

Stutzman Summary

Cedar Hill, Texas

Jul - Aug 2002

Dear friend,

This past November as I was praying, I asked the Lord, "What do you want me to do with the rest of my life?"

Suddenly, the Lord spoke to me, "Go into counseling work". At first I was stunned because He spoke so clearly and decisively. Then joy flooded my heart as it all began to make sense. My undergraduate degree was in Psychology and all my life I have had an intense interest in the study of human behavior. In fact, before we joined Wycliffe I had considered a career in counseling. However, when we joined Wycliffe I put that thought on the back shelf.

A few times during our Wycliffe career, I had thought about switching into counseling work, but the logistics never seemed right. Either we were located far from a good school for training in counseling or I was too busy assisting Robert in a Bible translation project or I, myself was too 'broken' emotionally to be of any help to anyone else. Now I realized that all those obstacles had been removed. We live and work very close to Dallas Baptist University (DBU), which has an excellent study program for counselors and the Lord has done a tremendous amount of healing in my life.

As I pondered this I wondered what my next step should be. I had heard that the screening process for counselors is fairly extensive because it's a challenging job. But since I had no doubt that my Father meant for me to be a Wycliffe Counselor, I approached the Wycliffe Counseling office here in Dallas for direction. Becky Leverington laid out the application process for me – extensive psychological testing for both Robert and me, collecting eight - ten references, writing detailed background information about my childhood, my marriage, my health, my field experiences, etc. and requesting my college transcripts.

Becky stated, "After you've assembled this information, I will present it to the Wycliffe Counseling Ministries Acceptance committee in January. The committee will also want to meet with you in person to get a chance to know you. If they accept your application, you will be required to complete a study program like the one at DBU. Since missionaries experience unique stresses of cross-cultural living and many transitions, when you've completed your Masters in Counseling degree, you will have to do a two-year internship here in the Wycliffe Counseling office. This additional training and supervision will help you pass the Texas state licensure exams to become a Licensed Professional Counselor."

"Wow." I thought, "Lord, do you know what you're asking of me? This is significant additional education and training." I sensed the Lord wanted me to continue, and so I began the application process and in January I met with the committee. A few weeks later as I checked my email in the Philippines I received the letter I was waiting for. In the letter the committee wrote, "*We are delighted to extend to you the invitation and approval to begin an MA program in counseling, Verna. There are many strengths that you bring to this ministry which showed up in the references, psychological testing, and application materials you submitted. They include maturity, perspective, and evidence of growth through your own life issues, which will enhance your ability... and growth toward becoming a good professional counselor. You also bring a wealth of experience within the (Wycliffe) organization and on the field. You exhibit an ability to cope with severe stress evidenced by your working through the village attack, difficult language program, and care for your youngest son. You are a good listener, empathetic, and approachable. We also note*

your experience with adoption and learning disabilities. All of these things will... enable you to grow into a good professional counselor." What a confirmation this was of what I heard the Lord telling me!

A further confirmation occurred when I visited the Wycliffe center in Papua New Guinea this past February, I was impressed with the need for highly qualified counselors on the mission field to come alongside the missionaries and help them work through issues of work-related stress, threats of violence, chronic illnesses and problems with children. Missionaries face the same stressors that we all face, plus many additional ones. I believe that because I've experienced many of these stresses and worked through numerous issues, that I can be of great assistance to the younger missionaries.

Thank you, too, for your part in this process of the Lord's leading through your regular prayers for us. I know they helped me hear and follow God's leading through this process so far, and they will continue to help as I continue the process.

I have applied to DBU and been accepted. I will start my first semester on August 26th. I plan to continue part-time in my current Wycliffe assignment doing software-related tasks, and study part-time until my degree is completed. Robert will continue full-time in the Translation department writing and editing exegetical Bible translation tools. Our financial arrangements with Wycliffe will remain the same. However, the cost for my study program is our responsibility. If you would like to contribute to my tuition costs, which are substantial, please mark your gift for Verna's scholarship fund. Thank you so much. Thank you also for praying for continued direction for us as we make this change.

Lots of love,

Love for both of us

Robert & Verna Stutzman



FOR FINANCIAL GIFTS:

Wycliffe Bible Translators
4316-10th Street NE
Calgary, AB T2E 6K3 CA

Wycliffe Bible Translators
PO Box 628200
Orlando, FL 32862-8200 USA

PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE:

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Stutzman Phone: 972-293-1734
419 McKinley Street Email: Robert_Stutzman@sil.org
Cedar Hill, TX 75104 USA Internet: www.robert.stutzman.net