

NEW TRIBES MISSION

NTM@work

your connection with tribal missions

A photograph of an elderly man and woman looking out from a wooden structure. The woman is on the left, wearing a light-colored shirt, and the man is on the right, wearing a red and black patterned shirt. They are both looking towards the camera with serious expressions. The structure they are in is made of vertical wooden poles and horizontal beams, with a yellow and black cloth draped over the top.

And the two shall become...what?!

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tribal love stories.

When the Gospel comes to town, tribal marriages and families change. Regular practices like beatings, adultery and forced divorces are being replaced by forgiveness, kindness and compassion. God's Word is making love stories possible where they never were before.

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- < **Watch** Linda Krieg talk about translating the Siawi New Testament.
- < **See** a gallery of photos from the Siawi people.

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[connect]

From idol worship to Bible teacher

Bapeke stopped to drink a little water and catch his breath. He looked up through the canopy of green and judged the time by the sun's location. Then he continued to hurry along the jungle trail. He didn't want to be late for the Bible teaching.

For six months, Bapeke had hiked three or four hours every other week to hear the missionaries teach about the one true God of the Bible. And what the Mibu man learned and believed had changed his life. Now the former idol worshipper was on his way to teach others.

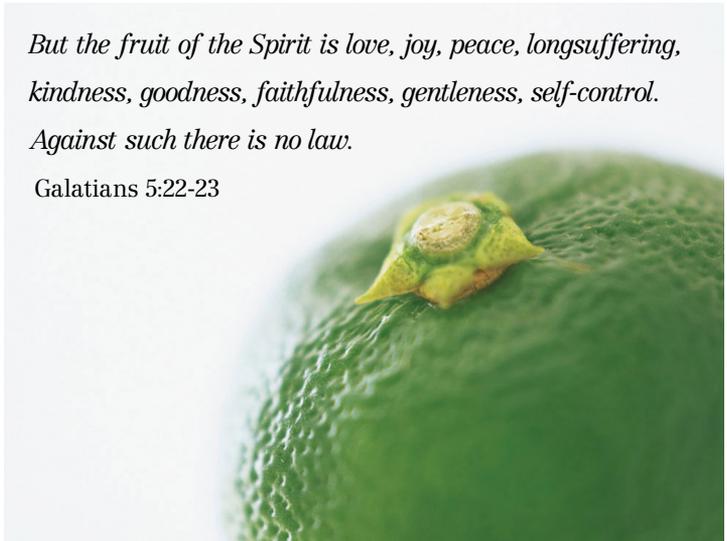
He told his fellow tribal people in village after village, "Before I used to go to the clan house and practice our customs. But I have discarded it all, and now have joined myself to the Word of God. This message is the only way and you should believe it. Listen to the message and decide for yourselves."



photo by Phil Sutton

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23





"I lived many years in darkness. ...I followed that which my parents had taught me. They don't understand the truth. ...I am happy that I now know the truth that is in God's Word."

- Antonio,
Pai Tavy Tera tribe,
Paraguay

*pray

For 20 weeks, the **Mwinka** people of **Mozambique** heard God's story unfold from the beginning to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. In mid-July missionaries presented the final evangelistic Bible lessons. At the time this issue went to press, missionaries were following up one-on-one to see who had clearly placed their faith in Christ, and who still needed questions answered or points clarified. Please pray that many believe on Jesus. Keep up with the latest news and prayer requests for the Mwinikas and others:

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connect with...

John Michael and Jessica George



Papua
New
Guinea

Children: Lucy, Mattie and Mia

Ministry: Church planting

Sending churches: Pheba Baptist Church, Pheba, Mississippi; Whitestone Church, Florence, Mississippi

John Michael and Jessica each gave their lives to the Lord at a young age. They realized as teenagers that they wanted to serve Him. Neither knew what type of ministry the Lord would call them to, but told the Lord that they would do whatever He asked and go wherever He sent them.

They had an opportunity to go on their first overseas mission trip in college while working in their church ministry.

"Our eyes were opened to the deep need for the Gospel message outside of our country, and we felt the Lord burdening our hearts for those with no access to God's message of redemption," wrote Jessica. "One afternoon we were listening to a radio program discussing a new English translation of the Bible. We realized how blessed we were to be able to choose a translation of the Bible in our language and pick out one that catered to our personal preferences, when there were people around the world who had no translation of the Bible in their own language. We became passionate about tribal church planting and Bible translation, and are excited about the work the Lord has in store for us."

ntm.org/john_george

[connect]

The spirits will eat you!

Crunch, crunch, crunch. The villagers listened closely. Who could be walking in the village after dark? They peeked out their doors. There was 4-year-old Kinsli!

