

in-ká-hai  
HOW SWEET IT IS!

Chantal Chen

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To those on the front lines and behind the scenes alike who strive tirelessly to bring the gospel to those who have not yet heard.



# acknowledgments

This book is the effort of many individuals who, by the grace of God, worked together to make it possible.

I would like to thank John Cross, who entrusted me with this project, taught me the ins and outs of chronological Bible teaching, patiently guided me along the way and oversaw it to completion. I am grateful for Paul Humphreys, who first envisioned the concept of this book and made all the necessary arrangements to bring it into being. And thanks to his son, Scott Humphreys, who penned the insightful Study Guide that truly made the book what it is. Thanks extends also to Rachel Bader, Amos and Jennifer Kwok, and David Cross, who contributed behind the scenes to bring this together.

I am indebted to Pete and Leah Humphreys for graciously trusting me, a complete stranger in the beginning, to put their story on paper. They have become precious friends in the Lord through this process! Thank you for telling your story and staying involved throughout the process to ensure that the doctrine is correctly represented and the story best communicated. Thank you for your transparency, humility, dedication and godly example.

I appreciate those who helped me in the writing. Russ Smyth, Elaine Yoon and members of the Coeur d'Alene Bible Church Writer's Guild were kind enough to provide me with valuable comments and feedback.

Gratitude goes to my husband, Derek, and all the family and friends who have stood behind me and prayed for this project. Our churches in Chicago, Evanston Bible Fellowship and Evangelical Taiwan Church, have faithfully supported us.

Although told in their voice, this is not just Pete and Leah's story. Time and time again, they have talked about the countless others

before and after them who have sacrificed much so the Manjúi people could hear the Word of God. These individuals, many unnamed, served in various capacities, such as Bible teachers, support workers, linguists and other vital roles. Their work and dedication cannot be ignored. Of the few I can identify here, I would like to thank Norm Fry, Gordie Hunt and Jeff Hunt for providing me with their insight regarding Santa Rosa, Manjúi culture and the Manjúi church.

Indeed, there have been too many wonderful stories, too many touching testimonies I wish space and time would allow me to include. I am grateful to all those who have served in Santa Rosa, and to the Manjúi believers, for allowing their story to be made known. It has been a blessing to me, and it will surely be a blessing to more people than you will ever know.

To maintain ease in reading and remain consistent with the Bible text chosen, lower case initial letters have been used for pronouns that relate to God.

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## THE MANJÚIS

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(The accented syllable is represented by capitalized letters.)

**Manjúi** (people group) Mahn-HOO-ee

**Hanimo** (M) Ha-NEE-mo—Humphreys' neighbour. Husband of Tina.

**Isnei** (M) Eesh-NAY—Son of Meyin and known as the local thief when he was young. Later, the husband of Zitila.

**Juana'a** (F) WAH-na-uh—A young single mother with three children. Suffered from TB.

**Kalowi** (M) Kah-LO-wee—Gifted orator and leader in the Manjúi community. Pete's language helper.

**Laanis** (M) LAW-nees—Shaman and family patriarch.

**Lanino** (M) Lah-NEE-no—Soft-spoken young man.

**Laweyin** (M) Lah-WAY-yin—Blind shaman in his 40s. Leah's language helper. Uncle to Seyin.

**Limina** (F) Lee-MEEN-uh—Daughter of Laanis and wife of Liwis.

**Lisa** (F) LEE-suh—Baby daughter of Laanis.

**Liwis** (M) LEE-wees—Stocky young man. Husband of Limina.

**Meyin** (M) MAY-yin—Father of Isnei.

**Nina** (F) NEE-nuh—Daughter of Laanis.

**Nowai** (M) No-WHY—Uncle to Laanis.

**Sesa** (M) SEH-suh—Son of Laanis.

**Seyin** (M) SAY-yin—Nephew of Laweyin. Brother to Tina.

**Wanyo** (M) WAN-yo—Young man in the tribe.

**Wiwita** (F) WEE-wee-tuh—Wife of Laanis.

**Tina** (F) TEE-nuh—Wife of Hanimo.

**Weinkil** (M) Wayne-KEEL—Shrewd shaman, feared by the tribe.

**Zitila** (F) Zee-TEE-luh—Daughter of Laanis and wife of Isnei.



## THE TEAM

---

(Bold-faced names are mentioned in this book.)

1971-1978	<b>Norm &amp; Iris Fry</b> Made initial contact with the Manjúis.
1971-1977	<b>Verl &amp; Susie Koons</b> Made initial contact with the Manjúis.
1972-1982	Gary & Mickey Stous (married in 1979)
1973-1976	Rich & Dee Perik
1974-1975	Curt & Mary Wildish (short-term help)
1974-1987	<b>Steve &amp; Ithie Jackson</b> (married in 1978) Physical aspects of ministry.
1977-ongoing	<b>Gordie &amp; Nancy Hunt</b> First Bible teachers, then Bible translators.
1978-1979	Roland & Betty Connery
1980-1997	<b>Pete &amp; Leah Humphreys</b> (Cheralyn, Shaun, Deryk, Charissa)
1985-1995	Jerry & Sue Pettus
1987-1997	<b>Don &amp; Julie Flower</b> Literacy and physical aspects of the ministry.
1988-1991	Dave Wood
1991-1993	Brad & Leslie Hilton
1992-1993	Dan & Jan McNutt (short-term help)
1996-2002	James & Penny Camacho
1996-2007	Dave & Hope Bradley
1999-2010	<b>Jamie &amp; Char Hunt</b> (Gordie & Nancy's son)
2001-ongoing	<b>Jeff &amp; Stacy Hunt</b> (Gordie & Nancy's son)

## OTHER

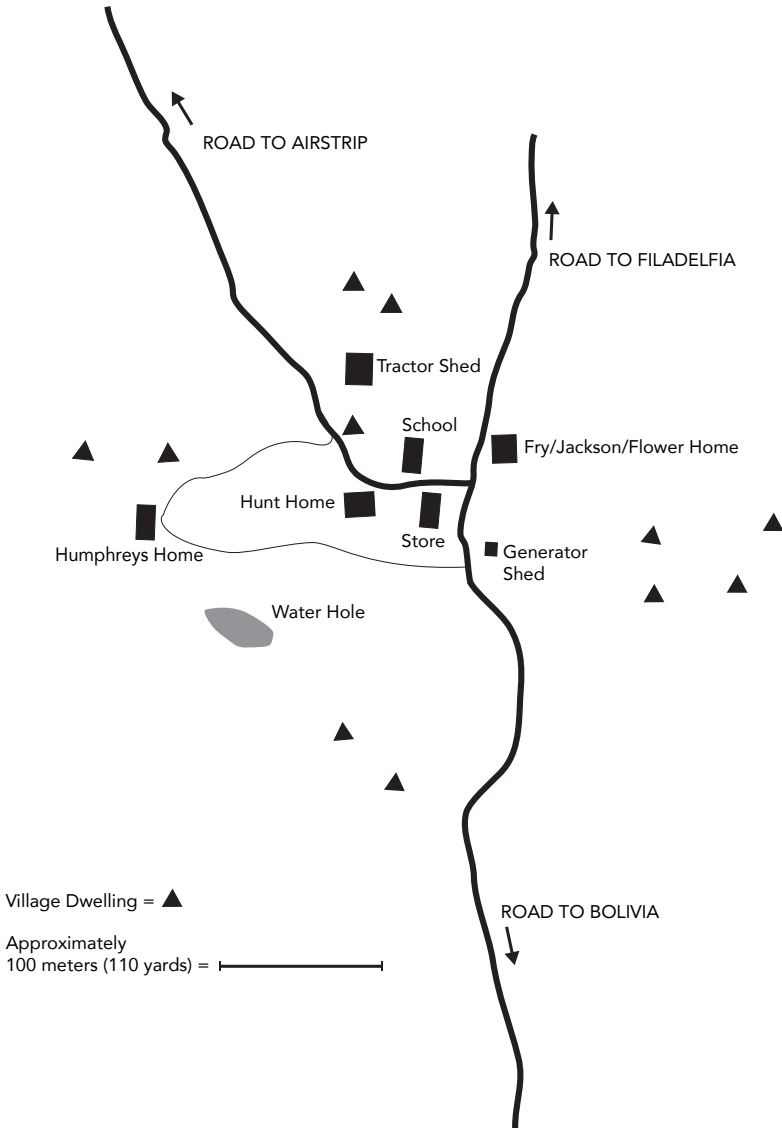
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**Laywot** (LIE-wote)—Pete's Manjúi nickname, literally "radio man."

**Neshen-hewot** (Nee-SHEN-hee-wote)—Name of Satan.

**Zinat** (Shee-NAHT)—Name of God (literally, our father).

# MAP OF SANTA ROSA \_\_\_\_\_



# foreword

If I handed you a piece of wild honeycomb, you'd notice its dark, sticky surface matted with dust, crawling with buzzing bees, and wiggling with larvae. Sure it's intriguing to look at, but how reluctant would you be if I dared you to take a bite?

As you read **in-ká-hai** you'll notice all sorts of foreign matter—thorny jungles, odd cultures, strange languages, dangerous animals, even demonic encounters. Like wild honey, you might see it as an intriguing story, but one you'd be hesitant to try yourself.

This book is the telling of a true jungle adventure. It records how committed men and women helped the Manjúi people come to believe what the psalmist wrote:

*How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey  
to my mouth!*

Psalm 119:103 NIV

But how did it happen? What obstacles were overcome? And how did the Manjúi people respond?

Instead of leaving the answers to these questions at the edge of the Chaco jungle, you're invited to consider the lessons learned in the midst of struggles, and how they might apply in your community—with those God might enable you to reach with the Bible's message.

So read on—I dare you! You may find that what's offered here is sweeter than you think.

~Scott W. Humphreys

Nephew of Pete Humphreys

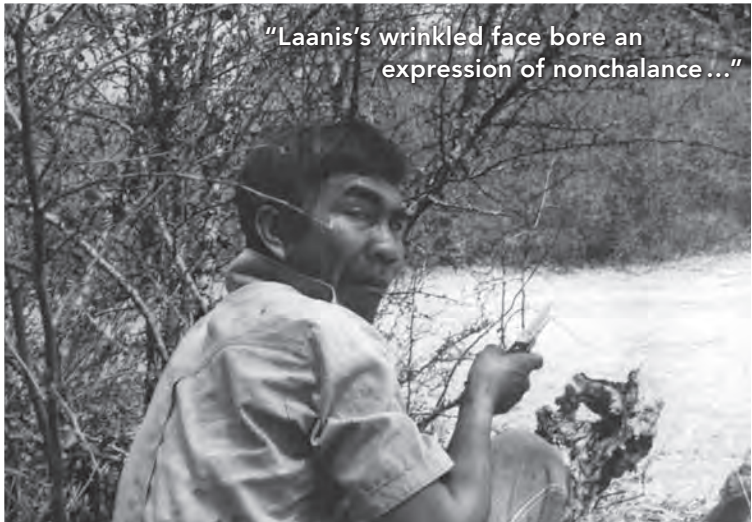


# prologue

The hot north wind kicked up sand and fine grey dust. The grit stuck to Laanis's brown skin like an oily film. The sun was just setting, but that did not bring relief from the scorching heat that held the land under its grip. Laanis squinted and scanned the horizon. The only things in sight were the gnarly *quebracho* trees and long-barbed cacti etched like skeletal snakes against a dull, colourless sky.

Laanis's wrinkled face bore an expression of nonchalance with just a hint of irritation, for he had weathered many long, dry seasons before. His eyes were bloodshot from a tiring day of hunting. Streaks of dry sweat caked the sides of his face and the nape of his bony neck. His greying hair and scraggly beard were smothered in dirt.

His fiber-woven game bag only grew heavier and the hunger pangs, like blows to his stomach, grew stronger as he trudged back wearily



to the water hole near which his family was camped. Laanis realized that this was his third day without a bite to eat. No wonder. The scrub jungle was *neshi-wata*—barren and foodless—and the dry season had only begun!

He couldn't bring himself to go back to camp and tell them that he'd had another empty-handed day of hunting. Oh, the agony of having his whole family spend another night in hunger! He knew his wife would not be in a good mood, especially since she had been taking care of a hungry, crying baby all day. He found himself kicking over twigs and leaves to try to find even one lizard or mouse he could kill for food.

But as darkness descended upon the scrub jungle and stars began populating the night sky, Laanis quickened his steps. Although he knew the jungle well, he was also aware that the worst mistake a Manjúi man could make was to stay out in the dark on his own. Evil spirits lurked behind every tree and could snatch his soul at any time. They were conniving and malicious, doing harmful things to unsuspecting mortals who dared cross their way. Laanis shuddered. Even though he was revered as a powerful shaman, he knew better than to leave himself vulnerable to the demons.

Laanis breathed a sigh of relief as a small fire came into sight. He counted the dark figures in the shadows: his wife, son and six daughters, including the newborn. Good—they were all safe. The presence of another fire farther back in the brush indicated that more relatives had joined his family during the day.

