

REPORT ON WEI TEAMS IN GUATEMALA

Greetings from the south!

Once again this year we were blessed to host teams from **World English Institute (WEI)**.

There were two teams, the first arriving on the same day that our July Mission Team departed. As in years past, these teachers arrived willing and ready to work in this special ministry.

Needless to say, we continue to be sold on WEI! Our brother **Dick Ady** has done a great job at developing this ministry that uses the Bible to teach English. For those who are new at receiving our reports, please allow us a few lines to tell you a little about WEI.

The lessons, from beginner to advanced courses, are designed to lead the student through God's plan of redemption, making the most of Biblical events to develop conversation and to create dialogue.



The students know from the beginning that it is not just an English class. They know that they will have the chance to enhance their English while having a chance to enhance their Bible knowledge; thankfully, the use of the Bible is a drawing factor here in Guatemala. After the teachers depart, the students can also continue their studies on line. And, in addition to all of this, once the students complete the advanced courses they are able, if they wish, to take the exam (the TOEFL) required by most U.S. universities before accepting foreign students, which is also the exam that opens many job opportunities in Guatemala. Of course, the ultimate goal is to help lead the students to Christ.

Each year, most of our students here in Guatemala have been eager to register knowing these facts already mentioned. Another item of importance about WEI is that, in most cases, there is a one-on-one student to teacher ratio. We say in most cases because there are occasions in which the teachers have more than one student during a class time. In these situations an effort is made to match students with an English level that is similar.

We could write more about WEI but we believe this is enough to help you better understand why we are excited about this ministry and the importance of individuals and local congregations supporting it financially. Now, let us tell you a little about what took place with the two teams that visited us this year.

This year we had four teachers on each team. The teams were here for two weeks each, which gave each student a month of studies. We had about 40 students who registered for the program. The hotel where the teams stayed gave a meeting room each day for the studies, without additional cost. This was a significant savings. It was also a benefit to the hotel in that several of their employees were able to take these classes. We were able to make many positive contacts in the hotel.

The first group of WEI teachers consisted of **Anna Pride**, the team coordinator, **Nancy Petrokansky**, **Emma Stallworth** and **Michelle Avalos**. They came from the state of **Connecticut**. Each teacher taught at least seven students each day with their first class starting at 9 a.m. As we mentioned



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earlier, there were class times that had more than one student. Except for Anna, everyone enjoyed a three hour break in the middle of the day; Anna took on a returning student from 12:00 – 1:00. This extended break time was used for lunch, which meant exploring new restaurants in the area, etc, and for down time to prepare for the last four students. Their last student studied from 6 to 7 each evening.

For their full weekend off the team took a tour on Saturday to **Antigua** with a local tour agency. It was a day full of culture experiences, shopping and just relaxation. They returned to the hotel that evening where we joined them for dinner.



On Sunday, they had the opportunity to worship with the local church in **Linda Vista**. This year they did not teach at Linda Vista, even though they offered to do so. With our July team having just departed, it was decided that it was probably best to go ahead with our normal program for the church. They did, however, bring special care packages from the congregation to our children. You can see in the picture the team with the children. Like any group of children, ours thoroughly enjoyed receiving this gift.



Our second team was made up of two couples. **Greg Weston**, the team coordinator, and his wife, **LaDon**, came from **Ashland, Oregon**. Joining them were **Pete** and **Amanda Shaw** from **Tulsa, Oklahoma**. They maintained pretty much the same schedule as the first team and they, too, did a great job as they worked with the students.

On their full weekend off, they, also, made a trip to Antigua. Because we were scheduled to teach in the ITL Saturday program, only **Hi** was able to accompany them this year. While in Antigua, they started with a visit to a **coffee farm**. Unfortunately, there was not an English speaking tour guide available, so they had to read the signs and listen to taped information as they went through the farm. Since we are not coffee drinkers, Hi was not a lot of help in giving a tour; we do not know good coffee from bad coffee. ☺



Something interesting happened while they were going through the farm; they met the owner. The group had just passed a picture of him on exhibit that was taken some 35+ years ago. He was a very interesting person and had a lot to say about his part of operating the farm now. Thankfully, he provided our guests with some up-to-date information about the farm. From there, the team went into the center of **Antigua** and to the market. After leaving Antigua, they traveled back to Guatemala City where **Byron** joined them for dinner.

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familiar with the team because she served as their secretary/receptionist each day. Her regular job is that of secretary for ITL.