“Kinsli! What are you doing outside your house after dark all by yourself?”

“I am going to see grandpa,” he answered simply.

“But what about the spirits out there? Get back inside. They’re going to eat you.”

The Bagwido people of Papua New Guinea believe that the spirits of the dead roam in the village at night and can cause you harm. But parents hype it up even more with their children to help keep them inside and get them to bed. So when the adults saw little Kinsli, whose grandfather lived on the other side of the village, they were surprised at his bravery.

“Aren’t you afraid of a spirit eating you?” they asked.

“No, my dad and mom told me that God’s talk tells us that this is not true. So our family does not believe that anymore.”

The 4-year-old walked confidently on.

—Mark and Holly Woodard, *Church planting in the Sepik Region of PNG*



photo by Jack Housley



Speaking in the wrong tone

Aaron was trying to ask one of the villagers if his rice was finished. What he actually asked was if his mother is finished. Needless to say, the bystanders got a good laugh while the old man whom he asked looked puzzled. Learning a tonal language still stays challenging and we are very thankful for your prayers.

—Aaron and Amy Speitelsbach,
Glaro tribe, Liberia

Thankful for the caterpillars

The people here are having a good problem. Caterpillars are eating their gardens. Why is that good? They like to eat the caterpillars! In church, the pastor was telling them how good God was to provide them with caterpillars to eat. The ladies had already been telling me about it and offered to bring some by so I could try them. I declined. When you thank the Lord for your next meal, you can be very thankful it isn't caterpillars!

—*Mike and Diane Hartman, Brazil*



photo by Phil Poulson

Jared and Dieneke Henderson



connect with...

Papua
New
Guinea

Children: Carolyn, Henry and Reese

Ministry: Church planting

Sending church: Cedar Pointe Baptist Church, Wichita, Kansas

"We decided to be missionaries before we met each other," wrote Jared. "Dieneke, whose parents and grandparents were all NTM missionaries, was already familiar with missions, and had decided early on that she would join New Tribes Mission."

Jared had never even heard of NTM until his youth pastor left the church to join the mission. Jared and Dieneke met at New Tribes Bible Institute in Wisconsin and married soon after.

They finished their training and made plans to go to Papua New Guinea in 2012.

ntm.org/jared_henderson

"Before you came, we never heard these truths, and we didn't know about God or His Word. Now we know the truth."
-Bonifacio, Guarijio tribe, Mexico

Siasi's family prayed ...

Rejoicing broke out in Papua New Guinea. More than 12 long years of prayer had finally been answered. At last, Siasi, a Nimo woman, had believed in Christ. Her believing family members couldn't hide their joy.

But what had taken her so long?

The small, frail tribal woman, who sat for hours weaving baskets for a living, found it hard to go against the powerful spirit world that had controlled her people for centuries. In the quietness of her work, the battle had raged.

"Should I go against the traditions of our Nimo ancestors? What if I believe in this Jesus? Will the powerful spirits get angry and curse me?" Siasi trembled at the thought. The spirits could cause horrible sickness and death.

But hearing God's truth over and over had finally broken through her fears and set Siasi free.

"I realize now that Jesus died for all of my sins past, present and future," Siasi said. "And all I have to do is believe in Him, that He died and rose again for me."

* pray

On the USA's Independence Day, July 4, the Siar people of Papua New Guinea began hearing the Truth that can set them free.

More than 100 people have been attending the lessons. Pray that attendance stays high and consistent, and that God's Word moves with power among the Siars. Find out how you can pray daily or weekly for the Siars and other people groups:

ntm.org/magazine



**Walk in love, as
Christ also has
loved us.**

Ephesians 5:2

photo by Keith Higbee

A leg up on illness

A Paraguayan friend recently shared the following story:

My father had a leg injury and was told by the local ‘specialist’ to find an old, dry bone from the skeleton of a dog, specifically from the dog’s back leg. He was then to take the bone, and in the name of Saint Roque, hit his leg several times for healing. After my father’s leg healed, he owed Saint Roque a big debt, so he killed four of our best roosters, cooked them up in a delicious meal, put the food in a container and began walking down the road. As he walked, he would break off a juicy piece of chicken and feed any dog that he encountered along the way. In this way he paid back his debt to Saint Roque, the patron saint of dogs.

—Mike and Trisha Goddard,
Paraguay

Curtis and Lesley Sewell

connect with...



Children: Josiah and Micah

Ministry: Support

Sending churches: Christian Family Chapel, Jacksonville, Florida; St. Peter’s In the Glen Anglican Church, Jacksonville, Florida

Curtis and Lesley received Christ as Savior as teenagers, and God used short-term mission trips to show them the real need for the Gospel in the world. Curtis was challenged to begin pursuing missions at a youth conference he attended in 1998.

