

A wise man once said...

"If you haven't got any charity in your heart, you have the worst kind of heart trouble." — **Bob Hope** (1903-2003), American comedian

"There's no need to be the richest man in the cemetery. You can't do any business from there." — **Colonel Sanders** (1890-1980), Kentucky Fried Chicken founder

"One man gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want."

— **Proverbs 11:24**

Generosity is not only a sure sign of faith; it's also a surefire way to stimulate it. As soon as something begins to feel just a little too crucial to our happiness or safety, it's time to show it who's boss by giving it away. — **Chuck Swindoll**, Pastor and author

"Any temporal possession can be turned into everlasting wealth. Whatever is given to Christ is immediately touched with immortality." — **A.W. Tozer** (1897-1963), American pastor and writer

"Store your treasures in heaven, where they will never become moth-eaten or rusty and where they will be safe from thieves. Wherever your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will also be." — **Mat. 6:20-21**

The Martin & Gracia Burnham Foundation

In Support of: Missionary Aviation Tribal Missions The Persecuted Church Muslim Ministries

June 2007

A Note from Gracia



Every once in a while, since my release from our jungle experience, I would think, "***I wish I could do something for those guys who held us captive. I wish there was a way to reach the ones who are in jail today because they have been caught.***" God gave Martin and me a special burden for the Abu Sayyaf and Muslims in that area. But I never knew what I could do.

About two years ago, I was invited to speak at Harding University in Arkansas. I was seated at the Head Table at the Banquet next to this Harding student who had been responsible for planning much of the meeting. Once supper started, I asked this kid to tell me about himself. He said, "I'm an MK (missionary kid) from the Solomon Islands. My dad was a good friend of your husband, Martin. They grew up together at boarding school in Manila. My grandparents are Wycliffe missionaries. They translated the New Testament into Tagu*." (*The word Tagu is a pseudonym for the language, which we'll use to protect the workers and believers who continue to live in dangerous conditions.)

I almost dropped my teeth in my salad! Tagu was the language spoken by a majority of the

Abu Sayyaf that held us captive. And before I left there, I had the name and address of his grandparents, Seymour & Lois Ashley. I had some contact with them via email after that, but it took almost two years for us to arrange to get together here in my home in Kansas so we could talk about what I can do for the Tagu people.

I was so excited about their visit. These were "old school" missionaries. I knew that I would hear lots of neat stories.



Irene with Lois & Seymour Ashley

I learned that the Ashleys were in the Philippines for 25 years living in places where their lives were sometimes at risk. As they learned Tagu, they also did medical work and bonded with the people. Once they knew the language, they began recording stories on the tape recorder in order to analyze the grammar. It took 24 years to translate the New Testament from English to Tagu. They completed an abridgment of the Old Testament and continue to work on it today.

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A Note from Gracia

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Their translation helper from the Philippines, Irene, also came along to visit. She is Tagu and is a special gift from God! Together, they have done a Tagu-English dictionary—an impressive body of work. They have also translated Bible story comic books and the “Jesus” film into Tagu. When I heard about the comic books, I thought, **“This is it! This would be a great tool to get into prisons where there are Tagu Abu Sayyaf. They would read those!”** So I asked the Ashleys how I could order some Tagu comics, only to learn that they are out of print. In fact, the dictionary and other translated materials are out of print, too! “Lack of money,” the Ashleys told me when I asked why. What a shame.

Time after time, the Ashleys’ lives were on the line as they translated Tagu materials. It is a miracle that they survived living where they did. But to find out that these precious materials are out of print because there is no money to have them printed was unacceptable to me.



Irene, the translator. . . you should have seen her face light up when we spoke of a home!

In the last few weeks, the Martin and Gracia Burnham Foundation has given a gift to partner with the Philippine Bible Society to start the process of getting the Tagu comics back in print. A church in Bowie, Maryland has stepped up to send funds to complete it.

The comic book series is just one of many project “dreams” that I have. The English-Tagu dictionary will be very costly to print...far more than I could ever hope to have through our Foundation. But with God all things are possible and, as always, we will just see what God does.

If I would REALLY allow myself to dream, I would love to buy a small home for Irene to live in near her home province. (It is too dangerous for her to return home at this point.) Her home would become a Tagu Center — a base for Christian ministry for that language group.

I want to thank you for your gifts. Without them, we could never have sent the down payment for the comics project off to the Philippines. It felt so good to do that—and I have you and your generosity to thank.

I know you have a million good things that you have opportunity to give to and we want you to continue to give to your local church and other ministries that you hold dear. We never “expect” you to give—and we are always humbled with what comes in. We do thank you for entrusting us with your hard-earned money. It’s pretty neat to see how God has used this Foundation the past few years.

If you think of it in the next few months, would you be praying for the Tagu people? We (and they) would appreciate it.

Love,

Gracia



Tagu Bible story comic books...can you guess the heroes of the top two books?

Photo by Ivey Photography.
Courtesy of Midlothian NOW Magazine,
a NOW Magazines, L.L.C. publication.

“The comic book series is just one of many project ‘dreams’ that I have.”

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