

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Luke 2:10-12



Rick: The pictures on this page are out of a book we recently completed, the Christmas story in Quichua. It is simply made up of all of the texts in the Bible relating to Jesus' birth, with pictures added on nearly every page. I had already put the text arrangement together many years ago, to read aloud to my own family. Recently I obtained most of the pictures in the book from an S.I.L.* picture database, so we have now put together the same Christmas book in English, Spanish, Central Highland Quichua, and Imbabura Quichua. If you would like to see it, or even print out your own copy for use with your family, go to www.quichua.net, click where it says, "I don't speak Quichua," and scroll down until you see the book. You can either view it on the computer, or print out a copy that can be folded into a book.

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Merry Christmas!

Betty: Our Home Ministry Assignment is going well. We have sure been seeing a lot of the U.S. as we travel from church to church visiting our friends and supporters. It's great to see everyone, but the schedule has been pretty hectic. We've been from Colorado to south Florida and back to Nebraska since August. We're planning another round of travel in the new year. The kids are getting used to the car, and have been real troopers, but it will be great to get a break in the travels and a little family time over Christmas. Please continue to pray for our time in the U.S. and our financial support needs. If you want to contact us, check out the contact info at the bottom of the letter.



We are about halfway through our

Home Ministry Assignment,

And our schedule has mostly filled up, but we could still fit you in! Let us know when you would like us to come visit you!

Details: Mid November – January: Nebraska & Colorado
February – April: Southeastern U.S.

* (S.I.L. is Wycliffe Bible Translators' sister organization: www.sil.org.)

Rick: Remember the men's Bible study that I have been leading for some of the men from *Sembradores* Church? When we left to come on Home Ministry Assignment, it was down to three students, but they were very enthusiastic, and had made tremendous progress in their reading skills. Thanks for praying!

Many of you were praying for the literacy program we had hoped to set up at El Tejar Church, and shared our disappointment when that did not materialize for this year. However, God in his grace has opened another door for this ministry when he closed that one. The men in our Bible study, when they saw the literacy materials we had prepared, and reflected on the progress that they themselves had made in reading, got enthusiastic about the idea of setting up their own literacy program, using these materials, at *Sembradores* Church. We were not available to train them to be literacy teachers, since we are on our Home Ministry Assignment, but several experienced members of our team in Ecuador got excited about doing this training, and have been carrying it out during the summer and fall. After the program is completed, these teachers will begin teaching classes to many of the members at *Sembradores* Church who cannot read or do not read well. After that program gets going well, their vision is to take the same program back to their home village in *Chimborazo* province, and set up a program there. And after that, only the Lord knows!

If you want to center-staple your folded Christmas book, but just have an ordinary stapler, check out the fascinating method (which I just stumbled across on the S.I.L. website, but wish I had learned long ago) at: www.sil.org/lingualinks/literacy/implementaliteracyprogram/howtocenterstapleabookwithareg.htm.

Prayer & Praise

- Pray for the new literacy program at *Sembradores* Church, that it will be a successful and effective program, and that this vision may spread to many other Quichua churches.
- Continue praying for our financial needs. We still have about \$1,700 in pledges per month to raise.
- Pray for us as we move into the second half of our Home Ministry Assignment, that we will be able get needed rest in spite of our hectic schedule and long distances to travel. We thank God that he gave us two little children who travel well, but they sometimes get to the end of their rope, too!




Cultural Closeup

Betty: This year, we have the joy of celebrating Christmas with family in the United States. As a family, we celebrate Christmas in Ecuador much the same as we do here. Most Ecuadorians have Christmas trees, a big feast, and gifts, very much like we do.

But Quichua culture is quite different. Christmas is not a big celebration among the Quichuas. In fact, they don't make a big deal about most other holidays or birthdays, either (except for *Carnaval* and the Day of the Dead, as explained in a previous newsletter). Giving gifts is not a big part of their traditions. Many of the older Quichuas don't even know when they were born or how old they are. One thing the Quichuas celebrate big, though: weddings. The whole community is invited and everyone is fed plenty. In fact, it's the duty of the groom's family to provide a full meal for every person— more than any one person can eat. The Quichuas each bring a container to the wedding to take food home. If you don't eat it all, you are expected to take it home. It's an insult not to. Some missionaries told me several years ago that they sneak the food into a "take home" bag. But we found out that you don't have to sneak. The Quichuas don't expect you to eat that much and are honored if you want to take their food home.

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This newsletter can be seen on the Internet at:
www.Aschmann.net/Rick/Newsletter.