In college, Lesley pursued nursing and missions. “It was not until we attended Bible school together that we were fully persuaded that if there were still people in the world who have never heard that Jesus died for them, we wanted to be a part of it. God has slowly been showing us His heart that desires people from every tribe, tongue, and nation to be at the throne in Heaven! We are excited to be a part of the team.”

ntm.org/curtis_sewell

“I see the ways of our ancestors and the beliefs that we still hold onto today, and I recognize them as untrue,” Gelio said. “So I want you to know that I believe you’re really going to bring us the truth. And when you actually tell us what that is, I’m ready to believe it, whatever it is.”

—Akolet Tribe, Papua New Guinea

[connect]

A different type of warrior

When news of the approaching war party reached the Dao village, they frantically gathered all the men they could. An important man in another clan died, presumably from witchcraft, and the clan was coming for revenge.

Whenever this happened in the past, Dao warriors set up an ambush to destroy their approaching enemies. But this time none of them even brought their weapons. Instead, the warriors gathered to pray.

“Father, it’s because of Your love that we are not hunting this war party down. And even if they come and fill us with arrows, we will look up to You as we fall, and we will thank You for loving us and for making a way for us to be with You. We were just like our enemies before we heard Your message, and they still need to hear it! Please Lord, wash the hate from their hearts like You washed it from ours. Change them like You changed us!”



The Cowlick Incident

The missionary had an exasperating problem – his unruly cowlick. At least that’s what his wife thought. She was continually trying to help smooth it down. But like a feisty gopher, popping up in the yard at the most inopportune times, you could never predict when or where it would pop up again. And on this particular day, it was at a tribal council meeting in Senegal.

Not wanting her husband to look ridiculous, the wife did what she always did: she reached up and tried to make it lay down. There was just one problem. Touching your spouse’s head in that culture was considered so intimate that it was something only done in the privacy of your own home. Oops! The very large gasp that escaped from everyone in the room as she innocently patted her husband’s misbehaving hair quickly alerted the wife to her “risqué” mistake. And the tribal people never let her live it down.

Missionary Madness

I got out of bed and walked into the kitchen. I walked over to the counter and saw our watermelon sitting there, split wide open from stern to stern.

“Dwight Brown! What did you do?” was my first thought.

Dwight is in the habit of sometimes getting midnight snacks. Then I looked on the table about six feet away and there was a big glob of watermelon sitting on a towel on top of the table.

“Man! He was really sloppy last night!”

Then I looked down on the floor and saw another big glob and thought, “Now wait a minute, he would not be that messy.”

I finally noticed the awful smell and saw juice all over the floor. I began to find watermelon on the Bible on the table, a splat on the computer cover on the other side of the table, and later on, a piece over ten feet away by the radio. I finally realized that, no, Dwight did not have a traumatic snack time — the watermelon had exploded! Wow!

I pray that I will never be like that watermelon. So nice looking (well, at least OK) on the outside, but rotten to the core. God always looks at my heart. What does He see in me? Sure hope it smells nicer than my kitchen.

—*Diana Brown, Bolivia*



photo by Keith Higbee

*praise

As recently as June, Bulu was illiterate and spent little time with his family. But now the **Patpatar** man in **Papua New Guinea** is learning to read and soaking up the truth of God’s Word, and is starting to read to his family. Thank God for changing lives. Your daily or weekly prayers help change lives:

ntm.org/magazine

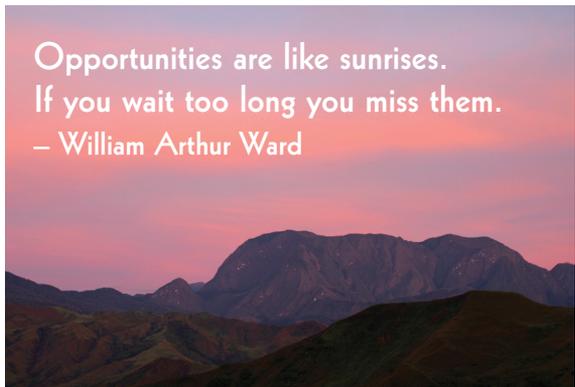


photo by Gary S. Smith

They just don't **think** like us.

We have been at tribal church planting for awhile now, but there are still times when something smacks us in the face as we are reminded that “they just don't think like us.” For instance:

1. Just after bathing by an open tank in front of her house, my granny friend declares, “I'm too embarrassed to wear pants.”

2. Before the newborn baby's cord falls off, “Provide a wide variety of food for the mom to eat to prevent food allergies in the baby.”