Stepping closer, he could see his wife, Wiwita, huddled by the fire next to their oldest daughters, Limina and Nina. They were talking in low voices. Even though the night was oppressively hot, the women stayed close to the fire where they would be safer from the spirits.

Upon his return, Nina's almond-shaped eyes glanced up hopefully beneath the long, unkempt hair shadowing her naïve face. Laanis's dejected expression told her that he had come home empty handed. Her eyes dropped instantly and her brows knit tightly together. Young as she was, Nina was familiar with the feeling of hunger.

His son, six-year-old Sesa, was trying to yank something out of a stray dog's mouth. Laanis was just about to yell at Sesa for wandering too far from the fire but found himself too weary to put out the extra effort. It wouldn't be any use flying into a temper now, anyhow. Sesa was probably restless from not having eaten anything substantial for the last few days. Laanis's three younger daughters were sprawled out in the dirt, in that state between sleep and wake. The baby, Lisa, who was barely six months old, lay naked and asleep on Wiwita's lap.

Tiny Lisa uttered a muffled cry as she stirred in her sleep, evidently haunted by a nightmare. Her puff of black hair, tangled and tousled, stuck out in all directions. Her little brown face was smeared with clay, just like the rest of her body, from rolling around on the bare ground all day. She opened her mouth and yawned, then let out another short cry, this time louder.

"Nothing today," Laanis said as he sat down next to the fire. His wife sighed sullenly and arranged herself and Lisa in a sleeping position.

He glanced over his shoulder at a muddy puddle—what was left of the water hole they had found three weeks ago. Even at its best, it had only been a few paces across. Now the water was all but gone. This meant they had to search for another source. If they didn't find one, they would be very thirsty by nightfall tomorrow.

*We'll leave this place in the morning, he thought, or else we'll die here.*

He knew Wiwita was still weak from childbirth and did not do well on the long hikes through the jungle. But Laanis was glad that she

was alive and could walk. He remembered that only a few months ago she was so thin and emaciated he could fit her whole body in his woven string bag. He had carried her and their newborn daughter in the bag when they travelled through the jungle.

After Wiwita had given birth, Laanis had forbidden her from eating any milk, meat or eggs, in accordance with tribal food taboos. Her own sister had almost died from a wracking cough the year before for not following the ancestors' instructions regarding food. Hadn't the shamans chanted long hours to the spirits to save her?

Yet the only foods Wiwita had been allowed to eat—cactus hearts and squash—were scarce during the drought season. Laanis had watched his wife dwindle into a pile of skin and bones.

Laanis knew that the baby, too, had been a weakling from the moment she was born. He should have known better than to let her live.

"She'll never survive!" Laanis had said after taking one look at Lisa. "We should bury her."

"No, no, no!" Wiwita had cried, her lips quivering. She held the baby to her tightly and turned her back to him. For the next few hours, she wept uncontrollably and wouldn't as much as talk to him.

Reluctantly, he had agreed to let her keep Lisa. Too weak to breastfeed, Wiwita had given her honey water. The baby had sucked it up voraciously, but she didn't seem to grow much.

Now the girl was hot and sticky and obviously irritated by her empty stomach. Laanis lay down by the smoky fire and tried to ignore Lisa's finicky whimpers. As he drifted off to sleep, his thoughts wandered to the inevitable question: *Are we going to survive tomorrow?*





A single, piercing cry woke Laanis from his slumber.

It was still night. Laanis sat up and looked over at Lisa, cradled in Wiwita's arms. Her red face was scrunched up in a tight knot and her eyes, nose and mouth were encrusted with white and yellow pus. Wiwita was trying to make her hush and go back to sleep, but Laanis knew something was wrong.

"Sesa, wake up!" he hissed. "Go get your uncles and cousins." Sesa's footsteps pattered into the distance.

Laanis scooped the baby up. The tiny body, trembling and shaking, felt almost weightless in his arms. Lisa had been restless for the last few days, but this was not one of those normal times of fussiness caused by hunger, thirst or heat. An evil spirit must have snatched her soul when they were asleep! That was making her sick. Laanis uttered a curse. He must act quickly.

Laanis's ancestors had taught him about the feared demon chief *Neshen-hewot*—"the flesh person," as all the Manjúi called him—who sent out his lackeys to snatch people's souls. *Neshen-hewot's* servant demons were very sly, very powerful. They could strike when a person least expected it. If Lisa's soul was stolen and not retrieved, she would die and *Neshen-hewot* would eat the flesh off her bones.

Laanis had healed his daughter several times in the past, always succeeding in retrieving her soul, but he had a feeling that tonight would be different. It must have been a powerful demon who acted this time—he was sure of it. He needed all the reinforcement he could get. He hoped his male relatives together would be powerful enough to save her.

His two brothers and three nephews arrived. Forming a tight circle around Lisa, they began chanting. A low, monotonic rumbling sound arose simultaneously from the throats of the men, led by Laanis.

Wiwita and her daughters sat close to the fire, a stone's throw away from the group of shamans, waiting in suspense. Sesa inched closer to the group and cocked his head as he listened intently. Even though he was young, he knew that one day he too would be expected to do the things that shamans did, like his father. *What does all of this mean?* he thought with curiosity.

The eerie rumbling grew louder and louder until it became a steady, rhythmic hum. One by one, the men fell into a trance. Some stared emptily into space while others' eyes rolled back into their sockets. Sharp, rapid yells now accompanied the humming. Laanis called out to the spirit world.

"Oh, my *spirit helper*—retriever of stolen souls—hear my voice and come to me!" he cried. "Clothe yourself with my body! Empower me to find my daughter's soul and return it to her!" As his *spirit helper* entered him, Laanis began convulsing. Other men followed suit, summoning their *spirit helpers*. Controlled by them, they too began to convulse.

The invisible battle began. The possessed men grappled and wrestled with *Neshen-hewot's* demons in a desperate effort to retrieve the baby's soul. Shouts and grunts, cries and groans filled the night air.

"I see her soul! There it is; there it is!" one of Laanis's brothers declared. He lurched forward, only to fall headfirst into the dirt. "There it goes! Go after it!"

"Watch out! Wait, I think I have it!" Laanis shouted. Just as he was about to grab hold of it, he grunted and staggered backward as if he had been stabbed in the stomach.

The battle went on for hours. As the crackling fire died into glowing embers, the shouts and cries diminished into mere whispers. One by one, the men slumped down onto the ground, exhausted.

Wiwita pulled Lisa to her, crying softly in the darkness. Sesa and the girls had fallen asleep on the dirt floor. After what seemed like an eternity, the men awoke from their trance. Dawn was just about to break. Laanis was the first to speak.

“We have fought the demons courageously, and we have lost,” he said matter-of-factly. “Lisa’s soul is irretrievable. She is gone.” Although the baby was still breathing laboriously between whimpers and wheezes, the shaman had proclaimed her fate. Her soul was *it-nan*—extinct. She was as good as dead.

At this, Wiwita broke into a loud wail. Sitting cross-legged on the ground, she held Lisa tightly to her body and threw her head back, howling desperately. Limina and Nina wrapped their arms around their mother, squeezing her and Lisa.

Laanis’s older brother came forward. “Let go of her,” he said. “She’s dead.” The other men had already begun digging a small hole in the ground to bury the baby.

“Noooooo ... nooooooo ...” Wiwita wailed. Giving up the body would mean it was over. They would never see the baby again.

Laanis felt a heavy pang of loss and sadness, for he too had hoped that Lisa would live, but his heart was numb from the teachings of his ancestors. They had told him that whenever a person’s soul was lost to the demons, he or she would surely die. Laanis had chanted over too many people to be mistaken. This was clearly fate. What else was there to do but bury her?

By this time, the whole family clan had gathered. They formed a circle and quietly watched the drama unfold. They were used to this. Not all Manjúi babies were expected to survive anyway.

A tug-of-war broke out between the women and Laanis's brother. He grabbed Lisa's ankle and tried to pry her body out of the women's grip. Limina, who was on the other side, fended him off, yelling at him to stop and clawed at his hands. Another brother stepped forward and tried to grab Lisa from the other side. The relatives stood watching from the sidelines. Sesa looked on in despair as his baby sister's body was tugged at and twisted.

"It's time," someone said.

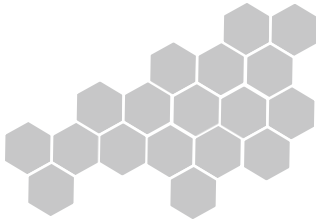
Two more men stepped forward to join in the struggle. The women, still huddled close together, wailed and howled as they were being attacked from all sides. They were tenacious, but eventually broke down from sorrow and exhaustion. The men won. Dangling Lisa by the arm, one of them carried her limp body a distance from the camp and dropped it into a shallow depression in the ground.

Covering the body with dirt, the men built a fire on top of her grave and burned the few things ever associated with the little girl: the woven blanket that Wiwita had wrapped her in and the gourd she had been fed from. They did not want her soul to come back and haunt them, so they were going to erase every trace of Lisa.

Wiwita fell facedown into the dirt and remained there, wailing uncontrollably. The wails were hollow and piercing.

Laanis slumped onto the goatskin next to his wife. Hopelessness was thick in the air. Soon, they would be packing up and travelling to another area of the jungle—without Lisa, for she was *it-nan*, extinct.

Dark and despairing thoughts, together with Wiwita's heart-wrenching wails, would permeate the jungle for many days to come. And the memory of his daughter's death would plague Laanis's mind for decades.



# El Infierno Verde THE GREEN HELL

The Manjúi people lived and died for generations in the unforgiving Chaco jungle of northwestern Paraguay. Generation after generation, fear and desperation clung to them tenaciously like a chronic headache. *Will there be enough water and food today? Will one of Neshen-hewot's demons snatch my soul? Will one of his servants harm me?* These were the questions a Manjúi asked himself every day from morning to sundown. He did not dare hope beyond the present.

The Manjúi people had little time to discuss politics, philosophize about the meaning of life, or dream about the future. They understood little of the art and music so commonplace in the modern world. Instead, all that occupied their minds were the pressing concern to stay alive and the constant terror of the spirits. The only art that surrounded them was a dense thorny jungle of skeletal trees and gigantic cacti, looming taller than a man and armed with four-inch spikes. The only music they ever heard was the monotonic chanting of a shaman who summoned spirits around the campfire at night.

## FOREIGNERS

In 1971, a team of North Americans ventured into the Chaco jungle. They were in search of the primitive, semi-nomadic tribe known as the Manjúi. Among the team were two couples, both from California.

Norm and Iris Fry had sold all they owned and moved to Paraguay with their two young daughters. They were joined by Verl and Susie Koons. These foreigners were not explorers or anthropologists. They were ordinary men and women who had something important to deliver: the Bible's message, a message unknown to the Manjúis.

It wasn't an easy feat for a foreigner to live in the Chaco. The sprawling, semi-arid plain of forlorn brush is landlocked east of the Andes Mountains. Characterized by pervasive heat and extreme dryness, the Chaco is one of the most difficult places to survive in the world.

A prevailing northerly wind drives waves of intense heat through the scrub. Temperatures regularly soar above 46°C (115°F). The only precipitation comes three or four months out of the year, sometimes adding up to less than 500 mm (20 inches) of rain. Spanning 60 percent of Paraguay's land mass, the region supports only three percent of the country's population. Even today, few Paraguayan nationals venture into the region they refer to as *el infierno verde*—"the green hell."

## CONTACT

Filadelfia was a small town in the Chaco used as a supply base for exploration. From this town, Norm and Verl began making regular trips into the jungle to establish contact with the elusive Manjúi people. After several failed attempts, they received word that some Manjúis had been spotted northwest of Filadelfia. Immediately, they headed out to that area of the jungle.

A few hours later, their old International truck rumbled to a stop on the overgrown dirt road. Norm and Verl stared at the sight in front of them—a group of Manjúi men were standing right in the middle of the road! It seemed as if they had heard the truck coming and had come out of the jungle to wait for the foreigners.

Scrawny, dishevelled, with matted hair sticking out in all directions and brown skin smeared with dirt, the dozen Manjúis stood silently, watching and listening. They wore nothing but cactus-fiber loin cloths.

Norm trembled with excitement and fear as he stepped out of the truck. *All my training never prepared me for this!* He stole a nervous glance at Verl. His teammate was shaking too.



One of the Manjúi men stepped forward and greeted them in an unintelligible language. They crowded around the vehicle, peering into the truck bed to see what the strangers were hauling.

Gesturing and signing, Norm and Verl exchanged sacks of beans, rice and *galletas*—dried biscuits—for a few fiber-woven bags and a wooden smoking pipe that the Manjúis offered. The Manjúi men smiled. They were pleased with the swap.

*It's clear that these Manjúis have interacted and traded with others before, Norm thought to himself as they made their way back to civilization. But how can they still be living in the jungle under such primitive conditions?*

## SANTA ROSA

When the team later explored the area, they counted around 90 members of the tribe left. Because of the Chaco's harsh physical conditions, the nomadic Manjúis were on the brink of extinction. They were forced to wander between shallow lagoons left from the rainy season. They had adopted no means of modern technology, hunting with slingshots, bows and arrows and gathering their food at the mercy of jungle resources.

