

Dear family at Cannon Beach,

I can't express my gratitude to our loving Father.

Presently we are in Tacloban guiding the Waray translators and all's well.

But I really want to share with you about the amazing ride (figuratively speaking) the Lord gave Raquel and me during the past week. So if you are interested, read on. In general all went better than expected during the Manobo dedication and over 300 Old Testaments have now been distributed among the Manobos in the mountains of Mindanao. Our SIL director mentioned that it was the first complete Bible for a minority language in all of the Philippines except for four Ifugao languages found in northern Luzon.

Immediate future plans:

Feb 10-24 - Attend the wedding of Yrrah near Amsterdam, Netherlands. Yrrah whom we put in charge of the Hanunuu translation is kind of an unofficial adopted daughter of ours. Her parents have passed away and we will be her only family from the Philippines attending the wedding.

March – Oversee the Mangyan translation workshop in Calapan, Mindoro

April-mid May - Work with the Mangyan teachers in the mountains and on the new Mangyan school building in San Jose, Mindoro. Also make a trip to the islands of Caluya and Semirara conducting seminars on principles of interpreting Scripture.

Thanks once again for your prayers and being our partners in our various ministries. Praying all's well in your journey with our loving Lord.

Kermit and Raquel

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## **Now for a more detailed account of the glorious dedication and all the neat things He did for us (with pictures):**

In our last email to you we wrote of how fantastically well our first week in the Manobo country/mountains went and we asked for prayers that all would go well during the following week as well.

Thanks so much for you prayers, for the last week went just as smooth and even more glorious than the previous week. I had asked for prayer that it would not rain so I could park near the church. During our trip back to

Barandias it had not rained and the roads were dry until we were within a mile or two of Barandias. Then we noticed that the roads were wet. Since everything was dry until that point I assumed it had just rained. Since I really did not want to park the van at the side of the highway (a number of blocks away from where we were staying) I emboldened myself to give it a try, to attempt to bring the van up the fairly steep incline on the clay roads to where we were staying, thinking that since it had just rained, maybe the clay roads were not all that slippery yet. At the first turn (going right) the van started to slip sideways towards the ditch on the left – actually towards a parked motorcycle with two men on it – I was afraid we might hit them. But I was able (more than likely with a lot of help from above) to get it to crawl back up on the center of the road and we continued our slippery climb with a few more scary turns and eventually made it to the church and parsonage. I found out later that it had rained there that whole afternoon. If I had known that, I would not have attempted to even try it. But I praised the Lord I was ignorant of that fact and we got the vehicle safely up the climb. I was able to have a great night sleep that night, not having to worry about the vehicle if we had to park it down on the highway – fearing that it might be vandalized.

Once again during the next few days we visited the reading groups and continued to meet with the leaders, planning with them for the upcoming dedication. Tuesday afternoon I gave another lecture at a remote village on how to read the Bible and principles of interpreting it. Three of us took two motorcycles to this very remote village. Shortly after we left, Dexter and I stopped to let Yoyoy catch up with us. However Dexter's motorcycle then would keep dying once we put it in gear. After dozens of attempts we decided to give up and leave it behind and the two of us transfer to Yoyoy's motorcycle. But Dexter decided to try one more time. This time it took and he was off. Once again, Hodu ladonay ci tov! Give-thanks/praise to the Lord, for *he is good!*

[Below: Dexter and I in front of the parsonage where Raquel and I stayed for two weeks, next to the Barandias church on the right]



Thursday afternoon our camera man (Khieven) arrived being picked up at the airport in Davao by Dante (one of our Light Team pastors). It “so happened to be” that Dante had previous arrangements to be in Davao at that time. Davao is 5 hours away from his home and from Barandias, where we were. We had been concerned how we were going to get Khieven to Barandias. But God once again worked things out beautifully. Khieven is from Manila but volunteered his time to come down to take pictures and videos of the dedication and surrounding events. He stayed the final two days before the dedication with Raquel and me in the parsonage – a very humble abode, but lot better and nicer and roomier than we had expected. We were expecting to be in some small corner in the small home of Pastor Noel with his large family. Once again we were very very grateful of His mercy and His accommodating us.

Friday it rained and rained – all day. I looked up to the skies and my dialogue with our Father went something like this: Lord, I think you are allowing it to rain like this so we’ll be even that much more grateful when we have a beautiful day tomorrow – dedication day. Friday afternoon I also came down with a cold and the chills and not a whole lot of energy. I just prayed that I’d be better the following day for the big event.