3. To ease the burning caused by getting pepper juice in your eye, just “sprinkle some salt on the opposite big toe.”

4. If you are going to weave a bag, “make sure you start on the right day or it will get all tangled.”

5. Smoking is a convenient way to keep mosquitoes away while you chop bamboo shoots.

6. After you have a baby, “Don't wash your hair for 15 days. You don't want that cold water touching your head and cooling your blood down.”

—Leigh and Lea Betts, Pwo Karen tribe, Thailand

Under where?

As Angela Ketcham was visiting with some Brazilian friends one day, she was trying to communicate in Portuguese what she wanted her husband, Joel, to do during the summer – put a sidewalk under their clothesline around the house.

However, what she really told them is that she wanted him to put panties under the clothesline around the house.

“Now you tell me ... don't you think *calcinha* and *calçada* are close?” Angela wrote. “The first is panties. The second is sidewalk. And then if those are not close enough there is also *calças* which means pants.”

Angela wanted a sidewalk because “I just don't like it when [the panties] fall in the dirt.”

Everyone had a good laugh at Angela's blunder.

“Thankfully we can often find the humor in our mistakes,” she wrote.

—Joel and Angela Ketcham, Brazil



photo by Angela Ketcham

* pray

God is using the death of one of his precious children to draw others to Himself. Kunas are noticing the way **Kuna** believers are coming to the aid of Edelfonso, a church leader, after the death of his wife, Eneida. Edelfonso would like you to pray that many place their faith in Christ. With tears in his eyes, he said, "This is something for which Eneida and I have been praying for a long, long time." Get prayer requests like this one daily or weekly: ntm.org/magazine



*Suffering keeps
swelling our feet
so earth's shoes
won't fit.*

— Joni Eareckson Tada



Ulaanbaatar Yogurt Bars

Crust

1 c. butter
2 1/4 c. flour
1 c. sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking soda

Mix the ingredients together until crumbly; spread 2/3 of the mixture into the bottom of a 9" x 13" pan. It is unnecessary to pat it down.

Topping

1 1/2 - 2 c. plain yogurt
1/4-1/3 c. sugar (or to taste)

Mix the yogurt and sugar together and pour over the crust and sprinkle with the remaining flour mixture. Bake in a 350 degree oven for about 30 minutes, or until lightly brown, and/or the yogurt topping has firmed up somewhat.

Makes 12-20 servings.

Comments:

This lovely dessert bar recipe comes from a Mongolian lady who lives in Ulaanbaatar and has an oven. Most Mongols don't have ovens, just a wok, in which they boil or fry their food.







We don't do sweet talk.

by David Bell, contributing editor

Missionary Linda Krieg had her misgivings about introducing a very western idea into the Siawi culture.

Taking an approach that was featured in the movie *Fireproof*, Jason Swanson challenged the men in the Siawi church. During a 21-day period Jason gave them a daily assignment to broaden their understanding of what it means to love their wives.

“As it turned out,” Linda wrote, “it was so very much exactly what they needed.”

Thirty-eight men, including young single men who wanted to learn how to love their future wives, attended the sessions to hear concepts that presented problems for some of the men.

On the second day of the Love Dare, Jason gave the men an assignment to help their wives, doing something nice for them in a new, creative way. That assignment gave one man an immediate test.

As the Siawi man was leaving the building with Jason he called for his wife to come to him. He then gave her his string bag, Bibles, notepad and pen to carry.

Jason could see that the woman was not pleased with the extra burden so he took the opportunity to make a suggestion that would fulfill

the day's assignment.

“Brother, your road for helping your wife is open and right there. Look, you go take her bag and carry that stuff for her back to your house.”

The man looked at Jason, then at his wife and back to Jason. “You want me to go up to her, get her *bilum* and carry it back to the house?”

Jason told him that it was just a clear way he could serve his wife.

“I’m not ready yet,” the man said as he turned to walk away. “Let me consider how to help her first.”

The next day some of the men shared that if they did some of the suggested things – carrying water and fire wood, helping cook *sak sak* and cleaning under their house – they would be shamed for doing work that is traditionally done by women.

“Yes, the road to loving your wife might be one of getting shame,” Jason



said. "But let's remember our example, Jesus. Did he take shame for us? Then let's be willing to take shame for Him."

One man told Jason that he did try to help his wife with cooking the *sak sak*. He did OK with part of it, but when it came time to turn the *sak sak* or cut it and pull it out of the pot with sticks, he kept dropping it. His wife told him to go outside because he didn't know what he was doing.

On the third day, the men were encouraged to show love to their wives by giving them something.

"You could make something with your hands, or give them their favorite

garden food, or give them the best piece of meat from an animal you shoot," Jason said. "Or, if you don't have any food right now you can come to our house and do a little work and use the pay to buy your wife some food."