The Manjúis scraped by with whatever they could find or kill for the day—plant roots, rabbits, lizards, snakes, birds and occasionally a wild boar or small deer. They ate, cooked and slept on the ground without so much as a roof over their heads. They travelled by foot, carrying everything they owned in cactus-fiber bags. They wore the same home-woven clothes until the fabric literally rotted off their backs.

The Manjúis were semi-nomadic, but not by choice. Environment dictated that they move through the jungle to survive. When food and water reserves were depleted, migration was a matter of life and death. Early on in their initial contact with Norm and Verl, the Manjúis indicated a desire for a secure source of food and water. The team knew that before they could deliver the Bible's message to the Manjúis, they had to meet that need.

Over the next few years, Norm and Verl developed a station at an abandoned Paraguayan military base called Santa Rosa, 212 km (133 miles) northwest of Filadelfia. They drilled a well to tap underground water and set up a supply store that carried food staples such as rice, corn, beans and green tea (called *yerba*). They employed Manjúi men at the station so they could exchange their wages for food. They also stocked basic medical supplies.

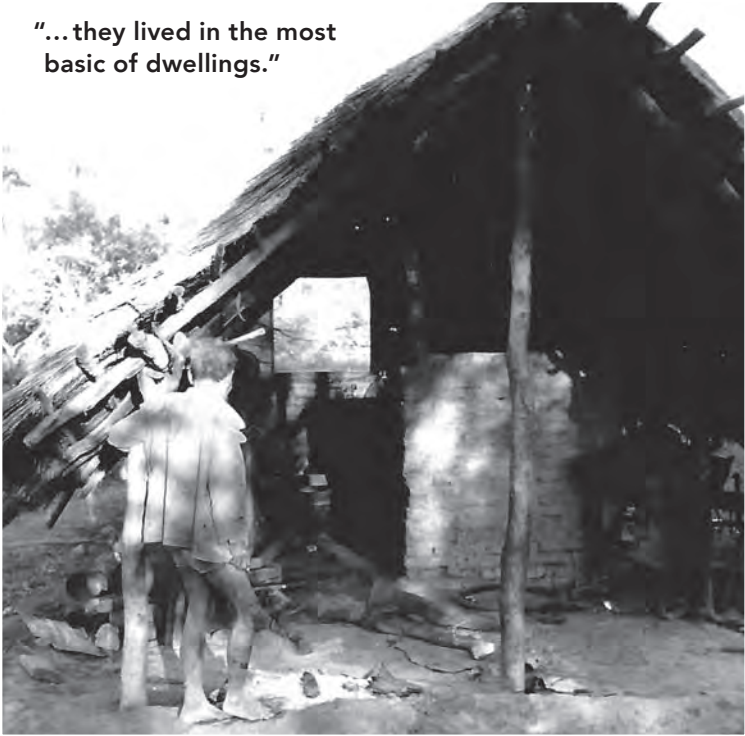
The curious Manjúis had no idea what these foreigners were up to. They surrounded them, making all kinds of motions and talking non-stop in their fast-paced dialect, full of strange clicks and sounds.

*What do the foreigners want out here?* their inquiring tones seemed to ask.

Most Manjúis were friendly and accepted the foreigners' help. Others weren't as amicable—like Laanis, the shaman who observed everything with a sinister glint in his eyes and hurled insults at the foreigners when they passed by. At night, Laanis chanted over sick members of the tribe. The chanting and wailing went on into the wee hours of the night so often that Norm and his family could hardly get any sleep.



“... they lived in the most basic of dwellings.”



Despite the availability of food and water at Santa Rosa, it was years before some Manjúis chose to live for extended periods among their guests. Even then they lived in the most basic of dwellings. Their transient lifestyle made it hard for the team to develop relationships with them. They would just get acquainted with a Manjúi family, only to have them wander back into the jungle and disappear for months on end!

The foreigners also found it extremely difficult to learn the Manjúi language. It was one of the most complex languages of South America, riddled with glottal sounds unfamiliar to the Western ear, and requiring multiple levels of conjugations for each noun and verb.

On top of that, surviving the heat and dryness of the Chaco was a challenge not for the faint of heart. And Santa Rosa was so deep in the heart of the jungle that a step in any direction was a step closer to civilization. But getting to civilization was not easy. The road out was a rough dirt path blazed through the scrub during the Chaco War\* in the 1930s. It was a bumpy 12-hour tractor and wagon ride to Filadelfia, plus another 465 km (290 miles) to Asunción, the capital city.

The environmental and cultural challenges took a toll on many of the foreigners who tried to settle in Santa Rosa. The once curious Manjúis grew skeptical by the time several families had come and gone. By 1979, when Norm Fry and his family were moved to Asunción to assume other responsibilities, no one had learned the language well enough to share the message of the Bible with the Manjúis. The Manjúis, oblivious to why these *tajeki leimijii'ne'*—white-skinned ones—were in their midst, continued living and dying in spiritual darkness.

## THE HUMPHREYS

In 1978, after four years of Bible and cross-cultural training, Pete and Leah Humphreys packed their belongings and left Ontario, Canada. Taking their one-year-old daughter, Cheralyn, along with them, they bade friends and family goodbye and flew to Asunción, the capital city of Paraguay. At the time, Leah was also seven months pregnant with their second child. They believed that God was opening the door for them to go there as Bible teachers.

Pete and Leah had both grown up overseas. Pete, whose parents immigrated from England, attended high school in Australia. Leah Eaton, from California, spent most of her growing-up years in the Philippines. But it was at a Wisconsin Bible school that they met in 1974.

There they became friends and fell in love. Leah, an outgoing brunette, had planned on going to medical school. But as Pete shared his vision for their life together—to live among a tribal group who had never

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\*Between Paraguay and Bolivia

heard of Jesus Christ—Leah found herself resting reassuredly in the leadership of this young man who displayed so much passion for the Word of God. They were married in 1976.

Pete had always had an interest in Spanish-speaking countries, and with time the couple sensed their hearts being directed toward Paraguay.

A few days before they were to leave for Asunción, Pete and Leah found that they still lacked \$400 to pay for the plane tickets. “If God wants us to go, he will provide it,” they decided together.

The night before the payment was due, Leah spoke about their upcoming work at a ladies’ meeting at church, where the women presented Leah with a brand new pressure cooker. Leah remembered she had mentioned earlier that she might want to take a pressure cooker with her to her new country. But how was a pressure cooker going to help provide the funds they still lacked?

No matter. As Leah opened the lid of the shiny green pot, sitting inside was a check for \$400! *God had known all along.* This was one of many miracles God used to guide them and demonstrate his faithfulness.

Being just 21 years old, it was this trust in their almighty God that brought Pete and Leah to Paraguay. Shaun, their second child, was born two weeks after their arrival in Asunción. After two more years of Spanish learning and administrative work in the city, the Humphreys were asked to join the Santa Rosa team and go deep into the hot, dry and virtually uninhabitable Chaco to work with the Manjús.

*The Chaco jungle? The Manjúi tribe?* Was this an answer to prayer, a destination and a people that they could now set their hearts on? Young and ready for adventure, Pete and Leah looked forward to the day that they would move to Santa Rosa.



That day came in November 1980. From the small Cessna 206, Leah looked down at the Chaco jungle she would call home for the next 17 years. A dirty brown from the air, it was so flat and vast one couldn't tell where it began and where it ended. Leah didn't usually like flying, but held back her fears as the plane bounced and dipped in the air. Cheralyn and Shaun shrieked with delight as they enjoyed the rollercoaster-like ride.

Leah was eager to reunite with Pete, who had left earlier that week to move the family's belongings to Santa Rosa. Riding on a large truck, Pete and the driver had started out early in the morning and travelled through most of the night, trekking through 212 km (133 miles) of knee-deep ruts and freshly rained-on mud to get to what seemed like the ends of the earth. But this did nothing to dampen his spirits. "Come join me here—quick!" he had shouted excitedly over the radio to Leah.

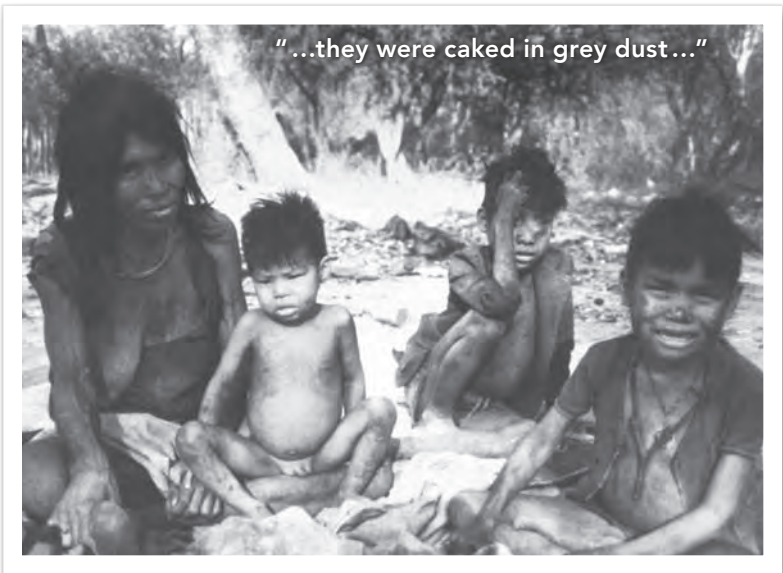
## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The Cessna landed on the rugged Santa Rosa airstrip. Leah surveyed her surroundings. An unrelenting northerly wind blew dry, gritty dust into her eyes and hair, and the sun glared down at her through a layer of haze. The heat was oppressive. The surrounding *quebracho* trees offered little shade—and they didn't offer much of a scenic picture either. The wiry and razor-sharp vegetation, covered in grey chalk, took on a lifeless hue. In fact, there was so little colour it seemed like they had stepped into a sepia-toned photograph.

She would relay this image in a letter home shortly after arriving:

*"Almost every tree had thorns on it. There were so many cacti; and some of them crawled along the ground, looking like a snake. Thorny and snaky!"*

Leah noticed the children of her new Manjúi neighbours. Playing and rolling about in the dirt naked, they were caked in grey dust from



head to toe. One child had developed a rash on her back. Horrified, Leah watched as the mother scratched her back to loosen the layers of filth on it. The sweat ran down in rivulets, washing away the dirt. It wasn't until then that Leah saw her actual skin colour beneath the grey.

"My children will never get that filthy!" she vowed to herself. Then Cheralyn let out a giggle. Leah looked down. There they were—her own two children—playing in the dirt and covered in the same grey dust as the Manjúi children!

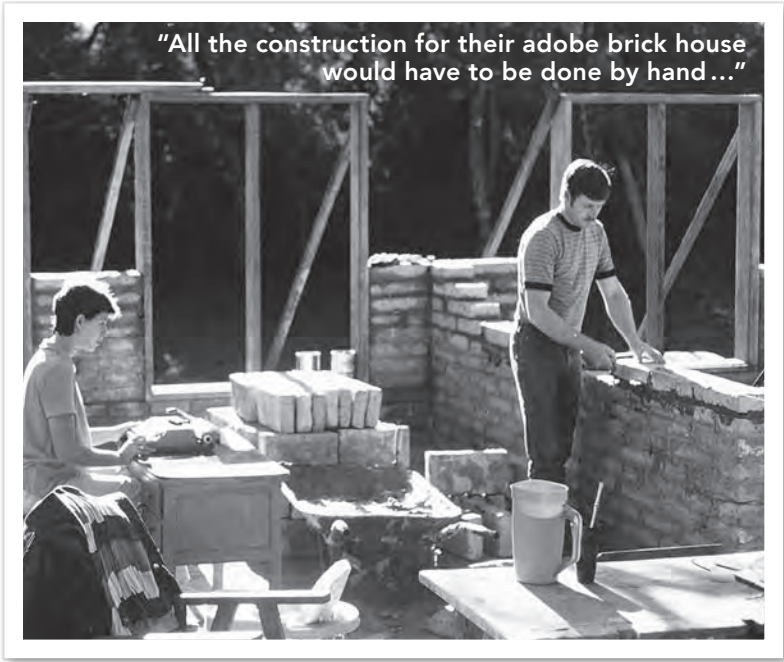
As Leah looked upon the harsh landscape and her neighbours' matted hair and dishevelled faces, she wondered, *What is it really like to live here? Are we going to survive?*

## SETTLING IN

Although they had braced themselves for one of the harshest living environments in the world, Pete and Leah had no idea what challenges awaited them. With no electricity or running water, it would be almost two years before they could set up their home. All the construction for their adobe brick house would have to be done by hand—from moulding and baking each brick to cutting and hauling wood from the jungle for lumber. In the meantime, they took refuge in another team member's vacant home.

Leah soon learned that everyday household tasks, such as cooking, had become much more complicated and time intensive. Food staples like rice and flour had to be flown in by plane, and Pete shot deer or wild pigs for meat. Leah made all their meals from scratch. She rolled and cut her own noodles for lasagna, ground her own meat for hamburgers, and even made her own cottage cheese.