Saturday – the Lord once again answered our prayers – all day was sunny and zero rain. In the morning we allowed the roads to dry up some before Jorge and Dante and nephew began to pick up people from the surrounding villages with their vehicles. Mind you, the Manobos are around the poorest of the poor and no one has vehicles, except for some motorcycles. Our SIL friends, including our SIL director, showed up around 9:30 AM. By 10:00 most of the people had arrived and the big event began. Yoyoy and I co-emceed the event.

Schedule of events:

1 Welcome by barangay official (in Cebuano, not being a Manobo)

[The translation of the sign below reads: DEDICATION OF THE WESTERN BUKIDNON MANOBO WORD OF GOD]



2 Opening prayer – Noel Pina (in Manobo)

3 History of Dick (known as Mangkaklin\* by the Manobos) and Betty Elkins and of the Manobo translation of the Bible – Pastor Linog (in Manobo) [Pastor Linog was the main translator for the Manobo Bible and worked closely with Dick. Dick and Betty arrived in 1953 from the USA and the New Testament was published in 1978. Around nine years ago, Pastor Linog began translating the Old Testament with me (Kermit) as the coordinator/overseer of the project. I was able to send our manuscripts to Dick (who was now in the USA semi-retired) via internet and he was able to check over all the books of the Old Testament before he passed away (April 21, 2012).]

4 Summary of the above – Kermit (in English for our SIL friends who do not know Manobo)

5 Special number – the youth of the church of Barandias sang a beautiful Manobo song

6 SIL Director's thanksgiving and words of encouragement – Jason Griffith (in English)

7 Translation of the above with some additional comments – Kermit (in Cebuano) [Note: I, Kermit, do not know that much Manobo. However the Manobos are familiar with Cebuano being surrounded

by that language group.]

8 Special number – Manobo cultural dance performed by the Barandias older women.



- 9 Raquel and I led singing Psalm 133 in the original Hebrew language with the dance Raquel and I created to go along with it. I had the Bible reading facilitators and the women who had just done the cultural dance come forward to join us in the dance – holding hands in a circle formation. “How good and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters live together in unity!”
- 10 Skit on the book of Jonah presented by the youth of the Barandias church. I had worked the previous evenings on this with the youth. [I was wondering how Jonah would be eaten up by a big fish. Right away the thought came to my mind to use a bed sheet - and so four gals under the sheet each holding a corner of the sheet walked towards Jonah who had been cast out to the sea by the boat crew and was now prostrate on the ground pretending he was swimming, and they swallowed him up.] At the end of the skit when the people of Nineveh repented in sack cloth and the narrator announced that God had forgiven them and they were now full of joy, they then sang Psalm 136 in Hebrew: “Hodu ladonay ci tov” – (“Praise/thank the Lord for *He is good!*”). I then had all those in attendance (200 plus adults and 100 plus kids) stand up and sing the song again being led by Raquel. It would be great if the Jews in Israel could see this. Hopefully somehow Khieven can get it on U-Tube and hopefully it would go viral in Israel – tribal people in a village in the mountains of

- the Philippines singing a Psalm in Hebrew. Hopefully it would get them to think.
- 11 Another cultural dance – this time by two young boys and five young girls.
  - 12 More skits and songs in Manobo from the various villages. I had encouraged the reading groups in advance to prepare a presentation for the day of dedication and many of them had indeed come prepared with a skit, song or dance. But to me a highlight was when one of the young ladies from a small village came forward and recited by heart all of Ruth in Manobo.
  - 13 I then asked all those who had attended the reading groups and had read most of the passages we had assigned two weeks earlier to come forward. Raquel and I then passed out pens for them to sign their names in ink on the back of the front cover of their Bibles. I was very surprised how many people came forward – I'm guessing maybe 60 to 80 of them. Then one of the pastors prayed a prayer of dedication for all the recently printed Bibles.



- 14 Pastor Linog shared how the reception of the Monobos to the Bible in their own language was way beyond his expectation (mine too by the way). He then teared up – which caused me to tear up as well.
- 15 After 3 hours (now 1 PM) Pastor Noel (head pastor) gave a final word and prayer of dedication and announced lunch.
- 16 I was not that hungry and besides I was too busy running around entertaining Manobo and other guests, including my SIL buddies, but I heard from many that the food was excellent – rice of course, and pork and beef – something that is usually only served on very

special events.