Malakai had a question about their assignment. "What if I decide to get her something from town later? Can I wait until then?"

"That is great thinking," Jason said. "Later, when you go to town don't forget about your wife. Buy something for her then and give her something today too. Do both."

The next day Malakai said he gave his wife a shirt. His wife had admired the shirt ever since Malakai bought it in town and had asked if she could have it. His answer was "No." But after considering the assignment he offered it to her.

"But let's remember our example, Jesus!"



Photos by Dale Stroud

“Here, take this,” he said.

“Are you giving this to me?” she asked.

“Yes,” Malaki said, “but if you don’t want it I’ll keep it.”

“No way,” the wife responded. “I like this shirt. I’m taking it.”

After the next day’s assignment, encouraging the men to show love to their wives by their actions, Beiyem said he was very tired because he was busy cooking sak sak, doing the dishes and carrying two loads of firewood to the house.

The next task Jason presented the men – speaking kind words to their wives for the meal they cooked or the way they dealt with the children – was met with uncomfortable silence. Jason asked what was wrong and one man finally answered.

“Jason, we don’t talk like that. We don’t say sweet talk to our wives. That isn’t our way.”

“OK,” Jason replied. “Starting today let’s work on changing that. With God’s help you can say a kind word to your wife. I know you can. Let’s see what happens.”

After several assignments one man said, “My wife asked me today what I was doing. Why I was helping her all the time. What am I supposed to say to her? We’re supposed to keep this work we’re doing hidden, right? I don’t want to tell her this is a class.”

“Tell her you are trying to follow God’s straight road,” Jason said. “Tell her you are glad she is the wife God gave you. Tell her you have no plans to get a second wife. You are fine with just her. You are trying to love her and that means helping her. Tell her something like that.”

Around day 12, the men were asked to do some work with their wives.

“Work together with your wife in the garden or something, but do it together,” Jason said.

One man reported, “We went to the garden. Actually I arrived at the garden after her and the kids. She worked over there and I worked over here. I finished my side of the work early and went home. She came home after I did. That’s what I did, but I don’t think that is what you meant is it?”

“You wanted us to work the garden together, but we don’t do that. Maybe we shouldn’t call this part of the garden mine and that part hers? Is that what you are saying?”

Another man said, “I’ve got some talk about the garden. Yes, I go to the garden but I always fill my wife’s string bag with all the heavy bananas I can, and the papayas. I don’t want to carry them because they are heavy. I let her carry the heavy stuff home and then I eat it.”

He laughed as he lowered his head in shame.

“But now I am thinking that isn’t the way of loving our wives, is it? Making them do all the heavy work. Is that something else that we should be changing? Wow, we really don’t know about this way of loving our wives. This is all a new thing for us.”

The biggest challenge seemed to come on day 17. Jason talked about how love gives sacrificially and challenged to men to give their wives something of theirs that the wives didn’t have.

“I told her that I was happy that God had given her to me!”

What a horrifying idea! In Siawi culture you only do that if you have two of an item. Jason was asking them to do without and let their wife have the item.

Some of the men couldn't follow through on the assignment. Yet the Holy Spirit did convict others and bring them to the point of loving their wife more than themselves.

Yaniwi said, "Last night I wanted to sleep, but I couldn't. I knew it was there. So I opened up the box and gave my wife the bed sheet that was hidden."

Mesiau came to Jason's office later and said, "Yesterday I didn't understand what you meant about giving my wife something. Did you mean food or water for her to drink or what? We each have a mosquito net and a bed sheet. Then as I was leaving the church building the Spirit told me

to give her my extra battery for her flashlight.

"So, I gave it to her. I told her that I was happy that God had given her to me. I told her *'Jason didn't tell me to give this to you, the Spirit shot my heart. This is how you walk the loving your wife road.'* She took the battery and her eyes brightened. She was pleased."

The men faced some tough decisions during the challenge. On day 15, one of the Siawi men, Nokee, expressed the difficulty in prayer.

"O Father, help us. We are not good at loving our wives. Before, we didn't know what the road of loving our wives was like. We didn't know how big and hard that road is. Now we know and want to love them and follow You. But it is hard. We are not strong. But for *You* nothing is hard."



Divorce was in the air.

by David Searcy with Dena McMaster,
contributing editor



Photo by David Searcy

Silence hung in the room, fraught with discouragement and despair.

Bane and Rua were still not speaking to each other, and the missionary and church elders had run out of words.

Missionary David Searcy, Ibung and other Punan church elders made the arduous trip downriver by canoe to help these new believers settle their marriage problems. They had quoted Scriptures, discussed biblical marriage principles and tried everything they could think of throughout the day. But nothing seemed to penetrate the anger emanating from Bane and Rua.