Primitive conditions aside, it was the excruciating heat that brought Pete and Leah to their wits' end. The waves of hot wind made them feel like they were being baked alive. Since arriving in November—



the beginning of the hot season—it only got hotter and hotter, until every day was a sizzling 46°C (115°F). With no fans or air conditioners, the heat was enough to drive one crazy.

At night, Leah soaked the family's sheets and pajamas in water so that it would evaporate off them as they lay in bed. It wasn't the most comfortable way to sleep, but it was a bit of relief from the heat and dryness of the day.

## FALLEN GARDEN

In the years that followed, Peter and Leah gave this desolate place what they thought was a fitting name: the Garden of Eden after the Fall. There were times when everything told them it was time to leave—the brutal environment, the primitive conditions and

homesickness—especially as their family grew and God added to them two more children, Deryk and Charissa. Yet quitting was never an option for the Humphreys. To them, quitting meant rebelling against God and walking away from the ministry they knew the Lord had entrusted to them. They were committed to finishing the task.

So, despite the hardships and loneliness they experienced living in this fallen “garden,” Pete and Leah knew that this was the right place for them to be, and they found ways to live and work there for the next 17 years of their lives. It wasn’t until many years later that they were able to complete what they had been sent here to do, to give the Manjúi people good news—the message found in the Bible.





## Neshen-Hewot THE CHIEF DEMON

The Humphreys settled into the harsh physical environment of the Chaco the same year as Steve and Ithie Jackson. Steve had spent several years in Santa Rosa before returning home to the United States to bring his new bride, Ithie, back with him in 1979. His job included the physical aspects of the ministry—the construction of buildings, tractor trips to town for supplies, and teaching basic work skills to the Manjúi men. These families soon caught glimpses of the dark spiritual world that the Manjúi people dwelled in—a world fraught with irrational fears and inconsistencies.

The Manjúis were in constant trepidation of the spirit world. They attributed every irregular weather pattern, shooting star, eclipse, toothache and unusual sound to demonic activity. Every waking minute, they were looking over their shoulders to see if an evil spirit was lurking behind them to snatch their souls.

Every male member of a Manjúi family was expected to learn the shamanistic skills required to save themselves from the chief demon *Neshen-hewot* and his evil cohorts. Young boys learned from the older men how to summon their *spirit helpers*, how to chant over the sick and how to wage battle against the demons. Cultural codes, such as oppressive food taboos passed down through the generations, were strictly followed to avoid sickness brought on by malevolent demons.

Not long after moving to Santa Rosa, the Humphreys wrote home:

*“The Manjúis are found each night, huddled around their fire, waiting for an old man to die. He has been threatening and cursing them, and they are terribly frightened. His threat to come back as a tiger and eat their children and*

*their livestock is no joke to them. They... are interested in the fact that we are protected from evil spirits..."*

The dying man was Weinkil, a shrewd witchdoctor who had always held unmatched influence in the tribe. He was an evil man, vulgar, immoral and abusive. So feared for his power in the spiritual realm, no one dared speak up against him, even when he committed one of the tribe's worst taboos—incest. In fact, he had fathered four children by his own daughter, two of whom he killed at birth. Weinkil was used to having his own way.

But now, Weinkil sensed his powers slipping away. His health was failing and death was imminent. To continue wielding his authority over his fellow tribesmen, a bitter Weinkil threatened to come back to haunt them. He showed that he still possessed great power by handling red hot coals and remaining unharmed. The people were terrified.

In the tension-filled weeks before his death, Weinkil lay on the ground, slowly wasting away. At the end, the Manjúis called Pete and Steve to come quickly. They knew Weinkil was about to die, and they wanted help.

Single file, Pete and Steve followed the men down the trail to where Weinkil lay. Kneeling next to Weinkil, Pete put his ear to the old man's chest. Weinkil's heart was still beating.

Thump.

Thump.

Thump.

Then it stopped.

Just as Pete was wondering what to do next, the surrounding Manjúis, as if in a hurried craze, gathered up what was left of Weinkil's meager belongings to dispose of with the body. They wanted to get rid of any



trace of the feared shaman. Because they knew the foreigners were somehow protected from evil spirits, they motioned for Pete and Steve to pick up Weinkil's body and transport it in their truck to a certain clearing outside Santa Rosa. The Manjúis themselves would not touch the body lest his spirit haunt them.

When Pete and Steve arrived at the designated spot, they put the body in a depression in the ground, expecting the Manjúis to bury it, as was their custom.

But the frenzied Manjúis cried, "No, no, no!" and pointed to a large bonfire they had built. They motioned for them to throw the body on it. Although it was not the common Manjúi practice, they wanted to cremate the evil witchdoctor. They wanted nothing left of Weinkil.

Pete and Steve threw the body onto the fire and watched as it burst into flames. This gruesome image—Weinkil’s wizened body splayed atop haphazardly piled firewood, shriveled legs poking out of the flames—would stick in Pete’s mind for many nights to come.

*This is what fear looks like*, he thought.

Within 10 minutes, Weinkil’s body had been reduced to ashes, and no one ever spoke his name again.

## FATE

Meanwhile, Leah, who supervised the Santa Rosa clinic, was invited to a Manjúi birthing. Accustomed to modern-day maternity care, Leah was jarred by its crudeness.

Lying on the bare ground, the labouring mother groaned in pain. The old women goaded the mother, saying, “He’s biting you! Push him out!” When she was ready to deliver, the mother sat up against another woman, who wrapped her arms around the swollen abdomen and tried to squeeze the baby out.

After the baby was born, the umbilical cord was cut with the lid of a dirty can. Half-starved village dogs rushed in to lick the end of the cord. The baby was passed off to a grandmother, who stuck her not-too-clean fingers up into the baby’s palette, pressing steadily to ensure the baby’s eyes would be “large.”

Leah’s glorified view of natives having the best natural birthing methods disappeared completely after witnessing several of these events.

When Nina, the daughter of the revered shaman Laanis, was giving birth to her first baby, Leah was called to help. Nina had been in difficult labour for two days. As the women neighbours and relatives gathered around her, comments flew.

“Poor you! Your baby’s probably dead!”

“My cousin was also in labour for this long, and her baby was rotten when it came out! Yours is probably rotten too.” Such “encouragement” was commonplace when the outlook was grim.



Leah put a stethoscope to Nina’s bulging belly and listened. The baby’s heartbeat was strong and vibrant.

“The baby’s alive!” Leah insisted. “It’ll come out fine.” And she was right. Not long after, Nina gave birth to a healthy baby boy.

But not all stories ended the same way. Because of a high infant mortality rate, the Manjúi had adopted a fatalistic and pessimistic attitude. Often, babies who could not be provided for were aborted or birthed directly into a small pit and buried alive. Deformed babies were always killed—sometimes stomped to death at delivery.

Death was such a common part of life that it wasn’t unusual for the old and sick to be abandoned in the jungle, or denied sustenance. And a pronouncement from a shaman could mean imminent death.

When Nowai, Laanis's uncle, contracted dysentery, Leah gave him some medicine. But Nowai refused to take it because Laanis and others had chanted over him and told him that his soul was irretrievable. That verdict was a death sentence. Instead of accepting medical help, Nowai lay down, refused to eat or drink, and eventually died.

In effect, Nowai had committed psychological suicide. But to him, he was simply following what he had always held to be true—a system of beliefs dominated by a fear of demons and their evil ruler, *Neshen-hewot*.

## FUTILITY

On another occasion, Leah pondered how she could help Juana'a, a young, single mother whose husband had left her for another woman. Juana'a and her three children floated among her relatives' families in Santa Rosa. She had developed tuberculosis and needed to be treated daily with antibiotics. Soon, however, Juana'a wore out her welcome with her relatives. Abandoning the medicine, she took her children back into the jungle.

Juana'a was another product of the chaotic and unstructured family life among the Manjúis. Infidelity was rampant, and many of the men had been together with many of the women. No wonder the genealogy of the Manjúis was hard to chart.

Manjúi marriages were seldom permanent. A girl as young as twelve years old could be prompted by her mother to go out to the jungle in the evening and build a fire, which signalled she was available to a particular suitor. There were no wedding ceremonies and either party could easily leave the relationship. Infidelity seemed to be built into the system.

Because marriage was interpreted so loosely, there was constant fighting over spouses. Violence wasn't limited to the men—fights among the women could be just as vicious! Suspicion was the rule

of the day. The children were caught in the middle—youngsters abandoned by their fathers rarely survived in the jungle. Pregnant women whose husbands had left them sometimes carried out abortions by repeatedly jumping out of a tree.

Such a system left Manjúi women like Juana'a in desperate straits, with no husband to provide food for her and her children. When Juana'a finally returned to Santa Rosa, TB had ravaged her body. Moreover, her one-year-old son was severely malnourished because she could neither breastfeed him nor provide him with proper nutrition.

When Leah heard that the baby had fallen into a coma, she rushed over to help. Laweyin, a blind shaman, was chanting over the boy, sucking at his stomach in an effort to remove the "object of pain" placed there by a demon—a servant of the evil *Neshen-hewot*.

Leah shook her head. *That's not going to help!*

"He needs nutrition and medical treatment!" she tried to explain. Laweyin paid no attention to her and continued the ritual.

Suddenly he cried, "I've got it! I've got it!" His face suffused with triumph, Laweyin spat into his hand and threw the "object" in the direction of the jungle.

Instantly, the boy opened his eyes and looked around. Then he got up and toddled over to his mother who held out her arms in an eager embrace. Leah's eyes widened in disbelief. She felt as if the Manjúi spectators could read her thoughts. *See? Our methods do work!* the looks on their faces said.

Leah turned away from the shaman. "He still needs medical treatment, Juana'a," she said. "He is very malnourished and he's soon going to fall ill again."

But Juana'a refused to listen. She believed that her son was already completely healed by the shaman's magic.

Leah went home saddened. *It is the devil who is displaying this power to keep the deceived Manjúis within his grasp!* she thought. *It's a little ray of light to keep them hoping and believing in his dark ways. Please, Lord, help them to understand the truth!*

A few days later, Leah received word that the boy was dying. His relatives were already digging a grave for him. Leah hurried over and measured his pulse. It was weak, but still there.

Suddenly, all the women started wailing at the top of their lungs, meaning it was over—he was dead. The men began to pry the boy from his mother.

“Wait!” Leah protested. “He’s still alive!”

But it was no use. In Manjúi culture, death was not pronounced by a doctor when a person’s heart stopped beating. That day, thinking the boy to be dead, they buried him alive.

## UNWANTED

Very soon afterwards, Juana’a died of TB. Immediately, cruel rumours circulated that she had violated a specific tribal food taboo and had paid the price for her folly.

The next morning, Leah overheard something even more shocking. The neighbourhood children shoved Juana’a’s two daughters and taunted them:

“Your mother just died. You’re orphans now! Ha!”

“Ha-ha! Your brother’s dead too!”

As Leah found out that day, the Manjúi people did not readily offer sympathy or condolences when a loved one died. Life was cruel to them, and they were cruel to each other.



The orphan girls, deserted by an unfaithful father, left behind by a dead mother, and neglected by an indifferent community, eventually moved to nearby ranches where they worked as prostitutes to feed themselves.

## HONEY

In the bleakness of everyday life, there was one thing that brought joy to a Manjúi, if only for a brief moment: honey.

One day, Leah was sitting on the front porch drinking tea with her Manjúi friends. Suddenly, one of Laanis's grandchildren came running down the path. *There must be some important news*, Leah thought. Word travelled fast in Manjúi culture, and it usually travelled on the heels of children.

Edging up to his mother, Limina, the grinning urchin whispered something in her ear.

*"... naki-wota!"*

*"Can it be? Naki-wota—honey!"*

The secret was out. A moment later, Leah found herself alone on the porch. Everyone had jumped up and rushed to Laanis's house.

What was so special about honey, anyway?

In the Chaco, sweet foods were not easy to come by. Wild honey was by far the sweetest natural food one could find in the scrub jungle. So whenever a hunter brought home honey, relatives came running.

Not wanting to miss the excitement, Leah called Pete and they followed the crowds to Laanis's house.

Gathered around a deerskin sac, young and old dipped their hands into the rich nectar and shoved generous helpings of comb and

honey into their mouths. Mothers fed it to their babies. The sticky substance trickled down their arms, oozed over their chests and dripped onto their laps. It smeared the children's faces and tangled their hair. But the mess did not matter. They ate and ate, clicking their tongues loudly. As the heavenly treat melted in their mouths, faces lit up and wide smiles emerged.

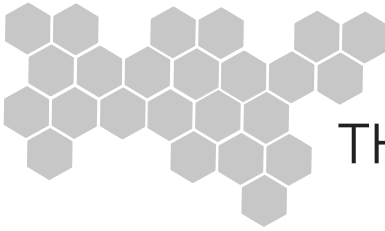
*"In-ká-hai!"* they cried, proclaiming the wonder of the delicious stuff before them. *"In-ká-hai! How sweet it is!"*

Spontaneously, some of the men began flicking their cheeks with their index fingers, making hollow popping sounds. *Pop, pop, pop, pop!* It was the Manjúi equivalent to a child rubbing his hands together with glee or licking his lips in anticipation.

