

Sermon Stories

The Word Touches an Uspanteco's Heart

We really felt the presence of the Holy Spirit when we found the phrase: *Xkacochaj kac'aslemal chirij Jesucristo*.

During a four way discussion between Xayo, Miguel, Margot, and Stan, about the true meaning of salvation, Xayo says: "You can't use that word, *cochaj*, for salvation. Because that's like if you invited my brother Miguel to dinner, and I arrived with him and then you had to give me dinner too. That would be a *free* gift to me. I didn't do anything to *merit* it. But *because of* my brother you had to give dinner to me too!"

Then Xayo, his face flushed with emotion, listened intently as we explained, "that is *exactly* what Jesus does for us!"

God accepts us because we "accompany" Jesus when He invites us to go with Him into God's presence.

Stan and Margot McMillen
Guatemala

María

María faithfully attends the Lutheran church in her village with her young children. She enjoys the fellowship and helping when she can. Her husband does not attend. He works to provide for the family; yet they are among the poorest in the village.

As a child, María attended school for a short while. She learned a bit of Spanish then, but very little. Her language was Quiché, the Mayan Indian language. She also learned about letters and numbers, but she never learned to read. The time was too short in school.

In the church services she understands the sermons preached in Quiché. And she has memorized a few of the Spanish hymns. Sometimes the congregation sings in Quiché. Then she can follow these words well.

Being illiterate has kept María dependent on others not only in the church service but in other aspects of her life as well. She recognized the need to read.

When the congregation decided to begin literacy classes, she was among the first to join. She wanted to learn to read. And she did. For the nine weeks, María rarely missed a class. She soon picked up on the lessons and sought for opportunities to help the other ladies as well.

When the day came for the graduation service at the church, María proudly walked up to the mountain

church with her little ones and her husband at her side. She and the other students sang out joyfully the songs they had learned to read from the songbook. And the Gospel lesson was read to the congregation by a tearful, proud lady—María—who could read God's Word. It was quite a moment for this lady, and for her family and church.

Paul and Tammy Kinney
Guatemala

In Their Hands—and Upon Their Hearts

The old man's face lit up with delight and he began to dance! It was Sunday afternoon and we were playing the cassette of newly composed Kwanja Scripture songs for those gathered nearby. The song was saying, "Do not worry about what you shall eat, what you shall drink, what you shall wear. Your life is worth more than these. Your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things." The man was at first surprised to hear the words in his own language. Then he exclaimed exuberantly, "It is so, it is true!" Unable to hold it in any longer, he danced about to express his joy at hearing and understanding the Scripture songs in his own language.

Martin and Joan Weber
Cameroon

From a Letter

This morning Tennyson, the Kisi translator, made a very revealing statement. He said, "I am beginning to understand that my people—even pastors—do not understand many parts of the Bible. Even though they have read it over and over in English, yet they do not have the right understanding of the Gospel. But now I see from the comments they make that they understand many parts of the Gospel in Kisi."

I asked him what comments they had been making. He replied that often after the people have read a passage they say, "So that is the meaning of this passage? Now I understand this passage better than before. I enjoy reading the Bible in Kisi very much." Tennyson went on to say that they would not enjoy reading the Scriptures if they were not understanding it better.

Larry and Mae Johnson
Liberia