

I recently received the below update from Grace McCune who is working with us this month (along with her husband Keith) on revising the Tagalog translation. They have been a BIG help. We divided up the native Tagalog speakers amongst us, with one or two of them working with one of us (I, Raquel, Grace, or Keith) on different books of the Bible. We go over various issues raised by others we've been able to get to help us by reading various passages and critiquing the translation we are revising. SIL has software called Paratext where those critiquing (scattered throughout the Philippines) can flag their concerns, and we are able to retrieve these flags via the internet. The issues generally are related to clarity, naturalness or accuracy. King and Shy usually work with Grace going over the flags in the narrative books. King and Shy are two of the four who recently accepted Jesus as their boss and saviour. I asked Grace if I can forward to you her below update. She said, "Sure!"

[By Grace McCune]

Ruth and the King

Have you ever read the book of Ruth for the first time? Have you ever read the book of Ruth as a mystery romance?

This is Grace writing this time -- I had something I wanted to share. We have mentioned that our four young people that have been working with us this month know very little about the Bible. Reading through our assigned books these weeks, the historical books starting with Joshua, has been a revelation. My two assistants, King and Shy, had heard of Moses, and had even heard about Joshua and the battle of Jerico, but had no idea that Joshua had been his Moses' assistant before he went on to lead Israel himself. Every page was new to them. For each chapter, we would first address the "flags", the notes that other checkers had made about problems they had noticed (either of accuracy or of naturalness), then when those had been corrected, either King or Shy would read the chapter out loud, and we would discuss anything they didn't understand (old fashioned words, awkward sentences, sometimes mistakes that I had just made in typing in the recent corrections), and make it more clear and natural if we could.

When we got to the book of Ruth, King asked: Who is Ruth? And I answered: Malalaman natin. Let's find out! I didn't want to spoil the story. So we would work through the flags, with King becoming more impatient as we got near the end of the chapter. He

wanted to get to the part where we read it through! As chapter one unfolded of course he learned something about who Ruth was-- a faithful friend to a bitter older woman, a foreigner who wanted to follow Israel's God-- but there was more to come.

In Chapter 2 he learned that she was also a good worker. And that Boaz was a near relative. And that Naomi hadn't, in her tired, bitter spirit, forgotten everything she ever knew about clever planning (there is a point where she says: put on your best clothes and wear perfume!) And King asked: Are they going to get married? and I said: Malalaman natin! Let's find out!

In Chapter 3 we had to deal with the problems before we could get on with the story. What to say about barley, something pretty much unknown in the Philippines? Answer: a footnote, explaining that it is a grain that grows somewhat like wheat.

Finally we got to the good part: we read about the meeting of Boaz and Ruth at the threshing ground. And then Boaz mentions that there is a nearer relative who could be the one to take care of her land and (as part of the process) marry her. Who is this guy, King demanded! What is his name? Is he going to mess this up?

And I answered: Malalaman natin!

In Chapter 4, of course, the story is resolved. Boaz wins his case (not without a little clever planning of his own) and the couple are married. Like all the best romantic comedies, it ends with not only a wedding, but a baby. And then that beautiful genealogy.

So, I said to King: This is who Ruth is. Ruth was from Moab, which means (though the book of Ruth doesn't explain this) that according to the Law, as a foreigner she could not enter the Tabernacle to worship. But she married Boaz, a man of Israel, and then she became the great grandmother of King David. You know King David, right? And King said, Oo pala! So that's the way it is!

King is learning. He is learning other things, too. Every morning, before we set to work, we have a devotional time. I am sharing some Tagalog praise songs with the group all of them new to them, and we praise God together and pray for each other. One morning I shared a song about asking God for forgiveness, and then we two

older couples talked about asking each other's forgiveness within our marriages, how that is just an ordinary part of our walk with God.

The next morning King had something to share. He said, "I have never asked forgiveness in my whole life (he is 20 years old). But yesterday, for the first time, I apologized to my wife for something." And then he had to take out his handkerchief and wipe his eyes. Vim, his wife, was smiling happily, but I think her eyes were shining a little, too!

[Now, it's me (Kermit) again. It has been neat these past couple of weeks hearing the testimonies of these new siblings of ours. They are full of joy and have given us neat testimonies of healed relationships recently with aunts and dads and each other. Sometimes us old children in the Lord take our position in Him and all the blessings and power and fullness and graces of the Spirit He gives us for granted. Once again, I can only say, "Hodu ladonay ci tov!" – "Thanks/Praise to (our) Lord for (He) is good!"]

Kermit for also Raquel