



Olson Family Newsletter Update

Serving the the Lord and the
Palawano people in the
Philippines with
[New Tribes Mission](#)
Issue # 27, December 2010

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.
~Isaiah 9:2

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To make a Christmas/end of the year donation to support the Gospel going to the Palawano, please send checks to the following address:
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Include a notation that says "for the ministry of George & Ginny Olson"

You can also donate on-line. For more information, please visit the financial section of our website by going to

www.reachthetribes.com/page5.html



One of these leaves is used to wrap food for roasting in a fire. The other is highly toxic, and if you wrap your food in it, you will get very very sick. Can you tell the difference? Palawanos can!

Jesus, Light of the World, hope for the future, and a certainty in uncertain times.

In the land of the Palawano...

They were convinced that one of the evil spirits from the forest was coming every night to take possession of him. He had already tried to run away twice, and during the last episode of possession he had tried to grab at the children and eat them. One of the village ladies approaches me. *Egsa, can we please bring our kids into the playhouse you built for Abby and sleep with them there tonight? If we don't, he will kill and eat us!*



Gathering grubs to eat out of the trunk of a fallen coconut tree

Back at home in America...

Having just recently been laid off because his company can no longer make a profit, having no savings, he buys groceries on the credit card to survive while he looks for a job. He is confronted by his teenage daughter. *Daddy, all my friends have an ipod, and I am the only one who doesn't have one! Christmas is coming!* She doesn't know about their financial situation, because as long as he and his wife both worked, they could make the payments on their credit cards and house every month to stay afloat. Now it seems that the cost of groceries is going up and up, and the job prospects look pretty grim. Stress leads to tension and arguments in the family, and he doesn't know where to turn.

Now to compare...

Two radically different worlds perhaps? Let me ask you a question – are the people in the above 2 scenarios any more or less in need of Christ than the other? I would say no – they both have a sense of hopelessness that is the result of wrong actions after years of wrong thinking. Our neighbors continue to live and experience the first scenario; perhaps many of your neighbors are living and experiencing the second scenario.

In a rather ironic way, the solution is the same for both sets of lost and needy people – they both need to face the truth about their situation. The Palawano needs to understand the truth about this world, the way God made it, the real causes of sickness and disease, and to know God through Jesus Christ. The American needs to understand the truth about this world, the way God made it, the principles of living within your financial means and staying away from debt (even if that means not buying all the new gadgets), and to know God through Jesus Christ. The only way the Palawano will have the strength to stand against the teaching of his ancestors and face the truth about what causes sickness will be by trusting in Christ.

In the same way, the only way the American will have the strength to face his situation, share the truth with his family, and begin living in a way that is sound and stable, is by trusting in Christ. Jesus Christ, Light of the World, and hope for the future, is the only one who can save us from our iniquities, the only one who can give us the strength to face the truth, and the only one who can give us the wisdom to do what is



This picture is at the thank offering made to God and the spirits for healing from cerebral malaria, or *memulpug* in Palawano. This young man on the left began having strange episodes at night in which he would go stiff, then run off into the jungle, and then return and try to grab at people to eat them. I was able to observe one of the episodes in which it took about 10 or more people to hold him down because he became so strong during the seizure. He had a very high fever, so we diagnosed cerebral malaria and began treating him. After 2 full courses of the medicine, he recovered. The word went out to everyone that the recovery was because the local shaman had come down and fought against the spirit. They said he chased the spirit off into the jungle and sliced it up with his machete. Everyone was certain that God and the good spirits had helped, so they made the thank offering in which they sacrificed several chickens.



Viewing the swollen river after a small flood. During rainy season the floods come about once a week on average.

right for the future.

There is one difference, though. The American does have the opportunity to hear and understand the Gospel in his own language, while the Menti Palawano does not – at least not yet. The time is coming when the Gospel will be presented to the Menti Palawano. Keep praying for that! And if you are faced with a neighbor, friend, or co-worker in need of Christ, trust God to give you the right words to say as you help him or her confront the truth and come to know our blessed Christ! This is the Christmas season, when we are reminded of why Jesus came into the world!

Events since our August newsletter...

We have been very busy since we last sent out a newsletter in August. Here is a summary of things that have happened...

- Getting back into language after a summer in Texas – it took a week or so to get settled back in our jungle house and get our tongues and brains loosened up to be speaking Palawano again!
- A language check – a language consultant flew out from Florida to advise us and help us be on the right track for learning the Palawano language. We are doing well and we still have a lot to learn!
- Helping out with a language check on another island – I was able to go out with the consultant to assist in the language assessment on another island. Crossing the open ocean on a small boat, walking through a fishing village (very different from the mountainous jungles where I live), and spending time there assessing how they are progressing in language!
- The end of the rice harvest – the Palawanos had a better harvest this year – some even had enough rice to make a small amount of rice wine! This was the first time in about 4 years!
- Amoeba – I contracted amoebic dysentery, and that was a real cultural experience!
- 2 weddings – 2 young couples that had betrothed themselves in the wrong way, had to put up resources for a sacrifice, a fine, and for each to have a proper wedding, or the gods would have great disfavor and cause some disaster like crop failure.
- A child with meningitis – a family from far off in the mountains brought their child to us who had an advanced case of meningitis. We sent them on to the hospital, but sadly, the child died within an hour's walk from leaving our house.
- Fishing event – the whole village got together multiple times when the fish were plentiful, and this time they strung a net across the creek to trap the fish before spearing them!
- Cerebral malaria, demonic possession, or some combination of both? See left.
- The loss of Ginny's cell phone – Ginny's cell phone was stolen 2 hours after we came out of the tribe. I had the number of the tricycle she rode in when she lost it and was able to report it to the police and baranggay officials, but nobody could prove if it was the driver or another passenger who took the phone. Alas for the loss of a good phone!



language assessment

Thank you so much to you all for your prayers, and we wish you all a blessed and merry Christmas! We would love to hear from you if you have time to email!

Blessings to you all in Christ,
George & Ginny
Isaac, Sarah, & Abby



Sarah with a tribal kid at the swimming hole