

*****NOT TO BE COPIED OR DISTRIBUTED, WITHOUT PERMISSION*****



McGraths' Newsletter –March, 2011

Manila, Philippines

Mabuhay (Welcome) to the Philippines:

It is interesting that only two Bible books, Jonah and Nahum, both end with questions and both are questions over the city of Nineveh!

In Jonah, God is asking Jonah if it is wrong for Him to have compassion on this great city of 120,000, which had repented in response to the message of Jonah.

At the end of Nahum, God is pronouncing judgment on these same people. They had initially responded to the message but then fell back into their sinful ways. We have just finished a study on Jonah in our staff devotions and this past Sunday (Mar 27th), our pastor preached from Nahum.

The question that sticks in my mind and heart is this (and yes, it is a “what if” question!): I wonder what might have happened differently, if the prophet Jonah had hung around the city and been an instrument of discipleship and development, rather than going out on the hillside and enjoying his pity-party? What if he had continued in his obedience to God and established “Nineveh Seminary and Bible College”? How might things have turned out differently.?

Well, as I said these are “what if” questions and they will never be answered differently. But the question that does beg answering is one each of us can only answer for ourselves! Am I being obedient to the call of God in my life? Has God called me to serve Him in a particular way but creature comforts, like a shade-providing gourd, stand in the way of my obedience? Even more critical than that is another question and it is this: do I share God’s compassion for the lost? Jonah obviously didn’t! His self-pity swallowed up any compassion he might have had for others.

These are not just questions for those at home but they are questions for us who serve overseas as well. It is so easy to do our ministry with our heads and not with our hearts. It is so easy to see all the discomforts and turn inward rather than keep focused on the goal of transformed lives.

God has called us to serve Him primarily – geography is secondary! With what kind of heart am I serving? With what kind of heart are you serving? Comfort driven or compassion driven? I must answer God for my days of bad attitude and trust Him to strengthen me with more compassion!

Thus endeth the sermon!! This has been a real burden and challenge to my own heart these past few weeks. And so I share it as an encouragement to you all.

Four weeks this Sunday and we are on our way home to Canada! Wow, the last weeks have been flying by!! It will be so great to connect with so many of you as we will eventually travel from Vancouver to Halifax during May and June and then spend July in Ontario visiting with family and friends there. Our speaking itinerary is posted on our website. You can find the details at www.lively.ca.

As we prepare to leave, we do still need someone to live in our home while away! Would you join us in concerted prayer about this matter? There are a few “possibilities” but so far nothing is firming up. It will be a big relief to have this settled and be able to plan accordingly, especially our finances relating to the cost of our home here.

Sometimes we find it hard to know exactly what to write to you about, as we go about our Human Resources and Member Care responsibilities. Many days are filled with the same matters – relating to people about their ministry here, about their retirement, about personal matters that need attention while here on the field, working with our Placement Coordinator on seeing new people

welcomed to the field, etc. For Sharon, it is a lot of time spent with people going to the hospital or having follow up visits to doctors, sending out special announcements about special health needs and coordinating hospital visits, when necessary.

It all may sound kind of mundane and some may wonder well is that really necessary and should someone be overseas doing that kind of ministry? If we did not have the bottom line which we do – Translating Scripture For Transformed Lives – then the answer might be “no” it is not necessary. But when our roles are placed in the context of our core values, we who serve in support, find our value. Because we are here doing our roles, translators and those involved in the teaching and engagement of people in the Scriptures in their heart languages, can do their role, knowing they have “back-up” support in place.

During our time at home, we want to share with you the diversity of opportunities to serve and be part of the team seeing that God’s Word is provided in the heart language of the people of the world, and in our case the Philippines.

By the way, just a couple of interesting facts about the Philippines. Cam Townsend, Wycliffe’s founder, went south first with his ministry of working with governments to preserve the languages of indigenous people. First, he went to Mexico and then to South America. But then in 1953, at the invitation of President Magsaysay of the Philippines, Wycliffe Bible Translators began their ministry here. Approximately 120 of the 180 languages here have been translated! We are very excited about TAP (Translators Association of the Philippines)! They are Filipino translators who have taken up the task, to whom we now provide support and encouragement.

As we have mentioned before, the Matigsalug translation will be dedicated on July 12th, 2011. Would you mark your calendars to pray for that special day in the lives of these dear people? For those in North America, you will need to pray on Jul 11th, as we get to July 12th 12 hours earlier here than you do! ☺

And in a very real way, you join us in a support team role. Your prayers and financial support make it possible for us to be here serving. Thank you for standing with us in partnership for the people of the Philippines! May God continue to bless and encourage each of us as we seek to faithfully serve Him as He has called us!

With grateful hearts, **Eric & Sharon McGrath**



One short-term youth team visiting from Japan, just 5 days after the tragedy in their homeland. They have a real heart for God’s will in their lives.

Contact Information:

By regular mail – Box 2270 CPO, 1099 Manila, Philippines - 519-489-0317(Home); 63 - 927-398-2975(Mobile)

By email at: eric-sharon_mcgrath@wycliffe.ca

By contacting the Wycliffe office: Wycliffe Bible Translators, 4316 10th Street NE., Calgary, AB T2E 6K3
800-463-1143

By contacting The USA Wycliffe office: Wycliffe Bible Translators, P.O. Box 628200, Orlando, FL 32862
800-WYCLIFFE

Mark support sent to the office “for the ministry or work of Eric & Sharon McGrath”

Support level – 94% = \$256 below Ministry Budget