The excitement was infectious. Here and there, men were flicking their cheeks to make the blissful notes. It was jubilant music in a land that offered its inhabitants little sweetness!

To the Manjúi, this was probably the closest one ever got to happiness. While eating honey, the daily cares of life melted away in the abundant sweetness. For a brief moment, time stood still for them. Life was sweet. It was *in-ká-hai*.

But just like everything else that only satisfies for a moment, this happiness was short lived. When the honey was gone, so was the sweetness. The very next day, the people were back to the bitter realities of life.



## THE RADIO MAN

*“Often, when we think of reaching people for the Lord, the first thing we want to share is the gospel. But we have found that there are a few things that must take place before the gospel can be shared... The language must be learned well. We must begin to have a good understanding of the culture; learning how they think, what they feel is important, and what their goals are. If the gospel is shared before this happens, then a shaky foundation is poured on which we hope to set very important principles. Friendship relationships are pursued and developed. We spend long hours with the people on their home ground, where they are the most comfortable and most likely to open up to us. We are strange to them, and what we say is to be regarded with suspicion...”*

Humphreys' letter home, 1988

## LEARNING THE LANGUAGE

Gordie and Nancy Hunt were an energetic couple who had arrived in 1977. Gordie was from California, and Nancy was from Idaho. As they settled into the Chaco jungle, they faced an immense challenge. No outsider knew the Manjúi language. It was unique, spoken by an isolated, monolingual people group. After their arrival, Gordie spent the first six years painstakingly analyzing and learning the Manjúi language. Nancy tended to their young family, befriended the women in the community, and in the process, was also learning the language.

Since there were no bilingual speakers, Manjúi vocabulary had to be extracted laboriously through signing and guessing,

transcribing different sounds, and recording words and their possible meanings. When enough information was known, a vocabulary list was compiled.

To their advantage, this work was already well in progress by the time Pete and Leah arrived in Santa Rosa. Tutored by Gordie and Nancy, the Humphreys plunged into learning Manjúi.

Many of those words were composed of sounds unfamiliar and even jarring to a foreigner's ear. *It sounds like they're choking!* Leah thought at first.

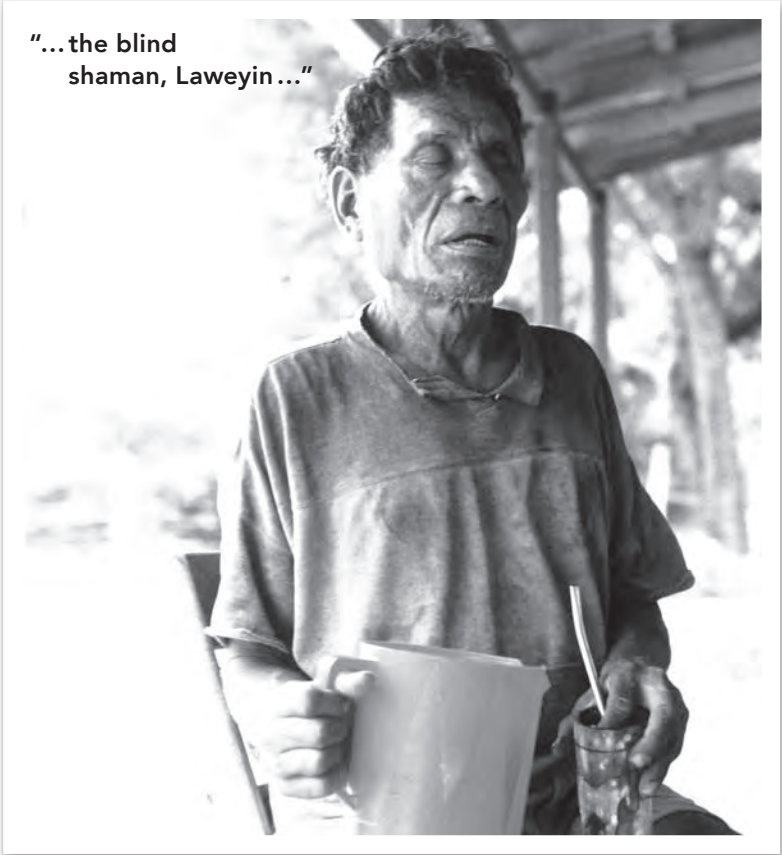
Soon, she and Pete learned to pronounce those very sounds—made by glottal stops. When a glottal stop was inserted, a word took on an entirely different meaning: *intak* (two) became *in'tak* (belt) and *jika* (his) became *ji'ka* (tongue). And they had fun enunciating words like *jmo'o jmo'o* (mouse) and *jnei'win* (smell), with voiceless consonants that tickled their noses.

But it was the complex grammar that threatened to shoot down even the most determined learner. Rather than building a sentence with separate words, the Manjúis formed long “word-sentences” by attaching many affixes to a single word.

*Surely English isn't this complex!* Pete thought as he stumbled over Manjúi affixes and articles. When referring to a noun, he had to indicate whether the subject was near or far, known or unknown, wide or narrow, and in good or bad condition. When using a verb, he had to denote how far in the past something happened and whether or not he had been there to see it. *Whew!*

Pete hired Kalowi, a gifted orator and leader in the community, to be his language helper. He spent hours practicing with Kalowi, carefully emulating his pronunciation and style of speech. Soon, the young people joked, “You sound *just* like Kalowi!”

"... the blind  
shaman, Laweyin ..."



On the other hand, it was the blind shaman, Laweyin, who made learning Manjúi an enjoyable task for Leah. A scrawny man in his forties with seared eyelids and a mop of unkempt black hair, Laweyin was one of the friendliest people in Santa Rosa. He had appointed himself the Humphreys' unofficial "welcomer" to the neighbourhood.

Every day, he wandered over to their house, hoping to chat and sip *tereré* (green tea) on their porch. With such an eager visitor, Leah

would take out the hollowed cow horn, pour icy water over the green yerba leaves, and sit down on the porch for an impromptu lesson of conversational Manjúi.

It was over *tereré* and such language lessons that Leah learned Laweyin's life story.

"I was a little boy growing up in the jungle," Laweyin recalled. "One day, I woke up to find my eyes hurting and itching horribly. Oh, they hurt so much! And they were so swollen I could hardly see. My father and mother took some cold ashes from the campfire and rubbed them into my eyeballs. I screamed and cried, but they told me the ashes would make them better. Finally, my eyes stopped hurting, but the ashes destroyed my eyeballs forever. I was blind."

Laweyin made his livelihood as a shaman, chanting over the sick in the tribe. He had become quite accomplished and took pride in his abilities.

"Leah, I can chant and make the sky rain," he boasted with confidence. "I've done it many times. People revere me for that."

Leah longed for the day when Laweyin would know the Creator God who sent rain upon the earth. In the meantime, Laweyin became a dear friend of the Humphreys. And through his language help, they would one day teach him something in return—God's words in Laweyin's own language.

## UNDERSTANDING THE PEOPLE

Not only did the Humphreys have to learn the language, they also had to find out how the Manjúi people thought and communicated with each other. For example, did they speak in a straightforward or roundabout manner? Were they aggressive or timid? How did they respond to praise and criticism?

The team in Santa Rosa had no manuals or textbooks to help them learn the culture. Instead, it had to be learned the hard way: through trial and error in daily interaction. Although this often provided much-needed comic relief, conflicts were inevitable.

*“Laywot!”* a familiar voice drifted into Pete’s office one day, calling him by his Manjúi nickname, Radio Man.\* Laanis’s wiry frame emerged in the doorway. *“Laywot! Come fix my gun!”* \*\* he demanded gruffly.

Pete looked up from the papers scattered across his desk. Ever since he arrived, he had become the one-stop fix-it shop. Some days, he was so inundated with requests that he could hardly get any other work done. Respect for others’ time and privacy had little value in Manjúi culture.

“Laanis, I’m sorry, but I can’t right now. Kalowi is coming to go over some things with me,” he said as gently as he could. “But I should have some free time later in the evening.”

Laanis’s smile dropped instantly.

“Never mind,” he said coldly. “I’ll never ask *you* to fix anything of mine again!” He stood for a moment in the doorway, as if expecting Pete to apologize and beg for the privilege of fixing his gun. When Pete did not, Laanis turned around and stormed out.

Through incidents like this, Pete and Leah learned that the Manjúis took rejections personally and were extremely sensitive to being offended. They also had a penchant for “paying back” the offender with threats and intimidation.

Although such conflicts were unpleasant, they were necessary. Learning to function within the Manjúi culture was imperative for establishing trust.

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\*This was the result of the Manjúis hearing Pete on the radio contacting other locations.

\*\*These guns were found in the jungle after the Chaco War.

## EARNING THEIR TRUST

Pete and Leah knew that the Manjús would not trust God's message if they did not trust them, the messengers. In preparation for teaching the Bible one day, the Humphreys purposefully took on the student role first, asking the Manjús to teach *them*.

During visits with the people, Pete observed that *food* was the topic that came up most frequently in conversations. It was such an





important part of survival that it took precedence over everything else in daily life. Food was never far from their minds. And the one food that got everyone talking was, of course ... *honey!*

Intrigued by their love for honey, Pete begged, "Teach me all you know about honey!" The Manjúis were more than happy to oblige him.

One sunny spring day, Pete accompanied Laanis and several other men in search of honey. They located a good spot in the jungle, spread out, and made a clean sweep through that area, scanning for bees hovering over nests. Each man let out high-pitched hoots to keep track of one another.

Suddenly, loud chopping echoed through the jungle. Jackpot!

Everyone rushed over to where the chopping sound came from. Laanis, the skilled hunter who had spotted the nest, had climbed up the tree with his hand-woven honey-hunting rope. Dangling precariously, he was chopping at the hive with his axe. Bees swarmed over him, but he seemed oblivious. Being stung was a small price to pay for the precious nectar.

Within minutes, the men were stuffing honeycomb into deerskin bags. No time was wasted filtering out the dead bees, larvae and dirt. It was time to bring the prized honey home to enjoy!

After familiarizing himself with the honey-hunting process, Pete decided to take a solo trip into the jungle. He successfully located a large bee's nest and chopped it out of the tree with his axe. After draining the nest's content into several large tins, he loaded them in the back of his truck and hauled them home to Santa Rosa.

He smiled as he imagined how the Manjúis would respond at the sight of honey. But adhering to the cultural protocol, he left the tins of honey in the truck, put on a straight face and slid back into town,

saying nothing at all. With as much of a casual smile as he could muster, he went about his business as usual that day.

“So, what did you see this morning?” Kalowi finally asked him.

“Oh...not much,” he replied off-handedly. He was trying to be vague and hide his excitement, just like the Manjúi men usually did when they got home from a successful hunting trip.

“Well, where did you go?” Laanis probed.

“Oh, just down the road,” he said. He could tell they were bursting with curiosity by now.

Finally, he went out to his truck, brought out the tins and proclaimed, “Let’s eat honey!”

Faces lit up. “*Naki-wota!*”

The Manjúis were impressed. Never had a foreigner brought in honey by himself! They enjoyed a feast with much cheek-flicking that day.

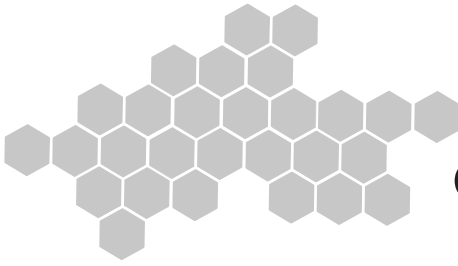
Following his successful hunt, the Manjúi began considering Pete “really like them.” Not only did he understand their many conversations about honey, he could also contribute to them.

“What kind of bee’s nest was it?” they asked. “What kind of tree did you find the honey in? What phase was the nest in?”

He could now give them all the right answers.

“It’s almost like you’re a Manjúi!” they cried.

Pete had entered into a whole new level of belonging.



## CHAPTER 4

# Zinat OUR FATHER

*“We realize that neither well-told Bible stories nor clear speaking will ever grip the hearts of these people, and we are trusting the Holy Spirit, and the power of the Word for this important work. Please pray with us that the Word planted in their hearts will take root.”*

Humphreys’ letter home, 1986

### BEGINNING THE WORK

Gordie was the first to introduce the Bible’s message to the Manjúis.

