations of the New Testament. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has also published several books and pamphlets in Cakchiquel, Quiché, Mam, and Kekchí. Many more translations are necessary to teach these people the gospel "in their own tongue, and in their own language" according to the word of God.

WRITING SYSTEMS

There are many different ways of writing the Indian languages. Different groups of people who have written down the languages have each chosen their own writing system, or orthography. There are sometimes differences in the spelling. Often the k's are written as c's, and vice versa; the same may be true with w's and v's, and other letters. Some beginning texts, and even some of the missionary discussions employ hypens to help distinguish the prefixes, suffixes, and roots; materials written for the public are usually without hypens.

Since the differences are usually minor, it should cause no real problem. Before you read something in the language, simply glance over the page to determine the orthography the writer uses, then recognizing the words should be no problem.

NATURALES

Missionaries should be careful not to use the terms *indio* or *indito* when referring to Indians; these words are often used in belittlement, and have developed a derogatory connotation. *Indígena* is a neutral term, and is inoffensive. When referring to themselves, the Indians use the word *natural*, or in some areas *indígena*. Either of these terms is acceptable.

VOS

The Spanish subject pronoun *vos* is the very informal equivalent of *tú*. It is used very commonly in Guatemala between males who are close friends, and also in a very informal manner with animals and children. *Vos* is also used extensively by the Latins when speaking to Indians. When used in this way, it shows little or no respect, and is a sign that the person using it considers himself socially higher than the person he is speaking to.

Because the Indians are often spoken to in the *vos* form, that is often the only form they learn. Therefore, don't be surprised or offended if an Indian speaks to you with the *vos* form. They are not making any indication of your social class; it is simply that they have only heard, and therefore learned, the *vos* form. It is most prevalent among the Indian women.

GREETINGS AND GOOD-BYES

In greeting people, it is very important to be friendly and courteous. A smile and a nod of the head is not enough in Guatemala; a handshake is also expected. When passing someone on the street, greet him with a "Good Morning," "Good Afternoon," "Good Evening," or simply "Sir" or "Ma'am."

When leaving a group, never just walk away. Be very polite in excusing yourself, then when you do, shake everyone's hand and say good-bye. Leaving the house of an Indian usually involves excusing yourself and saying many good-byes.

MEANINGS OF WORDS

Many Spanish words have different meanings when used by Latins or Indians. *Familia*, for example, means "family" to most Spanish speakers, but to the Indians in some regions it usually refers to a "child". If you hear an Indian say that he has five *familias*, don't accuse him of polygamy; he is merely saying that he has five children. When you use the word *templo*, most Guatemalans will think of what we would call a chapel or meetinghouse, because of the nomenclature of the evangelical sects, but not a temple as we understand them. If you use the word, be sure to explain it sufficiently for them to understand what you are referring to.

Be aware that such differences in meaning exist and be on guard for others you may encounter.

THE HANDSHAKE

An ambitious Mormon missionary is eager to go out and meet people. When he meets them he usually shows his enthusiasm with a hardy, firm handshake. Although this is welcomed in his culture at home, if he does it among the Indians in Guatemala he will offend many people. There are basically four handshakes in Guatemala:

1. A limp handshake (weak grip). This shows that the two are of equal status.
2. A firm handshake (strong grip). When someone gives this handshake to an Indian who offered a limp handshake, it tells the Indian that he has met his status superior, and that he had better treat him as such. It shows no friendship.
3. A pat on the arm. This is an expression of friendship most common among women.
4. A pat on the back, or *abrazo*. This is the maximum expression of closeness and friendship. The Indians normally don't show this much affection.

As a missionary, you must be careful what you communicate by your handshake. The townspeople in one town in the early days of the Church presumed that a woman who was a member of the Church must certainly be having inappropriate relations with the missionaries, because they saw them frequently shake hands with her with a strong, firm grip.

If an Indian's hand is dirty or wet, he will not shake your hand if he considers you of higher status. Rather, he will offer you his forearm, which you should accept as though it were his hand. If he offers you his dirty hand, it shows that he considers you to be his equal.

GESTURES

Gestures make up an important part of the way a Guatemalan communicates. To communicate effectively with them, you will need to understand and use many gestures common in Guatemala. Study the following illustrations and begin putting them into use right away.

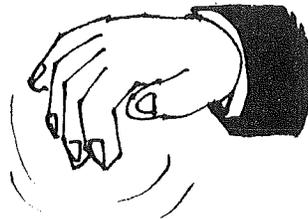
"Good-bye."

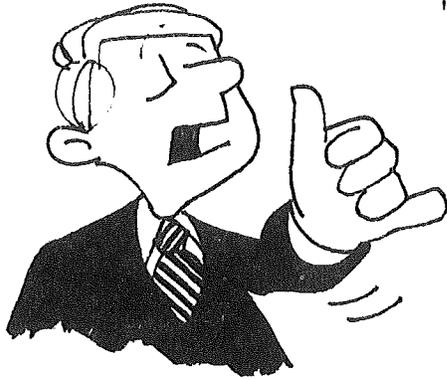
Hold your hand up and move fingers toward yourself.



