

Praising the Lord for how He has been guiding us and protecting us during the last week as we've been preparing for the dedication of the Western Bukidnon Manobo Scriptures to be held on the 31st of January. Thanks again for your prayers.

Read on for a more detailed account of all we've been up to.

Week One Of Our Time In Manobo Country

January 18 (Sat) – flew from Manila to Davao, Mindanao - a little over an hour before the pope flew from Manila to Tacloban. Our plane actually left a little earlier than its schedule since no traffic was going to be allowed on the runways an hour before the pope's scheduled flight.

We were able to see in Davao a lot of our SIL friends we had not seen in a number of years. I was also able to play some soccer at the Faith School soccer field, right next to the SIL guest house where Raquel and I stayed for one night.

January 19 – took a four hour bus ride to Maramag. We had planned to transfer to another bus to take us to Barandias where the Western Bukidnon Manobo Old Testament dedication will take place. We arrived in Maramag around 5 PM and waited for the bus that would stop by Barandias. When it arrived there were lots of people cramming to get in. It was soon packed like sardines. No way Raquel and I with our luggage could get on. Thanking the Lord that one of our former Cebuano translators lives near Maramag. Ann and her husband Jun came and picked us up at the bus station and brought us to a very humble pension house where we spent the night and the following morning Jorge picked us up with his multicab (a small version of a jeepney). Jorge is one of the soccer kids whom I played with and coached when we lived at Nasuli. He is now a leader with YWAM and has an ongoing ministry at Nasuli. He and his disciple Junjun (one of the younger batch of soccer kids whom I played with and coached) brought us to Barandias and stayed with us all last week helping with transporting Bibles and people.

January 20 – met with the Manobo church leaders discussing strategies for the distribution of the newly arrived Manobo Old Testaments and the coming dedication (on the 31st). I shared with them that it would be good if we distribute them to people who really want to read it. It is hard to sell Bibles since the people are very poor and they'd rather buy rice for their children. But we don't want to just give them away either since we are not sure what they'd do with the Bibles. Instead we are having them work for them. We are telling them that we are loaning the O.T.s to them with their assurance that they will read them and then meet in groups of around ten in their villages. I gave them reading assignments (a few chapters each day) from various books of the O.T. Then at the dedication we will ask those who have read the assignments to come forward and we will hand each one a pen to write their names on the back of the front cover signifying that the Bibles we loaned to them are now theirs. (Presently their names are written in pencil.)

January 21 – We split up in groups to hike to the various villages to distribute the newly published Old Testament to the Manobos scattered in the mountains. Yoyoy (whom Raquel and I had sponsored in his seminary education) and I hiked two hours at a steep incline to the village of Bagong Buhay. This 64 year old had to come to the realization his years are catching up with him, for every now and then I had to take a pause to catch my breath. But it was well worth it, for once we reached the village the view looking down into the valley was awesome. Also we had a great time sharing with the family that

Yoyoy picked to be the distributor of the O.T.s we brought up with us and the facilitator of the sharing groups in that village.

January 22-23 – We continued to distribute the O.T.s and had the privilege of witnessing the group meetings. I was very pleased. It seemed that the Manobos were excited getting the Old Testament in their language, including the young people. Every evening in Barandias (the main center where the dedication will be held and where Raquel and I are staying) I would meet with around 40 of the young people, mainly teenagers, and share with them the assigned passages. Of course I had to demonstrate to them that I am as young as they are (at least in heart) by standing on my hands 5 different ways. The following evening they also seemed to enjoy my little magic tricks. :) Raquel met with the adults.

January 24 – From 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM I conducted a seminar on how to read the Bible and on principles of interpreting the various kinds of literature found in it.

The church was packed with about 50 participants from the various surrounding villages. I prayed that the Lord would help me with Cebuano and I believe He indeed helped me out since I did not seem to have too much difficulty expressing myself in Cebuano. Their English is very minimal and so is my Manobo, so we communicate via Cebuano, the lingua franca in this area. Raquel utilized her God given skill organizing those who prepared lunch for the big group. We are grateful that at least in the morning we had good weather so the people were able to attend the seminar. Due to the poverty among the mountain people, there is a lack of umbrellas and the small mountain trails can be very slippery – not much fun hiking when it is raining. And it does rain a lot here.

After the seminar, Jorge made two trips with his multicab jammed with people transporting them closer to their homes. He then brought Raquel and me to the town of Quezon where we spent the night near Ann and Jun.

January 25 (Sunday) – After attending church with Jun and family, we joined them and many others at a swimming pool celebrating Jun's 47th birthday. Then Raquel and I once again got on a bus for Nasuli arriving in time for me to play soccer with my old soccer buddies. In the evening, many of them came over to Jorge's home (where we spent the night) to visit us.

January 26 – In a couple of hours, Raquel, Lenie and I will travel back to Barandias (two plus hour trip) in the KIA we had used in the past with the Light Team. This time I'll be driving. Its front wheel drive is out of function. Pray it will not rain so I can park it near the church. Otherwise we'll have to park it by the highway since the road up to the church (a fairly steep incline) is mainly clay and very slippery when wet.

Pray that this week will be a great week like the last week and especially during the big event on the 31st when we will be dedicating the Scriptures in the Manobo language. Very few of the languages here have a translation of the whole Bible. The Manobos are blessed indeed. May they all be very appreciative of this fact and give Him the praise and glory and honour He so deserves.

Yours in His service and for His Word, Kermit and Raquel with Lenie, Jorge, Junjun, and our Manobo brothers and sisters