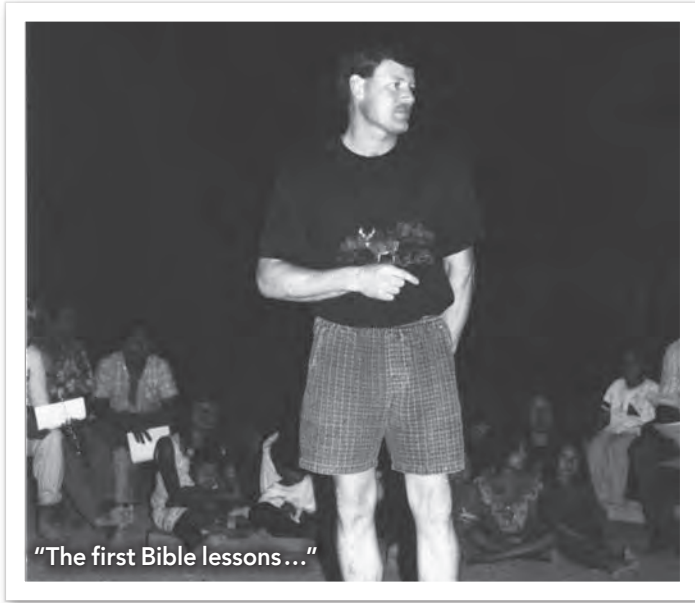
“We have a very important message to tell you about *Zinat*,” he told them.

Literally translated, *Zinat* means “our father.” The Manjúis in Santa Rosa had heard the name *Zinat* before from a related people group near the Pilcomayo River. Someone teaching the Bible had visited that area and reports of *Zinat* had come up from the river to Santa Rosa. The Manjúis were only mildly curious about this *Zinat* talk, but it was this curiosity that allowed Gordie and Pete to introduce the subject to them.

“We know about *Zinat*’s words,” Gordie said. “We want to talk to you about his words. That’s why we’re here.”

Some Manjúis obliged. The foreigners seemed sincere and trustworthy. Besides, the Manjúis had already learned a great deal from the foreigners—like how to make adobe bricks and raise cattle. What harm would it be to learn a little about this *Zinat*?

Although Gordie was the one to introduce the subject, in the years to come Pete would take on the bulk of the teaching responsibilities. Gordie’s focus turned to linguistic analysis and Bible translation, based on his giftedness in those areas.



The first Bible lessons involved only a few Manjúi families. One lesson was taught several times to different family groups on separate nights of the week. Extended families gathered around the campfire and listened.

As each teaching session began, the usual noises of dogs fighting, babies crying and children playing threatened to distract. But Gordie and Pete were encouraged as they saw the rapt attention of those who wanted to learn.

### THE GOOD NEWS?

What exactly was the message that the Bible teachers had come to tell the Manjúis? It was the essence of the gospel, as laid out in John 3:16.

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, so that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

But how should this powerful truth be communicated clearly and accurately to the Manjúi audience, in a way that they would understand and believe it? As the team evaluated the challenge before them, they recalled all their years of culture learning that revealed just how different the Manjúi worldview was. To merely teach a classic gospel text like John 3:16 to the Manjúi would evoke all sorts of questions. Consider their response to the first few words:

*For God (Zinat)...*

“Wait a minute,” the Manjúi would say. “Who is this *Zinat* anyway? Is he a friend of *Neshen-hewot’s*? How powerful is he? What does he want with us?”

The Manjúi worldview did not leave room for a sovereign Creator God. Instead, their spiritual world was overrun by scheming, treacherous demons who constantly pursued and terrorized them. In their minds, the highest power belonged to *Neshen-hewot*. *Neshen-hewot* ruled, and he was to be feared above all. Everyone else paled in comparison.

*...so loved the world...*

“Love? What’s that?” Such a concept was foreign to the Manjúi ear. The spirits were not capable of love; they knew only harm and oppression. Why else would life be so miserable?

*...that he gave his one and only Son...*

If a Bible teacher were to tell them at this point that *Zinat’s* son, Jesus, came into the world to die for sinners, it would then generate the question: “Does *Zinat* have a wife? And what are sinners? Why did *Zinat’s* son have to die for them?”

And then, if the teacher were to tell them that all mankind had done wrong, offended *Zinat* and were condemned to die, they’d object:

“I have always done things the *Manjúi Way*. I’ve never broken any taboos. How is this wrong?”

The Manjúis’ concept of right and wrong was determined by whether one did things the *Manjúi Way*—a set of standards passed down from their ancestors. The consequence of going against this was not moral judgment by a just God, but sickness or calamity brought on by demons.

After all, those heartless demons weren’t interested in how “good” or righteous one was, but how meticulously one followed the rules. Man was not ultimately responsible for his actions; instead, he was a victim of the whims of the spirits.

*...so that whoever believes in him...*

“Our ancestors have always told us about *Neshen-hewot* and the demons,” they’d say, “but they have never said anything about *Zinat*. Why should I believe him?”

*...shall not perish but have eternal life.*

“Eternal life? That’s impossible,” they’d laugh. “Our ancestors have always told us that our souls become extinct when we die. The dead are *it-nan*—non-existent. There’s nothing left after you die.”

You may as well have told them they had wings and could fly. With no hope for life after death, the fatalistic Manjúis did not see any higher purpose in living. Life was about scraping by with what you could get—until fate came along and did away with everything. Then, it was just *it-nan*.\*

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\*Although the Manjúis said death brought cessation of existence, their fear of dead ancestors coming back to haunt them showed that they still held a belief in an existence beyond the grave. Such inconsistencies were common in the Manjúi worldview.

## OBSTACLES

If a short explanation of John 3:16 was the only thing a Bible teacher relied on to explain the gospel, he would find his audience completely bewildered.

“*Zinat’s* words don’t make any sense!” the Manjúi would conclude. “What’s the point in listening to him? I’d be better off practicing my chanting.”

A person trapped in a burning house would surely die if he refused to acknowledge his helpless situation and accept any help to be rescued. In the same way, a person cannot be saved spiritually unless he recognizes his dire state and need for salvation. For the Manjúi people, who were oblivious to such vital information, John 3:16 made no sense at all. Deceived by Satan, the Manjúis had a worldview that excluded the very knowledge of a sovereign God, sin’s consequences, and the reality of life after death. To them, they were just doing the right thing.

Pete, Gordie and the rest of the team knew there was much groundwork to be laid in the Manjúis’ hearts. It would take months—even years—to build a biblical foundation before they could understand and believe the good news of Jesus Christ.

## A REAL OPPONENT

There was another important consideration. The Manjúis were bound by their fear of *Neshen-hewot* and his demons. *Neshen-hewot* had another common name, which literally meant “the chief demon.” Even though the traditional Manjúi view of *Neshen-hewot* was not entirely consistent with the biblical concept of Satan, the team realized he was one and the same. *Neshen-hewot* was not some abstract concept in the Manjúis’ minds, but rather, an active agent fighting against the very *Zinat* that the team wished the Manjúi to know personally.

One night, Pete had quietly approached a group of shamans chanting over a sick girl. The shamans, deep in their trances, were unaware of Pete's presence at the back of the crowd. But upon his approach, Laanis, controlled by a demon, began to chant repeatedly: "*Ja a'poka pa Zinat! Ja a'poka pa Zinat! Ja a'poka pa Zinat! God is not powerful! God is not powerful! God is not powerful!*"

The incident was a stark reminder to the team that their battle to present the Bible's message was not limited to the visible world.

*"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." \**

## LAYING THE FOUNDATION

As Pete picked up the Bible teaching, he stimulated the Manjúis' curiosity by asking questions.

"Do you know anything about *Zinat*?" he asked them.

"No," they answered.

"Why not?"

"Well, the 'old, dead ones'—our ancestors—never told us about him," an energetic young man named Wanyo said.

"Why didn't your ancestors ever tell you about *Zinat*?" Pete asked.

The answer was obvious. "Well, no one ever told *them*!" Wanyo replied.

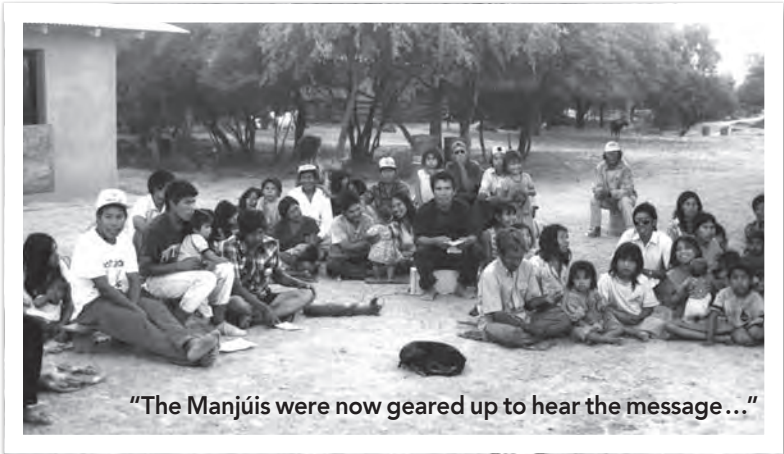
"Yes, if a person does not hear *Zinat's* words, it is impossible for him to know *Zinat*," Pete said. "Who, then, has *Zinat's* words?"

He explained how God chose and inspired writers of Scripture thousands of years ago to record his words so that people down through the

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\* Ephesians 6:12 NIV





generations could read them. Two thousand years after *Zinat's* book was completed, his words still stand and the message is still the same.

During the teaching, whenever a verse was to be read, Leah would read it first from her English Bible and Pete would read a provisional translation\* in Manjúi. When the people heard it in another language first, it gave the words authority, reinforcing the fact that these words were not merely Pete's, but from God himself.

"Just as *Zinat's* inspired words have been translated from their original language into my language—English—they are now being translated into your language—Manjúi—so that you can understand them."

#### FROM THE BEGINNING

The Manjúis were now geared up to hear the important message that the Bible teachers had brought. But where in the Bible would Pete start?

He started where the Bible starts.

*"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."*\*\*

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\*A first-draft attempt, which had not passed through a translation-checking process

\*\* Genesis 1:1 NKJV

That's how the Bible started. Genesis, the Bible's first book, means "beginnings." Pete knew that the Bible, given to mankind by their Creator, is itself a divinely revealed teaching outline. In the same order that God revealed his message over the ages, Pete would teach the biblical message chronologically, from beginning to end, progressively giving the Manjúis the whole picture of God's redemptive plan. Before he could tell them about the Saviour, he needed to lay the groundwork of who God was and what he was like.

"Listen to *Zinat's* word," he said. "*In the beginning, Zinat created the heavens and the earth. Zinat was there in the beginning, before everything else. Zinat has always existed. Before the earth existed, before there was Neshen-hewot, before there were demons, there was Zinat.*"

He paused as this new information sank into his listeners' minds.

"*Zinat* wasn't created. He always existed. There was never a day that he did not exist. And *Zinat* will never die. He is self-sufficient. He does not need anything to survive, whether food, water or sleep."

This was a direct contrast to the Manjúis themselves who were constantly concerned about getting enough food and water. Pete continued to tell them of the all-powerful, all-knowing and everywhere-present God, distinguishing him from limited human beings.

Pete then went on to explain that God created spirits, called angels, to serve him. Because God created them, they belonged to him and were to do whatever God asked them to do. Pete used an example from the Manjúis' own culture to illustrate this point.

"When you make a honey-hunting rope, you roll cactus fibers into a string and weave them into a rope. Now, after you are finished, do you have control over how to use the honey rope, and when to use it?"

Laanis spoke up. "Of course, because I made it!"

“That’s right, Laanis,” Pete said. “The same applies in this case. Because *Zinat* created the angels, he also owned them and had authority over them.”

Pete continued, “One of these spirits, an angel named Lucifer, was created to be the most beautiful and powerful angel. However, he became arrogant toward *Zinat* and coveted his position. He said: ‘I will make myself like *Zinat*.’ He led a rebellion against his Creator and a third of the angels followed him.

“This was unacceptable to *Zinat*. He was their Creator and Owner. He alone was all-powerful and deserved to be worshipped. So *Zinat* judged those rebellious spirits, expelling them from his home and separating them from himself. The rebellious ones became the demons you now know about. Lucifer became the chief demon—*Neshen-hewot*.”

Pete chose to use the familiar term *Neshen-hewot* for Satan because one of the names for this spirit meant “the chief demon,” but he was careful to explain that Satan did not eat the flesh of dead humans as the Manjúis believed.

The fact that *Zinat* could cast *Neshen-hewot* out of Heaven was surprising information to the Manjúis. *Was Zinat more powerful and stronger than all the demons, even Neshen-hewot? What else could Zinat do?*

“Now, where do you think everything you see comes from? The trees, the deer, the grass, the moon, the stars? Where did your ancestors come from?” Pete asked.

“My grandfather told me that a giant parrot had diarrhea, and from that came all mankind,” replied Seyin, a mild-mannered and sincere young man.

Others started chipping in and offering their stories of origin. Some stories were so bizarre the Manjúis themselves laughed and appeared embarrassed.

