

Hal and Cheryl Large

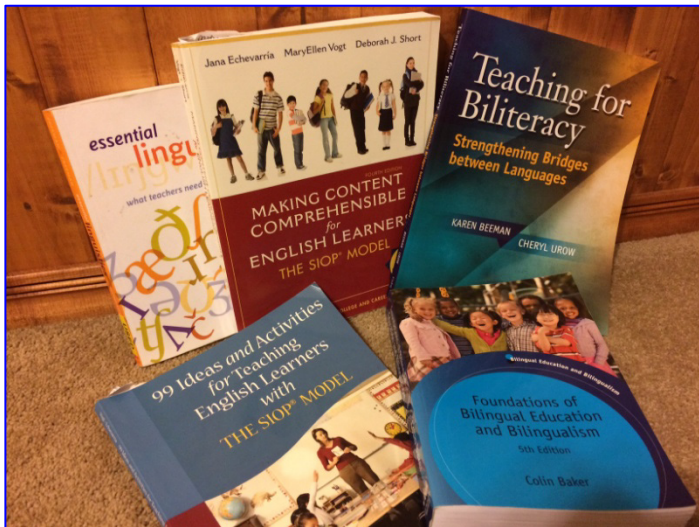
Ministering to Hispanics in the Pacific Northwest

World Reach, P.O. Box 26155, Birmingham, AL 35260
January 2017



Can you believe I'm back in school at 65??

I turn 65 years old in January. I guess you could call that a milestone! I'm all signed up for Medicare! I got out of Social Security, unfortunately, when I was young and foolish, so that isn't an issue right now. But, I am back in school! This past summer I started a Masters Degree program for teaching English Language Learners (ELLs) and Dual-Language Education at Heritage University in Toppenish, WA. As you know, I am teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) as a way to minister to the mostly migrant Hispanic community here in Eastern Washington (currently, between 20% - 70% of the population, depending upon what town or city). I am enrolled in an Accelerate Program, which allows me to finish the normally two-year degree in three semesters. I started with a summer semester in June, I just finished the second semester in December and I will finish the degree in May of 2017, in just one year. It has been very enlightening, very intense and is proving to be very helpful as I am looking to be better equipped for this ministry.



Because I am in school, I am only teaching ESL two nights a week: Tuesday nights in Pasco (with help from volunteers from First Baptist of Richland) and Wednesday nights in Prosser (with

help from volunteers from Bethel of Richland and Prosser). The ESL center in West Pasco is continuing in the Nazarene Church with help of a Hispanic Missionary Pastor. I gave him all the materials, gave him an orientation and had him observe the ESL Center in Pasco. They have a great team of volunteers there and, with God's grace, will continue to reach out to the Hispanic community in their area. I visited several Head Start centers, got the word out through local Hispanic pastors and went visiting door-to-door in Pasco to let folks know about the classes. We have had a number of new folks attend. However, it is interesting how God will send people to the group that were not contacted in any of these ways.

The Tuesday evening center in Pasco has childcare provided by members of the Hispanic church. They also provide refreshments. A number of their members are in one of the two classes being offered, including the pastor, Jaime. In each class meeting I am sharing a spiritual devotion, with prayer. There is a real comradery and friendship among the members as they struggle to learn to speak English and begin a new life in a land where "strangers" and "foreigners" are not always looked upon with the grace and love of Jesus. So many times, as they receive the gracious message of God's loving acceptance, they are wiping tears from their eyes. I acknowledge before them the harsh realities of living in a nation whose heart has been hardened against them. How our "Christian" nation needs to take seriously the words of our Heavenly Father: "But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you

as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." (Leviticus 19.34)

The Wednesday evening center in Prosser is prospering again this year because of the faithfulness of God and the volunteers from Bethel. The children enjoy their classes so much they are reminding their parents: "It's Wednesday. We're going to class tonight, right?" There are two levels of English instruction. I'm not leading the advanced class. The volunteers have assumed responsibility for choosing curriculum and planning for their instruction. The leader, Ninette, is a counselor at Prosser High



School and together with her team does a great job of teaching the more advanced English language learners. In the beginners' class I teach, we started with four and now have 13 students. It is great to see new faces, to hear the students encourage one another and to watch a new cohort forming. Each evening, both classes come together, with the children, for a dinner prepared by a small group from the church. In this way so many people are able to participate in reaching out to their neighbors, strangers in a distant land, who greatly appreciate the love and assistance they receive from a local church each week. In December, a Christmas dinner was celebrated with students and teachers bringing food to share. Fifty-four people were there on a snowy night from varied backgrounds but rejoicing together in a bond of peace.

I hope your holidays were celebrated in God's peace and hope. There is neither hope nor lasting peace from the kingdoms of this world. However, as Jesus told Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, but my kingdom is not from hence." (John 18:36) We have a "better hope", a "living hope"; and that hope is Jesus. He defines us as people beloved by God, redeemed by blood and called to a spiritual inheritance "reserved in heaven for us". We join with Paul and stand in his affirmation: "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory for ever and ever." (2 Timothy 4:18) We are

Yours for Souls,
Harold and Cheryl Large

hclarge@hotmail.com

(509) 460-7370