“It was getting late. The sun was setting and people were tired from the emotional wrestling since midday,” said David. “We were all tired and longing to take a bath in the cool river running just outside the door. The coffee kettle was long empty and the cups were already full of ants. Cigarette smoke hung heavy in the hot, humid tropical air.”

Before the missionaries brought the Gospel message to the Punan people the divorce rate was nearly 100 percent. Many couples divorced and remarried several times. Among believers there had been no divorces.

Yet there didn't seem to be any solution for Bane and Rua. It seemed that only a miracle could save this marriage.

Rua sat in the window sill, silhouetted in the open window, smoking a cigarette. Bane sat on the floor across the room. Bane and Rua remained silent, pent-up anger obvious in their stance.

Sometimes simple forgiveness is the only solution.

Out of desperation, Ibung asked Rua, “Can you forgive Bane? Can you mutually forgive?”

No one expected anything.

Rua took a long draw on her cigarette and flipped it to the ground. She slipped down out of the window, crossed the room and squatted on the floor in front of Bane. She extended her hand and asked for forgiveness. Bane stood and drew Rua up and right there in the middle of the room; they shook hands and extended forgiveness to one other.

David and the church leaders sat stunned as they watched the miracle unfold. This had never happened before in Punan culture.

Sometimes simple forgiveness is the only solution.

Jesus made possible what the men could not accomplish. The couple continued to work on their marriage and to grow in the Lord. They now serve as leaders in two area churches.





He didn't hit her back!

by Patrick Hatcher, contributing editor

The Simbari village was buzzing with the news.

The gossip grew louder and louder.

“He has the right!”

Furtive glances and questions flew like arrows.

“But why?”

Pointed fingers stabbed the air, as one by one, hut by hut, the villagers learned what Bo'wol had done.

In the Simbari tribe of Papua New Guinea, when a wife strikes her husband, he has the right to hit her back. And that's what normally happens.

But not this time, not with Bo'wol.

A man from another tribe stole food from Bo'wol's family garden. Bo'wol's wife wanted him to press charges to get some compensation money from the thief.

But Bo'wol was a Christian, and although he was mostly quiet about his faith, he intended this time to put his faith into action.

Standing firm, Bo'wol told his wife that he felt the Lord would not be pleased with him and refused to bring charges against the thief. Realizing that there would be no payment, Bo'wol's wife picked up a big stick in anger. She swung it down with full force against Bo'wol's arm.

In cases like this, a Simbari man would never let his wife get away with such a public display of disrespect. It was unheard of.

She needed to be put in her place, and the best way to do that was to strike her back. *An eye for an eye.*

But while anger seethed and rippled under his wife's skin, Bo'wol didn't move a muscle. He just sat there, quietly contemplative.

Later, Bo'wol told the missionaries how he showed such restraint. As his wife hit him, he thought about how Christ took the beating for him when He died on the cross, and he knew it would be wrong to hit her back.

Only a few days later, God used this event to change the lives of Bo'wol's adult son, Noxyiol, and his son's wife, Rindilov. Because of Bo'wol's Christ-like example, both put their trust in



Bo'wol (blue shirt) and his son Noxyiol (pink shirt) with their families.

Jesus as their Savior. Noxiyol was so overwhelmed by what Christ had done for him that he walked around weeping and confessing his sins to those he had wronged. The next Sunday during church, he couldn't sit still. Completely overcome with his new relationship with Jesus, Noxiyol left his seat in the congregation and joined those leading the worship to fervently sing his praise to the Lord with all his heart.

Bo'wol's wife and his tribe expected him to follow tribal and cultural rituals, but he clearly showed that he was following *Someone* else now.



Photos by Dale Stroud

The Odd Couple

by Debbie Burgett, contributing editor

Where did this strange couple come from?

The Pai Tavy Tera people of Paraguay were mystified as they watched NTM missionaries, Don and Julie Flower. The couple walked the trails *together*. They talked at length *together*. Julie *never* talked bad about Don. Don *never* looked at other women. They actually seemed to *like* each other. How could this be?

Pai Tavy Tera marriages weren't exactly the same.

The Pai tribal man staggered slowly home. He had been away for weeks working on a Paraguayan ranch. As usual, the wine, women and song had flowed freely – along with all his money. His pregnant wife would be angry that he didn't bring any oil, salt, soap or rice ... again. He didn't care. Maybe he'd just leave. The baby probably wasn't even his.

He passed his friend, Fulano, on the trail near his house and slurred a greeting. His wife had better have something ready for him to eat this time – or else.