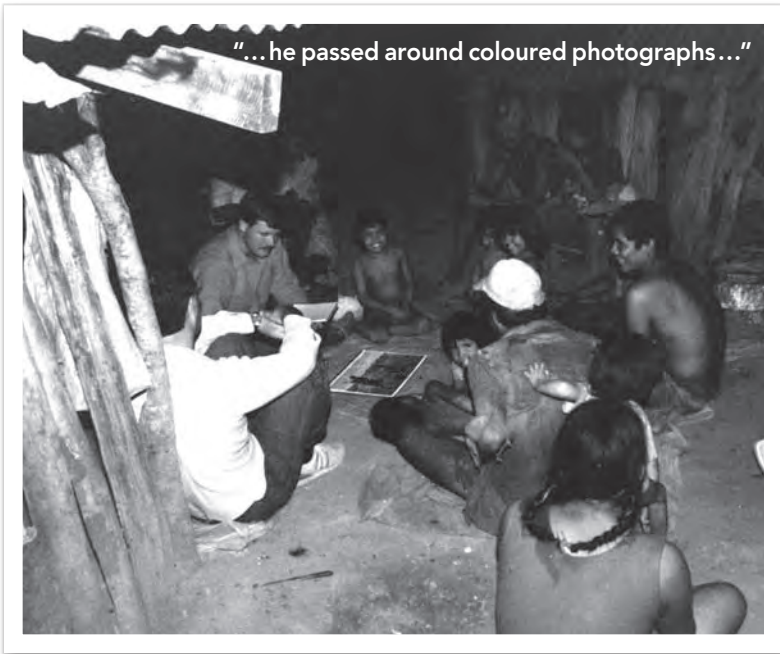
“You know what? We don’t really know,” Seyin concluded for the whole group.

“Do you know what some of *my* people believe?” Pete said. “They say that all mankind descended from monkeys a long time ago. Over time, the monkeys changed into human beings.”

“Monkeys!?” they exclaimed as they burst out laughing.

“I’ve never heard that story before! That’s really funny!” chuckled Liwis, a stocky young man and Laanis’s son-in-law. “What else did they say?”

“I am going to tell you what *Zinat* says,” Pete said, bringing their attention back to the Bible. “Listen to his words: *‘In the beginning, Zinat created the heavens and the earth.’* Just as *Zinat* created the spirit beings, he also created everything in the natural world. Everything



you see around you was created by *Zinat*. Nothing exists by itself, but *Zinat* created everything from nothing.”

Pete recounted the first five days in which God created the world just by speaking: the earth, sun, moon and stars, the land and the sea, and all kinds of plants and animals.

To expand their understanding of God’s creation, he passed around coloured photographs of land animals, birds, fish and insects, many of which the Manjúis had never seen before. Their fascination with the variety of animals heightened their awe of the Creator.

“It’s true—*Zinat* really is powerful!” Wanyo exclaimed.

Pete continued: “In those first five days, *Zinat* created everything good and perfect, in loving and careful preparation for his final creation: mankind.

“Now, *Zinat*’s words do not say that humans came from a parrot or from monkeys. They say that *Zinat* created human beings. Just as he created everything in the earth and sea and sky, *Zinat* created a man and a woman. Listen to his words: ‘*Zinat formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*’\* When *Zinat* made man out of dust, the body was an empty physical vessel and had no life in it. But *Zinat* breathed life into the man, giving him a soul that would live forever.”

Bringing in this little detail was very significant, for it challenged the very worldview that the Manjúi held about human life. The Manjúi believed that a person ceased to exist when he died. But Pete now told them that God created humans to have both a physical and spiritual part. The spiritual part of humans is imperishable and eternal, like God Himself.

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\*Genesis 2:7 NIV

“*Zinat* made man in his own image. Unlike animals that are not made in *Zinat’s* image, man has the ability to think, feel and make choices. Not only that, he also possesses a soul that will never be *it-nan*. His soul lives forever, just like *Zinat* himself.”

It was this eternal soul of a human that God cared most about, that he wanted to save. And it was for the souls of the Manjúis that Pete and Leah had come to Santa Rosa, to tell them about God’s saving plan. But it wasn’t time yet.



## PERSONAL BADNESS

*“In presenting the Bible stories to them, knowledge that we have of their culture helps us to guide their thinking. Issues have to be discussed. How does their belief that a person’s soul can be stolen from his body by demons, thus causing sickness, line up with what the Bible teaches about Satan? What about their belief that when a person dies, he ceases to exist? How important does the message of salvation and eternal life with God seem to a people who believe that there will be no afterlife?”*

Humphreys’ letter home, 1992

## PREPARING FOR LESSONS

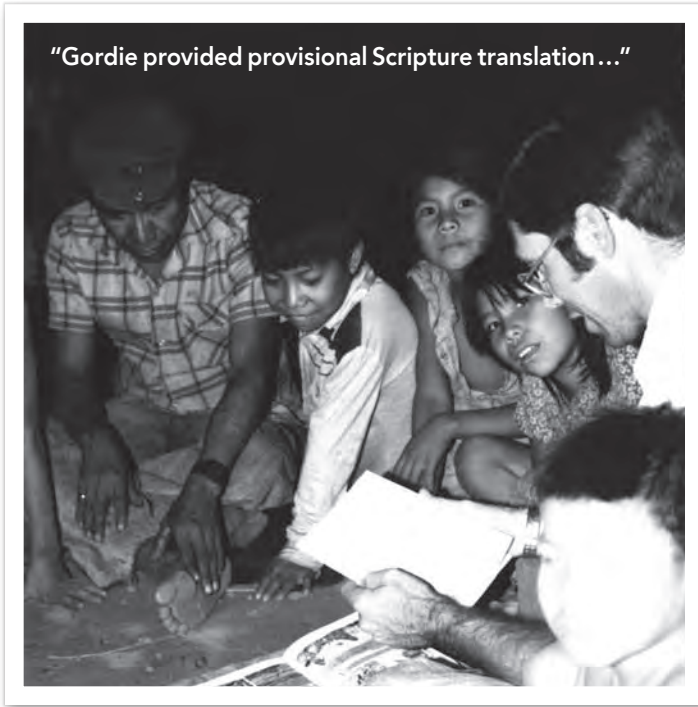
The whole team was aware that the Bible’s message had to be communicated clearly and accurately in light of the Manjúi’s animistic worldview. It was paramount that the Manjúi understand that there were only two sources of information: **the truth found in Zinat’s word and the lies that originated with Neshen-hewot.**

Pete never taught a lesson without an immense amount of prayer and preparation. He understood the specific nature of the Manjúi language: Any slight change in pronunciation or conjugation would confuse the meaning of a sentence. Because Pete was not completely fluent in the language, he decided to err on the side of caution. Instead of jotting down an outline to teach from ad-lib, he wrote each lesson out in detail and read the script word-for-word.

The lesson scripts were not without gaps because of Pete’s limited vocabulary and the lack of spiritual terminology in the Manjúi language. So he enlisted the help of Kalowi, his Manjúi language

helper. Together, they hammered out phrases to describe spiritual concepts and built on existing terminology to form new ones. The objective was to communicate spiritual truths to the Manjúis in their own language as accurately as possible.

Each lesson went through a comprehensive system of checks. Pete would prepare the text in Manjúi by writing it out in full. Whenever possible, Gordie provided provisional Scripture translation for each lesson. These drafts would then undergo corrections and editing. Finally, the finished product was hand-copied into a notebook. \*



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\*Computers were not available at this time.



Leah would translate the lesson from Manjúi back into English so that other team members, unfamiliar with the latest Manjúi scriptural vocabulary, could learn these terms as the lesson was taught in Manjúi.

To practice teaching, Pete copied the lesson onto small note cards and highlighted the phrases that were new to him. With the cards in hand, he would take a brisk walk around Santa Rosa, reading and repeating the lesson to himself in Manjúi. This 11-kilometer (7-mile) walk gave him sufficient time to practice giving a fluent delivery of the entire lesson.

### TRYING ZINAT OUT

The teaching continued for a few months. The buzz about *Zinat* was arousing more and more curiosity in Santa Rosa.

It was apparent that the Manjúis were becoming familiar with the idea of a powerful Creator God. For these people who lived in constant fear of the terrorizing demons, there was now a growing consciousness of a higher spiritual authority.

Leah described the Manjúis' reactions to the Bible teaching in a letter home:

*"Are you going to tell Zinat about this?" was the earnest question of the Manjúi chanter, whose young 'patient' was dying in childbirth.*

*"Why did Zinat let this happen?" cried the anguished relative of a five-year-old who had just died.*

*"Zinat can't have much power," insisted an older man, who was chanting over the convulsed body of his daughter.*

*"Please tell Zinat about this thing!" pleaded a group of badly frightened Manjúi men and women. They had recently rushed into Santa Rosa from their jungle home, after having seen an apparition.*

For most Manjúis, this was a trial period. They wanted to “try God out” to see if he was really more powerful than the demons. They wanted to know what God could do for them in terms of spiritual power.

But Pete knew the Manjúis could not be freed from fear and bondage to *Neshen-hewot* until their relationship with *Zinat* was restored through faith in Jesus Christ. So he kept on teaching.

## SIN

One of the key aspects of the gospel is forgiveness of sin.

*“... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,  
and all are justified freely by his grace...”\**

Pete pondered this verse as he worked on his next Bible lesson. How could he explain “sin” to the Manjúis? The Manjúis had not grown up hearing biblical terms like “sin” or “repentance.”

So instead of teaching point by point through a topical outline full of theological jargon, Pete taught Bible stories. Storytelling, a practice embedded in every culture in the world, is one of the most effective ways by which information is passed on and retained. In fact, much of the Bible is written in story or narrative form. But Pete did more than just tell the stories. He also explained the stories’ significance.

“*Zinat* loved and cared deeply for Adam and Eve, the man and woman whom he had created,” Pete said. “He made them a wonderful garden to enjoy, one with a comfortable climate, a variety of beautiful plants and animals, and an abundance of fruit and vegetables to eat and water to drink. They had everything they needed.

“Adam and Eve never had to scrounge for food and water to stay alive. Neither did they suffer from heat strokes, dehydration or any kind of sickness. Trees had no thorns, insects did not sting

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\*Romans 3:23 NIV

and animals did not attack. They were not afraid of demons who could steal their souls. *Zinat* was Adam and Eve's best friend. The garden was a perfect place, where perfect people could live with a perfect *Zinat*."

The Manjúis' eyes widened at the thought of such an unspoiled garden. It sounded too good to be true! They looked at the Chaco—their "fallen garden." *What happened to that perfect garden that Zinat made?*

"As their loving Creator-Owner, *Zinat* always provided what was best for Adam and Eve," Pete went on. "Because he is all-powerful and all-knowing, he did not leave it up to them to decide what was good or bad. *Zinat* gave Adam and Eve a rule: They could eat from any of the abundant trees in the garden except one tree—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He warned them that if they ate from that tree, they would die.

"Adam and Eve now had a choice: They could continue to believe their Creator-Owner and eat only what he had said was good. Or they could choose not to trust *Zinat* and decide what was best for themselves. They could continue to be *Zinat's* friend, or they could disobey and rebel against him like *Neshen-hewot* had done. What would Adam and Eve do?"

Pete told his listeners how *Neshen-hewot* disguised himself as a serpent and lied to Eve about *Zinat's* word. He told them how Eve, then Adam, chose to believe *Neshen-hewot* instead of God and ate the forbidden fruit.

"When Adam and Eve believed *Neshen-hewot's* lies and disobeyed *Zinat*, everything changed," Pete said. "Before, they did not even know anything evil or bad because *Zinat* had only given them what was good. Now, they knew what evil was. They were not perfect and innocent anymore. They were tainted with something bad and rotten that they could not get rid of," Pete said. "They had *hikat tasat*—sin."

Literally translated, *hikat tasat* means “personal badness.”

“The *hikat tasat* in Adam and Eve made them feel fear, guilt and shame, emotions they had never experienced before.” Pete described how Adam and Eve were now aware of their nakedness and desperately attempted to cover themselves with fig leaves and hide among the trees. But they could not escape the all-knowing *Zinat*.

## DEATH

“*Zinat* confronted Adam and Eve about their sin,” Pete continued. “Just as he had promised, they now had to die because of their disobedience. But what exactly did that mean? Did it mean they would be *it-nan*? No, they would not become *it-nan*, because *Zinat* had created human beings with an eternal soul.

“Instead, death meant Adam and Eve’s friendship with *Zinat* was over. Because they now had *hikat tasat*, they could no longer live in the presence of the perfect *Zinat*. So *Zinat* banished them from the garden and from himself. He cursed the world they lived in so it was no longer perfect—there would no longer be beautiful surroundings and abundant food for them. Instead, Adam and Eve would now have to labour for their food, evade predators and suffer pain.”

*So that’s what happened to the perfect garden!* The Manjúis looked gravely at Pete as he delivered this bad news.

Pete went on: “Once they sinned, Adam and Eve were cut off from their source of life. Just like a tree branch cut off from a tree will eventually wither and die, their physical lives on earth would eventually end.”

The Manjúis were all too familiar with this aspect of death—a sad, yet inescapable, part of everyday life for them.

“There is one more thing,” Pete continued. “Remember the eternal soul that *Zinat* gave mankind? After the physical body stops functioning, the soul lives on. But those who have rebelled against *Zinat* will not be able to live with him forever in his perfect home because of their *hikat tasat*. Instead, their souls will go to the same home that *Zinat* set aside for *Neshen-hewot* and his demons. That home is a horrible place of punishment and torment called the Lake of Fire, and its inhabitants will be separated from *Zinat* eternally. That is the final meaning of death.”