"Come here."

Put your hand down and wave it toward yourself.





"He's drunk" or "He's out drinking."

Make a fist, then extend the thumb and pinky, bringing the hand up to the mouth as if holding a bottle.

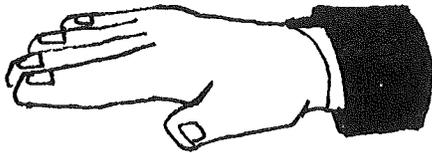
"Cheapskate" or "stingy."

Bend your left elbow and pat it with your right hand a few times.



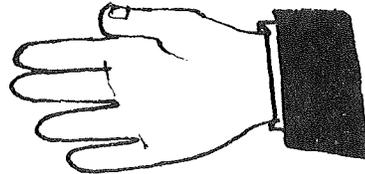
"A chicken is so high" (Used to show height of chickens, cats, and other small animals.)

Hold hand horizontally with the palm down.



"A dog is so high" (Used to show height of dogs, pigs, goats, cows, and other large animals.)

Hold hand vertically.



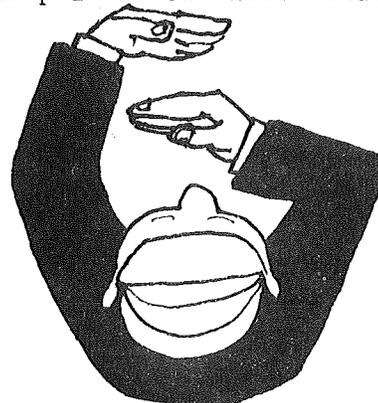
"My son is this tall" (Used to show height of people.)

Raise hand with palm forward and bend the fingers slightly.

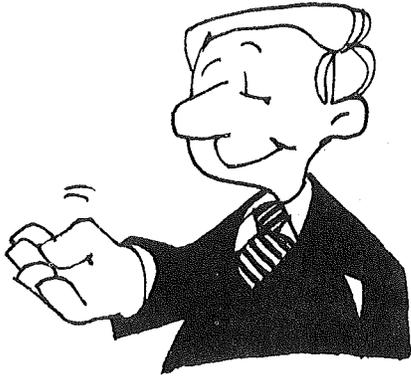


"The snake was this long" (Used to show length of things.)

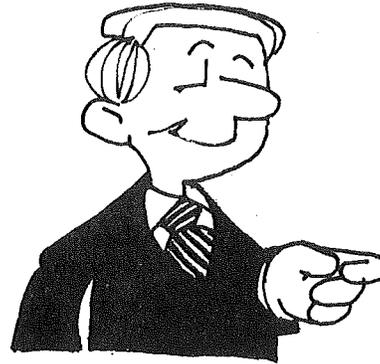
Extend your left hand with the palm facing your body, then position your right hand so that the back of the hand is facing the palm of the left hand.



"That guy's got money" or "That costs a lot of money." There are two ways:

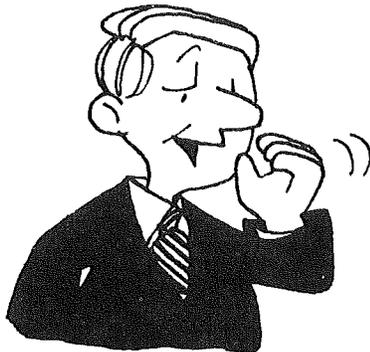


Hold hand forward with palm up. Rub thumb across the fingertips as if feeling sand between them.



Hold hand as if imitating a pistol, with your palm facing you. Form a semicircle with your thumb and index finger, as if holding an invisible silver dollar.

"I want to eat." There are two gestures for this:

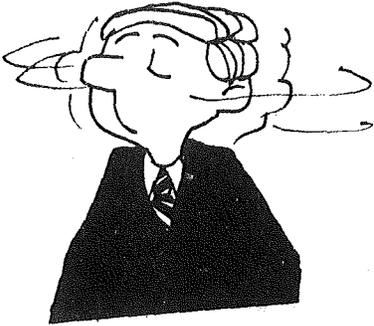


Bring the palm of your hand toward your mouth and move fingers (together) up and down, like a backwards bye-bye.

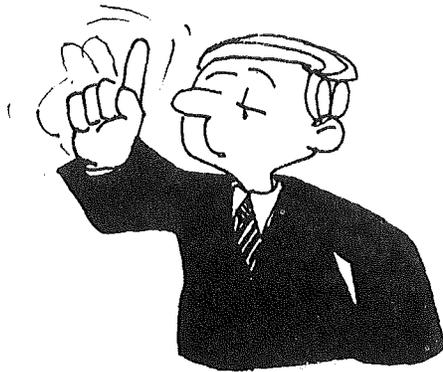


Bring fingers and thumb together to a point and bring them toward your mouth several times, as if cramming food into your mouth.

"No," Negation is expressed in two ways:



By shaking the head back and forth as in the U.S.



By waving the index finger back and forth (also used in refusing permission for someone to do something).