

May 17, 2015

Dear ones,

Greetings from Lima. Nancy was with me for a month and just returned to North Carolina and a lovely spring. Actually they don't do much spring in North Carolina. It goes from winter (which isn't much either) directly to summer and then it stays summer until pretty much November, when people plant pansies, which begin to flourish in February. I understand that Ohio's winter was pretty robust this year.

I'm teaching a cohort of nine students, seven of whom are from Argentina. The other two are Mexicans, with additional profs and TAs from the US, El Salvador, Guatemala and Peru. It's like International Day every day around here. The program is called CILTA (International Course for Linguistics, Translation and Literacy) and it is run in conjunction with a local Peruvian university.

The Argentines have a custom—common-cup tea drinking. The Argentine diet has two main ingredients—meat and mate (pronounced MA-tay). Mate is a kind of tea that gets passed around any meeting of Argentines. It is called the national fusion of Argentina. It is unclear to me why a country needs a national infusion. It is said to be caffeine rich, so maybe my students are trying to tell me something as they listen to me drone on and on, while passing the mate mixture round and round the classroom. The “real thing” mate is drunk from a squash gourd through a silver straw which, along with very hot water, is supposed to kill microbes. Mate tastes like green tea, but it is loaded and loaded with insider, cultural significance. As James Thurber said decades ago, “You could look it up.”

My students had their midterm test just this past week. They are doing well. Five of the students are heading into a ministry of Bible translation, while the other four are concentrating on literacy and development work. All nine take the same courses during first semester and then they split up according to their interests for second semester. Interestingly, one of my Argentine students made a living as a clarinetist in a symphony orchestra, but he left the orchestra to try his hand at linguistics. He got a 93 on the midterm. Not bad for a clarinetist. BTW, his ability on the clarinet is mindboggling. For those of you with short memories, might I remind you that I played the clarinet from fourth grade until my junior year in high school. For the record, when I played, it sounded like a different instrument altogether from Federico's playing. He makes the clarinet talk, not just sing.

I have told you for maybe a year now about progress on my book on Maya-Mam language and culture. I guess this time it's really true, we're bearing down on the finish line. In fact, it is now out of my hands, and the final edits are being added without any further input from me. My biggest complaint is how expensive the book will be—probably between \$30 and \$40. The price hasn't been determined yet, but my pleas for a twenty-dollar book have fallen on deaf ears. At this point I'm glad just to have it done. The editors remind me that academic books cost a lot more than New York Times bestsellers; the big publishers make up in volume what they lack in

high prices. In any event, we're hoping the book will soon be available on Amazon. I'll let you know when that happens, hopefully soon. For those of you who are curious, I don't make any money on the book. It all goes to SIL International, the publisher. Most academic books don't pay their way unless they get picked up as a college textbook. I could hope for as much, but even then, my full reward for the book amounts to three author copies, which will go to our three kids. Not even Nancy and I get a copy—although we do get a discount. If you do end up with a copy, I'd be happy to sign it—for free!

My next teaching opportunity will come in August-October in Dallas. We'll be pulling the old switcheroo where a phonology professor at GIAL (Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics) will be taking a teaching stint for me in Peru and I will fill in for him in Dallas. This Dallas linguistics school is where Nancy and I did our training with Wycliffe and SIL starting back in 1977. What goes around comes around. I'm looking forward to seeing how it will go teaching the same course to university students from the US and Canada (with a few internationals mixed in as well) in comparison with Latino students at CILTA. I'm expecting a lot of similarities.

After Dallas, we hope to make another trip to Guatemala. We are still pretty active in that program, but we're very grateful to others—including a few North Americans and a lot of Mam men and women—who are doing most of the heavy lifting nowadays.



Federico, the clarinetist, has the green shirt on.

We appreciate those of you who pray for us. I would ask prayer that we finish the semester well—both I and the students. It always gets hectic at the end of the semester. Also pray for my preparation for teaching in Dallas. Dallas is SIL international headquarters, so it is an exciting place to be, with people coming and going to locations all over the world. We also ask prayer for Nancy's sister, Darlene, who had cancer surgery last month and tomorrow (5.18.2015) starts four treatments of chemotherapy (three weeks apart). She is doing well. The surgeon said that they got it all and that the chemo is just to make doubly sure.

Nan and I tentatively plan to get to Ohio in early July. We hope to see many of you at Parkside or at Grace in Ashland.

Here is a picture of Elisa and Yury at the dedication of Nadia before the Lord. It was a happy day. By the way, feel free to ask us about our grandchildren—any or all five.



God's best to you all.

Thanks for your interest and prayers and support.

Wes and Nancy Collins