

11 November, 2015

Good friends,

When Nancy and I joined Wycliffe back in 1977 we wanted to go to China or Russia. I really can't recall the thought process that led us in that direction, but that's what we talked to Wycliffe about. Back in the day, Wycliffe founder and visionary "Uncle Cam" Townsend was praying daily that God would open the door to Bible translation in Communist countries. He even visited Russia ten times during the hard days of the cold war, confident that God would one day open the door.

We all knew he was a visionary, even an eccentric, but today Uncle Cam's faith has been shown to be reality. There are Wycliffe members from Russia doing Bible translation, and Wycliffe's international headquarters is in Singapore, and we have a number of members from Hong Kong—none from mainland China as far as I know. Not yet.

But we were recently encouraged by some related happenings.

In Lima last year at CILTA, I had a Peruvian student who wants to work with minority languages in China. He already speaks and writes good Mandarin. This year he worked at CILTA as a Teaching Assistant in the semantics course I taught, and he hopes to go to Dallas in January to work on an MA in linguistics at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics (GIAL), the place Nancy and I just spent two months.

I was there to teach Phonology. I had a couple in the class from Hong Kong. They are native speakers of Mandarin and they hope to use their linguistic training to help translate the Scriptures for a Chinese minority language. There were two other students in the course that also speak Mandarin. One (along with his family) has lived in China for 13 years and he serves as a language coach for those interested in learning Mandarin and other languages of China. Another student also speaks Mandarin together with his wife (who just gave birth to their first child and who is not studying this quarter). They are also on their way to China after they finish their studies.

Additionally, I had two TA's that helped consult with students and grade papers for me during our eight-week intensive course. One lives in Botswana and is here finishing her MA in linguistics. The other one is headed to China. She's working on her Mandarin, she studies Hebrew and she TA'ed for me in Phonology.

As I write this, I'm packing for Guatemala. I plan to leave on Wednesday morning. Nan isn't traveling with me this time. I plan to visit the group working on the Mam Old Testament translation and a second group that is working in literacy. The literacy leader is our long-time friend, Byron, the nephew of one of our first friends—Eberardo—among the Mam back in the day. Samuel leads the translation

group of four. Byron was a student of mine back in 2006 in Peru. I had just finished my doctorate at Ohio State and Nancy and I went to Lima to live and teach. We were there full time for three years and now I teach one course there per year—usually either phonology or semantics or sociolinguistics. Samuel was a student of mine as well, during a four-month semester in Guatemala City in 2009. I'm very proud to see these guys take leadership in ministries related to translation and literacy. May God prosper their vision.



The couple you can see here is from Hong Kong. The guy standing up and waving his hands is from Cleveland. The world is a big place.

Thanks for your interest and prayers.

We've still got lovely fall colors in North Carolina. And temperatures in the mid-70's. I won't rub it in.

Blessings from God to all.

Wes and Nancy Collins