



Serving the Lord to reach
Unreached Language Groups in the
Philippines with
New Tribes Mission

Issue #28, December 12, 2011

Truly, truly I
say to you,
unless a grain
of wheat
falls into the
earth and
dies, it remains
alone; but if
it dies, it
bears much
fruit.

~ John 12:24

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Visit our blog and home page at:

tribetrek.blogspot.com
www.reachthetribes.com

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To make a Christmas/ end of the year donation to reaching unreached tribes in the Philippines, please send to the following:

New Tribes Mission
1000 E. First St.
Sanford, FL 32771-1487

Include a notation that says "for the ministry of George & Ginny Olson"

You can also donate on- line. For more information, please go to the following:

www.reachthetribes.com/
page5.html

Dear friends and family,

As the single prop lifted our plane into the air and we waved good-bye to the people, I knew that this was probably the last time our whole family would be together in the tribe with the Palawanos. Our last newsletter was written a year ago when we were in the tribe. I find it amazing all that has transpired since then. One year ago all of our life was wrapped around the serving the Lord among the Palawano people. We believed that the Lord was going to have us there for many years to come. We looked forward to the day when we would be helping to teach the Palawanos about Christ for the first time in their language.

Now, circumstances beyond our control have compelled us to leave the Palawano ministry, beginning last July. We thought at first that we would only be out of the ministry for 1 year; now that we are out we realize that we will have to remain out for a few years. While I cannot go into the details of why we had to leave the Palawano ministry, I can tell you that this decision was made in full agreement with the leadership of our home church and the leadership of NTM here in the Philippines. *We are still assigned to the Philippine mission field, and we are now heavily involved in other ministries.*

Thankfully, **the Palawanos are not left alone.** Our partners are still in the tribe teaching bible lessons and literacy. There is no longer any internet contact with our partners there since the satellite went down, so we only hear bits and pieces when our partners hike downriver once a month to send email. We expect that the Bible teaching will continue for some months before we can report on the response. What we know so far is *there are about 10 people that are regularly attending the Bible classes*, and the rest have drawn away out of fear. Please pray that the Lord will open their eyes to the truth.

The most difficult thing about our change in ministry is the loss of our dream of being there when the Gospel would be preached, and of taking part in that. This was a great struggle, and I felt I had to continue to die to my own dreams and ambitions in order to serve the Lord in the way He has guided us. I had to continually remind myself of the verse quoted above, John 12:24. God has been faithful to guide us through it all, and we are now pressing on.

New roles, new ministries, still seeking to expand the Gospel to all areas

Now we are in Manila, and, wow, the Lord has done amazing things! As I write this, I have just returned from a tour of 3 tribal areas where our missionaries are ministering, working on acquiring the language and culture of the tribe, and serving God faithfully in hard to reach places.

I have taken on the role of being a *field language consultant*. Some of you are probably wondering, "what is that?" My role is to help train missionaries in national and tribal language study to become proficient in their language and culture abilities where they are ministering. This is why I spent the last 3 weeks out in the tribal areas, working with missionaries in 3 different language groups – to help them all reach a proficient level of communication so that they too can preach the Gospel in these areas. So in reality, *our work now affects multiple tribal areas!* Remember once when I wrote about all of the still to be reached remote areas in the Philippines where the Gospel has still not penetrated? This is what we are all about – **finishing the job!** And we are not trying to do it alone – there is now an effort underway to include Filipino churches in what we are doing!

God's blessing on our family for this time

We believe the Lord has guided us in this decision. *This is Isaac's last year in high school*, and it is really great to be together as a family again before he goes to college. Also, Sarah has been doing well in school, and we are enjoying having her here instead of in the dorm. Abby also, has especially been blessed by this move. *In the tribe, all the girls her age are now married* and have responsibilities to help their husbands gardening and working. Many of the other kids moved down-river to attend school, which was a new development in the tribal work. So if we were not here in Manila, she would basically be sitting alone in our tribal house all day while Ginny and I were working on learning language and doing medical.



Saying good-bye to our friends in the tribe



On a consultation check in another tribe



Isaac played on the Philippine National Rugby team (U-18) in a tournament in Taiwan



Sarah's soccer team, with Ginny as an assistant coach



Isaac's injuries after a motorcycle accident



Rugby season started again this fall.

While Abby was able to help with some of the tribal work between home school studies, the lack of social interaction was becoming quite a strain. So we are very thankful that she now has an opportunity to be around lots of other kids her age and make some good friendships.

While I am busy learning the role of being a Culture and Language Consultant, *Ginny has taken on the role of teaching missionary kids at Faith Academy*, where there was a great need for a special ed teacher. Since this was Ginny's area of study, she fits in very well to help the school. Many of the missionary families here in the Philippines are very thankful that she is able to do this. Ginny really excels and thrives in the teaching role, and we are so thankful that we are able to serve the Lord here in a way that uses the training and experience God has put us through.

A bit about how and why we do language consultations

Allow me to just relate one story of our time last week when we visited one of our missionaries working in a language group in Northern Luzon. After walking with him around the village, we brought his language helpers over to do "communication tasks." *One of these was to compare and contrast the differences between a pig and a water buffalo in the tribal language.* First we had the missionary describe the differences, which we recorded, and then we had the language helper translate into Tagalog for us and at the same time critique the missionary's native language skills. In this case, the missionary did very well and the language helpers told us that he described everything just as they would say it.



The language helpers

Then for comparison, *we asked the language helper* to also describe the differences between a pig and a water buffalo, which we recorded. When it was done, the missionary looked at us and said, "Wow, he totally took a different approach. He talked all about the difference in the usefulness of the 2 animals, while I talked all about the differences in appearance." *This was a learning point about the culture* - in the minds of the people in this case, they are thinking far more about what helps them get through the day than taking time to examine how things look different. It is a subtle difference, but an important one. This is why we study language and culture together, and not

just language only - so that we can relate the Gospel to them in a way that is relevant to them and their way of thinking.

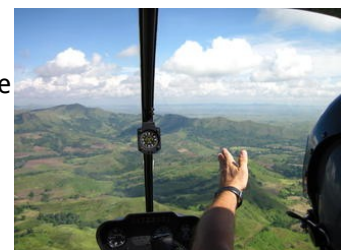
As we prepare for this Christmas season, we pray the Lord's blessings on all of you who have been such a blessing to us with your prayers, contact, and financial support! Together as the body of Christ, we will press on to continue to bring the Gospel of our blessed Lord to all the unreached people of the world!

Blessings and Merry Christmas! We are so thankful for the Savior Jesus!

George, Ginny, Isaac, Sarah, & Abby



Abby and the Middle School Choir recently sang Christmas Carols at a local mall



From inside the helo, the pilot pointing out the direction

Here are some pictures from our consultant trip to the 3 tribes!



This was the island I visited 5 years ago



These are sea people living on the beach



Our boat was stranded at low tide when we needed to leave



Traveling over the open ocean on a bangka



Ga-dang mountain people pounding rice for breakfast



Visiting at someone's house in a Northern tribe



Our helicopter going to the tribes and our team



Agta people in a native home.



An Agta village



The Agta live on a beautiful black sand beach