In his absence, something else had flowed freely as well. When she wasn't tending to the children or the garden, his wife and her friends had regularly swapped bitter gossip about how bad their husbands were. Now seething with resentment, she cooked for herself and the children – and threw the leftovers to the dogs. If her husband did return tonight, he would be sorry. In fact, maybe she should just give these children to her mother too and run off with Fulano. He couldn't be any worse than her latest husband. She patted her just-showing stomach. At least he was around more ...

Against this marriage backdrop came Don and Julie's very strange relationship.

The Pai people shook their heads as they watched the missionary couple hold hands and smile at each other as they walked along the trails. At the same time, Don and Julie wondered how



A typical teaching session with Don and Julie.



they would ever reach the Pai Tavy Tera people. With such fractured, callous families, how could they ever bring the people together for Bible lessons?

Then suddenly, a novel idea. Why not teach the Bible lessons together as a couple to the Pai couples in their own homes? This would be teaching Scripture and giving an up-close-and-personal look at a loving marriage — both of which the Pai people desperately needed. And in a culture where infidelity, jealousy and suspicion were



Photo by Dan Huntting



Photo by Dan Huntting

the rule rather than the exception, it would also protect Don and Julie since they would always be together.

Because hosting the missionary couple was seen as an honor in the community, the plan was very well-received.

So began the hiking to the spread-out homes in Paraguay. Sometimes Don and Julie met with one couple, sometimes two came together and sometimes three. They taught both Bible and literacy lessons, then would move on to the next house and do it all over

again. Tromping mile after mile over dusty, mountainous countryside was hot, tiring and very time-consuming.

But it was worth every minute.

Sitting outside the homes under the coolness of shade trees, passing around a shared cow horn of cold *terere* tea, couples as young as 14 listened as Don and Julie took them on a patient, loving journey through the Bible. They learned about a God who created them, loved them and eventually, sent His own Son to die for them.

As they listened, Pai husbands and wives also closely watched the missionary couple. They saw how much they loved each other. That was evident. But there was something else. It was puzzling. Their eyes seemed to bubble with a quiet strength and joy. Where did that come from? Then they knew. It was the God that Don and Julie were teaching about. He wasn't just in the lessons. He was in *them*.

On those peaceful, breezy afternoons, as words of pure life floated in the air, God's Spirit began to breathe gently into broken, hurting hearts. Over time, Pai couples reached out hesitantly for what Don and Julie had — and eventually trusted Christ as their Savior. And that was just the beginning.

Now the missionaries began teaching the new Pai believers about the beautiful marriage relationship God had created and equipped them to have with each other. The Pai people had never heard of such things. Concepts like love, respect and oneness were revolutionary. Layer after layer, as the Spirit continued to whisper truth, years of relational hardness



Photo by Paul Triller

softened. And like sunlight finally breaking through the dense fog, Pai families began finding a new trail.

Believing men started staying home more and drinking less. They became productive – building better homes for their families, growing larger gardens and raising animals for food. Best of all, husbands and wives started something earth-shaking for their culture – actually spending time together. They had never had anything “in common” before to talk about or do. The Bible gave them a beginning.

“Before we studied the marriage lessons,” Ermelinda said, “I would be at home with my husband but I would sit in the house and my husband would sit outside the house. We didn’t know how to get along or how to talk to each other. But since we have been studying the Bible lessons, we talk about what we have learned. So now we talk about everything and sit together and talk and read the Bible together.”

It wasn’t an easy or perfect road. The addictive call of alcohol combined with the other cultural pressures and temptations were sometimes too hard to fight. But husbands like Chito decided the battle was worth waging.

“I got married when I was 15,” he said. “I didn’t know how to care for a wife or how to be a husband. No one ever told me how to care for my family. Now that I have studied the Bible and studied the marriage lessons I have learned so much.

“I finally decided I had to quit drinking. So when Saturday came instead of going to the store with my friends, I went fishing. Then when the week passed, I really wanted a drink, but I stayed home and worked on my house. I sent my oldest son to the store to buy supplies because if I went, I would buy alcohol and get drunk with my friends.

“I don’t drink any more, wasting my money. My wife is so happy. Life is better. I couldn’t quit on my own but God helped me put my family first and be a good example to my sons and the community.”

*“...God helped me
put my family first
and be a good example
to my sons
and the community!”*



And the community was definitely watching.

Their Paraguayan neighbors, who considered the Pai tribal people beneath them, were stunned at what they saw happening. Those who became believers stopped stealing from them, refused to work on their ranches in exchange for alcohol or even to work for pay because of all the drinking and immorality that went on. Also, if any Pai believers did contract for an outside job, they now completed the work and did it well—becoming trusted, desirable workers. They also saw the Pai people begin making wise choices for their families, like sending the kids to school.