After lunch, once again Jorge and Dante and his nephew transported those living in the neighboring villages back to their homes. By 4 PM all were transported and we too then headed back to Valencia and Nasuli in our three vehicles.

[Below: Manobos seeing us off in front of their church]



Again, I can only thank our loving Father for how smoothly everything went and for giving us such a gloriously sunny day.

On our way back I felt very tired and worn out. That night I did not sleep hardly at all as a bad cold and the sniffles had now come upon me. I just thanked the Lord I was 100% well during the dedication event. Junjun had expressed a desire to be baptized, so that Sunday morning Jorge and I along with our camera man and those close to Junjun went down to the Nasuli pool (only 100 meters from where Jorge and Retchie live) and we baptized him there. Pray that Junjun will continue to grow in our Lord as he is disciplined by Jorge and that the other youth in the Nasuli area will see Junjun's changed life and also desire to follow the path he chose.

[Below: Kermit sharing the meaning of Baptism at the Nasuli pool]



[Above: Junjun sealing his new life in Christ with Jorge and me]

Raquel and I were thinking about taking the bus up to Tacloban – a more than 20 hour bus ride. However I had a slight fever and was coughing and constantly blowing my nose. We thank the Lord that at that particular time Jorge had a good internet connection and we were able to book flights to Cebu and then to Tacloban at surprisingly a very reasonable rate (usually within 24 hrs of the flights, the cost is out of sight). That night, as I went to bed to try to get some sleep, I asked Junjun to pray for me that I would be well the next day when we travel to Tacloban. As he and Jorge prayed, my prayer was that our loving Father would indeed heal me, not so much for me, but for our new little brother in the Lord, that he'd see the power of

prayer. I then went straight to sleep and slept through the night. I woke up refreshed, no fever and did not blow my nose once during that day. Jorge along with Junjun and Retchie drove us to the Cagayan de Oro airport, a five hour trip. I had mentioned I'd really like to see some of the Super Bowl. As we drove through Cag de Oro, Jorge stopped by a small cafeteria on the side of the rode that had a TV. We tried to see if they had the Super Bowl on their cable system. They did not, but the cafeteria next to them did. We had our lunch there watching the last quarter of the Super Bowl. During the last week God gave me figuratively speaking one fantastic banana split (that is the dedication and baptizing Junjun) and He even added a cherry to it – being able to see some of the Super Bowl – actually first football game I was able to watch this year. American football is generally not covered here in the Philippines and Raquel and I are rarely near a TV anyway.

Yesterday we met with the whole team of Waray translators discussing certain key terms and troubling translation issues and plans concerning how to finish the New Testament before Paul leaves for the U.S. I have been asked to come back here in Tacloban to coach the high school soccer team of a large Christian private school and at the same time work with the Waray translators. That would be from mid July to mid Oct. We told them we think we might be able to do so. After what we experienced with the Manobo dedication I'm already looking forward to a Waray one. This one though will be for around 2 million speakers.

Hodu ladonay ci tov!

Kermit and Raquel

[Below: Kermit and Raquel with Pastor Noel. Sitting next to him is his mother-in-law, Dionesia. She and Noel and her son Ezar have probably been the number one distributors of the New Testament throughout the years. Behind Dionesia is Emy Ballenas who was my neighbor on Caluya back in 1977. She was a teacher on Caluya. I had encouraged her to go into literacy and translation work and she did. She had spent about 8 years doing literacy work among the Manobos, teaching many of the illiterate adults (some of them you can see below) how to read.]



[Pray for Pastor Noel and Pastor Yoyoy below as they continue the reading programs throughout the Manobo villages]



[Below: Kermit sharing with the youth in the Barandias church as they went over the passages in the Manobo Old Testament. Afterwards they would practice their Jonah skit.]



[Below: Raquel would meet with the adults at a nearby porch]



[Below: home of Jorge and Ritchie and where Raquel and I stay when at Nasuli. This home had served for many years as the SIL Nasuli clinic and is now being well served by Jorge who heads up a number of YWAM ministries in the area.]



\*Dick Elkins went by Mangkaklin, which means “father of Kathleen”. Manobos don’t have the “th” sound, so Kathleen becomes Kaklin. In Manobo society one is known by ones oldest child. It is similar to what one will find in Iceland and what was the practice of Sweden and Norway. Only there one takes the name of ones father instead of ones child. For example my mom’s father’s name before he went to the USA from Sweden was Robert Johanson (pronounced Yohanson), since Johan was his father’s name.