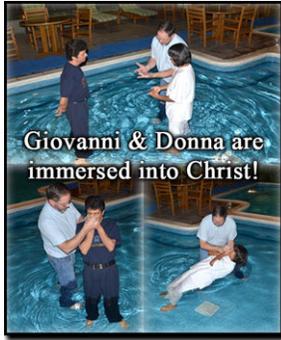
In addition to all the good that was already taking place, this team was able to see fruit born from the seed that had been planted through the labors of both teams (see 1 Corinthians 3:6). The first was **Thelma Fabiola Chan Rodriguez**, a new student for this year. Thelma, a student of Michelle Avalos on the first team and Amanda Shaw on the second, came to the conclusion that she needed to obey her Lord in baptism. We were asked to step in and to study with her in Spanish to make sure that she understood the commitment that she was making. After the study we talked with the person in charge of the private swimming pool area. We were allowed to use the pool to immerse Thelma, who then became our new sister in Christ. As a result of WEI, Thelma's English is much better, but most important, her soul is saved. In the picture, Thelma is the one standing on the right with a white blouse. Please keep Thelma in your prayers. She has a good job, but the problem is that she works all day on Sunday. She stated that she is going to work on that because she understands the importance of assembling with the saints on the first day of the week.



The next conversion involved **Donna Suseth Alvarado Castillo**. Donna is a returning student from the two previous years that WEI has been taught here in Guatemala. Her teachers were Anna Pride on the first team and Greg Weston on the second. Donna's story is very interesting. After one of their studies, Donna told Greg that she was not a Christian and that she needed to be baptized. Greg let Donna know that he and the rest of us were there to help in any way that we could. But Donna told Greg that she could not be baptized because she and Giovanni were not married. They had, according to Donna, been living together for a long time. Thankfully, Donna understood the importance of her soul and the soul of **Giovanni** and she accepted the invitation of Greg to study with both of them. To make a longer story shorter, Greg then asked if we would step in to study with both of them in Spanish to make sure we could answer any questions that they might have. Of course, we agreed to help.

Marriage is not a topic in the WEI studies. However, **repentance** is. And, after talking about repentance before one is baptized, Donna came to the conclusion herself that two people cannot live in sin and expect God to forgive them of it if they continue in that sin, even though they had been baptized. We fully agree with her conclusion. But the interesting part of her story is that after talking with both her and Giovanni, we found out that they *were* married. They had been

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taught—and for many years felt they were living incorrectly—that they needed to have a church wedding and to be married by someone in the church (a teaching of the Catholic Church). Because they **only** had married as the law of the land required, they had been *erroneously* led to believe that God did not accept their marriage. You should have seen the look on their faces when they discovered that after all these years their marriage *is* acceptable in God’s eyes. They realized that they did not need to repent of and rectify a sin that they were not in. Now, it was time for them to answer a more important question: was their relationship with God acceptable? Both acknowledged that it was not. We went to

the hotel swimming pool area where Greg immersed them into Christ!

Please keep Giovanni and Donna in your prayers. Pray that we will be able to help them grow in their new walk with the Lord. Also, pray that they will be a positive influence on their children and that they, too, will come to know and obey the saving grace of God.



How exciting it was to have both teams with us. They left us some good contacts. We are presently studying with **Douglas Roberto Rivas Perez**. He has some very different ideas about several religious topics. Hopefully, we can help him better understand what God’s will is for him and for everyone that seeks the Lord. **Gilmar Ruben Barrios** is another student that has shown much interest. With the exception of one Sunday since the WEI studies have stopped, Gilmar has been at Linda Vista each week for worship. Lord willing, we will travel to his home to study with him and his wife on Saturday, September 10. Gilmar’s desire is for him and his family to be united in the “things of the Lord.” Please pray that we, with God’s help, can help him achieve this goal.

We close by asking that you please keep Dick Ady, WEI, the WEI teachers and students, and us in your prayers. If you have a desire to come to Guatemala with one of the WEI teams or to go anywhere else in the world where WEI is, just let us know. We will put you in touch with the right people; you can also visit the WEI website at www.worldenglishinstitute.org.

May God continue to bless each of you with the knowledge of His presence! We love you and are thankful that you have an interest in how the Lord is working in the small country of Guatemala.

Because He First Loved Us,

Hawatthia “Hi” Jones

Byron E. Benitez

“Teaching the CENTRAL MESSAGE in CENTRAL AMERICA!”