

Collins update; May 11, 2017

Dear and good friends,

Greetings to you from springy North Carolina.

Nancy and I have been busy since we last touched base with you.

Our biggest news is that our bundle of grandchildren has grown to six with the birth of Jolene Joy Collins to Isaac and Elizabeth. She was born on April 21 and weighed in at 8 pounds even and 20 1/2 inches long. Among the details is that she sports her Grandpa Collins' hair. Elizabeth and JoJo are both fine.

Our other big event was a trip that Nancy and I took back to Guatemala, and to the village where we worked, and where the kids grew up.

Our LAMP friend, Byron, put together a Literacy Olympics that promoted the reading of the Scriptures in Mam. It was an encouraging event.

He contacted a number of local churches and challenged them to bone up on the practical use of their Mam New Testaments. There were four events: Public Bible reading, Bible memory, finding Bible references ("sword drills" for those with long memories), and Bible knowledge.

The winners of each event from each church met on market day in downtown Comitancillo, when thousands come to the village to buy and sell, to visit and to see what's going on. The competition was friendly and there were prizes for everyone. Two of the events were especially interesting. The public reading of Scripture was won by a 70-year-old man who, a year ago, couldn't read Mam. The Bible memory event was won by a 16 year-old boy who recited over 40 Scripture references memorized from his Mam New Testament.

I was one of the judges. A young man sat beside me who was also a judge. He said, "This day must be a dream come true for you." And it really was. It gets better. I didn't recognize this young man, but when he told me who his parents are, I realized that I had included him in part of the storyline in my dissertation (and recent book). I learned that he had become a Christian a couple years ago and that he was now teaching school and is a big promoter of Mam language and literacy.

What goes around comes around.

I'm presently gearing up for four months in Peru with CILTA. This will be the twelfth year that we have been involved with this training. You will recall that CILTA exists to train Latino students for cross-cultural ministry. I will be teaching three courses this year. One is new to me and another is new to both me and CILTA altogether.



A good turnout for the Literacy Olympics



A daddy's first kiss.

April marked 40 years that Nancy and I have worked with Wycliffe. Some of you have prayed for us that long and longer. We really appreciate it.

One thing that has become obvious in this kind of work is that it takes a team. We've benefited. What is especially gratifying at this point is that a lot of the team members are Latinos and Indians, and not just gringos.

Thanks for your role in all this.

God's best to you all,

Wes and Nancy Collins