The Paraguayans were so amazed that they even asked the missionaries to come teach them the Bible as well. But already stretched beyond capacity, the missionaries could only offer to send tribal believers instead. They were shocked when the proposal was accepted.

Believing Pai couples now travel from house to house teaching other



Chito, his wife Cenidia, son Aldo and daughter Eli

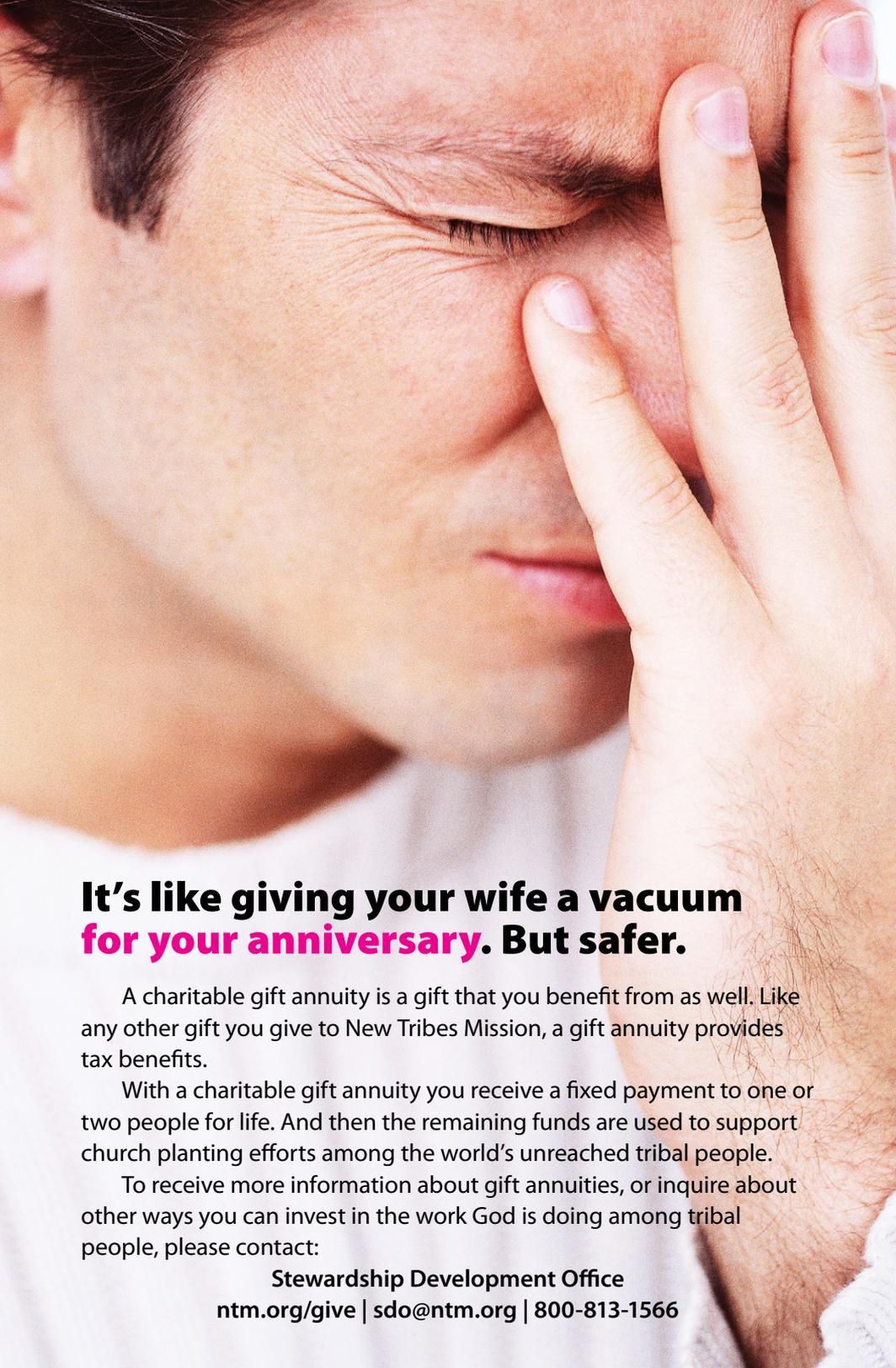
Pai couples and any interested Paraguayans. They walk the trails *together*. They talk at length *together*. And they actually *like* each other.

“It is a good thing that the Americans have come,” one Paraguayan man commented to a Pai believer, “because they have sure changed you.”

The tribal man answered, “No. They were just the tool. It is God’s Word that changed us.”



Photos by Dan Huntingt



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