Pete told his listeners that all of Adam and Eve’s descendants would now inherit their *hikat tasat* condition and experience the three aspects of death: physical, spiritual and eternal separation from God.

From his culture studies, Pete knew that when someone committed a crime such as murder, the Manjúis viewed it as incurring a debt. They said the murderer had to pay that debt with his life—literally, “*he himself must be the payment.*”

Using the Manjúis’ own words, Pete taught: “Every person born of a man and a woman has a sin-debt. And that debt can only be paid with death. He himself must be the payment for his sin.”

## COVERINGS

“Despite Adam and Eve’s disobedience, *Zinat* still loved them because he was their Creator,” Pete continued. “But he could not ignore their *hikat tasat*.”

“Remember how Adam and Eve tried to cover their naked bodies with fig leaves? *Zinat* was not pleased with their attempt to right their wrong. They could not make themselves right with him by their own efforts. So *Zinat* rejected their fig leaves, but he lovingly

provided them with an acceptable covering made of skin. An animal died in order for them to be clothed.”

Pete also told his Manjúi listeners that God, in his mercy, gave Adam and Eve a promise: that a descendant of Eve would come to set all people free from sin and death once for all.\* This was good news to them. God had a plan to save men and women from their *hikat tasat* and misery. A Saviour was coming!

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\*Genesis 3:15



# Ha akaku pa Zinat I DON'T DOUBT ZINAT

*"We tell them about God, about his attributes, and desires. About Satan's fall. About creation, and sin, and how God always requires a payment for sin. We assure them that we are not teaching our ways or our works, but God's. How there always was a sacrifice required for sin, and long ago God accepted animal's blood as a covering for sins."*

Humphreys' letter home, 1988

## GROUP MEETINGS

"We want to know about *Zinat!*" One after another, Manjúi men and women from different family groups around Santa Rosa approached Pete with their request. "Please teach us too."

"Can we arrange to have everyone meet in one location for group lessons?" Pete asked several leaders of the community. The demand for Bible teaching had become so great that he could not meet with individual families on different nights of the week anymore.

The Manjúis responded to his question with gasps of surprise. "What? We can't have all our men and women together in the same place!"

"Given the conditions, this is the only way I will be able to teach everyone," Pete said.

Reluctant at first, they finally agreed.

"What time of day would be the best time for lessons?" Pete asked.

"One o'clock in the afternoon," came the reply.

*The hottest time of day?* Pete thought. It turned out that 1 p.m. was the only free time for most Manjúis, who laboured all day

long to scavenge enough food for their families. They took a break from work after lunch because it was literally too hot for physical labour. Pete usually chose not to venture outside in the extreme heat at that hour. But here was an opportunity to teach the whole tribe!

So when the bell rang at 1 p.m., five days a week, Laanis, Wanyo, Kalowi, Seyin and their clans gathered in a large clearing for Bible lessons. The blazing sun beat down on their heads and the hot north wind stirred up billows of dust. The scraggly carob trees offered little shade. Pete's voice was often drowned out by the wind, and his throat became hoarse and dry in the heat and the grit. Yet despite the excruciating conditions of this open-air "classroom," Pete's listeners came prepared to learn.

At the first meeting, the men gathered and sat down in a large half-circle around Pete. With time, the women shyly drifted out from their dwelling places. Leah looked around. She noticed that the women were acting embarrassed and fidgety.

But what the women did next surprised Leah even more: They sat down facing the opposite direction, listening with their backs toward Pete and the rest of the men!

*That's silly, she thought. Why would they do that?*

It wasn't long after that Leah learned the women were afraid of making eye contact with a man who wasn't their husband and being accused of flirting. They were also uncomfortable in the presence of other women who had been with their husbands, and vice versa.

In turn, the Manjúi women thought it strange that the Bible teachers' wives and daughters were not ashamed to face the men straight on.



As they observed these foreign women and their quiet poise, they thought, *Maybe facing the men is not so bad if the foreign women are doing it!*

Little by little, they began shifting their orientation each day and turning slightly toward their teacher. A few weeks later, Pete was delighted to see he now had the full attention of both his men and women listeners.

## THE LAMB

Throughout the Bible teaching, Pete emphasized again and again basic biblical truths revealed in the stories of the Old Testament: how sin separated holy God from man, but those who believed God and came to him through the way he commanded were accepted by him.

Pete described how God provided an escape route from death for men and women who chose to believe him.

*“For Adam and Eve and their descendants to enjoy friendship with Zinat, they were to kill an innocent animal and let its blood run down on an altar. The animal would die in their place.”*

Pete taught that Abel offered an animal as a sacrifice while his brother Cain brought fruit and vegetables. God was not pleased with Cain’s sacrifice. Why not?

*“Abel believed Zinat’s words and killed an innocent animal in his place. But Cain rejected Zinat’s words and brought a sacrifice that did not shed blood. Like his parents, he tried to satisfy Zinat in his own way. But Zinat refused his offering—Cain’s efforts could not cover his *hikat tasat*.”*

Pete taught that the animal sacrifice was God’s way of providing forgiveness to sinful men and women. This truth was repeatedly

reinforced through key Old Testament stories, such as the story of the Passover.

“The angel of death passed over the houses of the Israelites who had applied the blood of a lamb on their door posts and lintels, but killed the firstborn sons of the Egyptians,” Pete taught. “Just as *Zinat* accepted Abel’s sacrifice as a death payment in his place, *Zinat* accepted the Passover lambs in place of the firstborn sons.”

### ZINAT’S COMMANDMENTS

As the teaching progressed, the Bible lessons became more than just “stories” in the Manjúis’ lives. Every day they were learning new things about the character of God as they retraced the Israelites’ footsteps in the wilderness.

As Pete taught the Ten Commandments that God gave Moses on Mount Sinai, the eighth commandment—“you shall not steal”—rang loud in the Manjúis’ ears. Was *Zinat* saying that stealing was a sin—worthy of death?

The Manjúis had always felt that stealing was wrong only if one were caught. There was nothing wrong with helping yourself to someone else’s squash, as long as you weren’t discovered!

But now, they began to realize that their concept of sin was not the same as *Zinat*’s. Their thinking had been shaped by *Neshen-hewot*’s lies.

Pete knew that many people from his own culture were also aware of God’s views on sin, yet felt pretty good about themselves. *Surely God will accept me, they think. I am an upright citizen and I’ve never committed any heinous crimes. Only bad people go to hell.*

Yet the Bible’s message is clear: “*There is no one righteous, not even one.*” \* “*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*” \*\* God knew that

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\*Romans 3:10 NIV

\*\*Romans 3:23 NKJV

people needed a clear standard so they could see his requirements for perfection, and what was needed in order to live with a perfect God.

The Ten Commandments did just that.

*“In Zinat’s eyes, stealing is a sin because ‘he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.’\* Zinat gives each person the right to own and keep property. If you take something that is not yours, you have disobeyed Zinat. The punishment for stealing is everlasting separation from Zinat.”*

Pete looked up from his lesson. While some Manjúis squirmed uncomfortably and avoided eye contact with him, others had a puzzled look on their faces. The commandments about lying, immorality and murder also seemed to arouse similar emotions.

*“Remember, even if you break just one of Zinat’s commandments, you are guilty,”* Pete said. *“For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.”\*\** Without absolute perfection, no one can stand in Zinat’s presence. There are no exceptions. Do you think you can obey all of Zinat’s ten rules?”

No one said a word.

## THE THIEF

Not long afterward, Pete witnessed an event that he would never forget. It began with some bad news.

*“The supply store’s been broken into!”*

The store in Santa Rosa provided the Manjúis with basic food staples they could exchange for their wages. Assessing the situation, Pete could see that a substantial amount of cash was missing.

*Must be Isnei again,* Pete thought.

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\*Acts 17:25 NIV

\*\*James 2:10 NIV

Isnei and his father Meyin had been regular attendees at the Bible teaching. Meyin appeared to be intent on understanding the message, but Isnei hadn't seem interested.

It wasn't only Pete who suspected 18-year-old Isnei this time—everyone did. Isnei, who had only been a boy when the Humphreys first arrived in Santa Rosa, had “matured” into the local town thief. That Isnei was a crook was public knowledge. Whenever he was around, people glued their eyes to their belongings.

What implicated Isnei even more was the fact that his entire family left Santa Rosa the day after the money was taken. After locating the family at a Paraguayan ranch some 40 km (25 miles) away, Pete paid them a visit. When he arrived, Isnei was helping his father with the horses. A strong, muscular young man, Isnei's thick dark hair was damp with sweat from the morning's labour. He looked at Pete out of the corner of his eye.

Following cultural protocols, Pete addressed Isnei's father first.

“Meyin, the supply store has been broken into,” he began. “We suspect Isnei took the money. If this is true, you will have no employment at Santa Rosa until the money is returned.”

Immediately, Meyin flew into a rage.

“*Laywot*,” he said, “how dare you say that about my son! He didn't steal anything. It isn't true!”

As Meyin seethed, Isnei, who had been silent, blurted out: “Let's go over to our camp!”

Pete thought quickly. There were probably grown men with axes and machetes at the camp. “No, let's go over to that *quebracho* tree,” he suggested quietly.

Isnei agreed and headed silently toward the tree. As Meyin was about to follow, Pete held his hand up. This would be a one-on-one discussion. Meyin reluctantly remained behind.

“Lord, help me,” Pete prayed. “This is going to be tough.”

The two arrived at the old, twisted *quebracho* tree. But the unexpected happened. Instead of defending himself or becoming aggressive, Isnei slumped down in the dirt, buried his head in his arms, and sobbed.

“My friend, what is it?” Pete said softly, sitting down next to him.

Beneath the mop of dark hair Pete could see that Isnei’s face was streaked with tears. The strapping young man who had appeared so defiant just a few minutes ago had broken down crying! Pete had never seen this happen in a Manjúi man.

Still hiding his face, Isnei dug into his pocket and withdrew a thick wad of cash. It was the exact amount stolen from the store. Almost immediately, he reached into his other pocket and took out more money.

“What’s this?” Pete asked.

“I earned it at the ranch this past week,” Isnei said between sobs. “Please take it! I don’t deserve this money.”

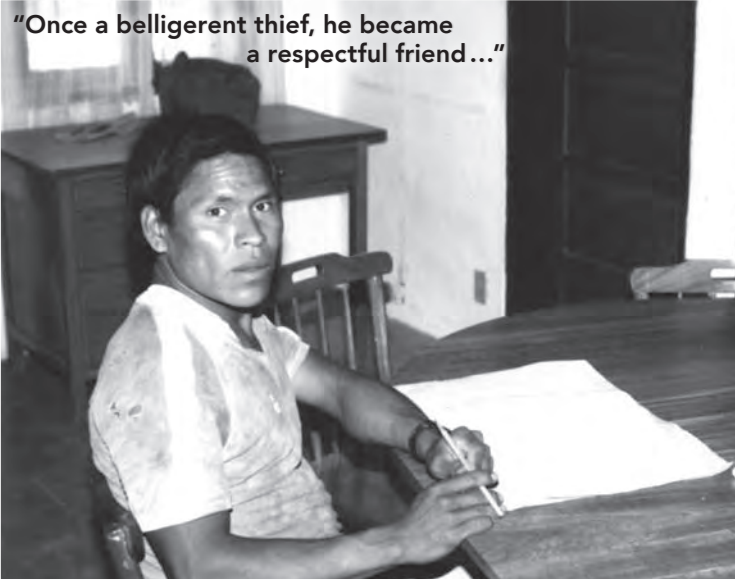
“No, I will not accept what you have rightfully earned. I’m only taking back the money you stole from the store.”

Pete called Meyin over. “Your son has something to tell you.”

Meyin took one look at the sobbing teen and put the pieces together. Then he started weeping.

“I told you not to steal!” Meyin lectured Isnei. “The foreigners are our friends and they help us. Now we can never go back to Santa Rosa...”

“Once a belligerent thief, he became  
a respectful friend...”



Pete cut in: “Since the money is returned, we can all go back to Santa Rosa. I have my truck here. Let’s go home.”

That day was a turning point in Isnei’s life. Once a belligerent thief, he became a respectful friend and worker. He also became one of Pete’s most diligent students, intently following along from his front-row seat each day as his teacher taught from the Bible. Isnei’s heart was being prepared for the message of the promised Saviour.

## FIRM FOUNDATIONS

By the time Pete had finished teaching the Old Testament, the Manjúis knew that:

God was a sovereign and all-powerful **Creator-Owner**, rightful master of all mankind;

God was a holy and righteous **Lawgiver**, who alone sets the standards for what is right and wrong;

God was a perfect **Judge**, the executor of justice who demands death as the payment for sin;

God was the One who had promised to send a **Saviour**.

Pete described how many men, from ages past, had sought to bridge the gap between themselves and God with their own efforts and ideas, but had never succeeded. Men were helpless sinners in need of salvation. Only God could save, and only those who came to God in his own way, in accordance with his word, were saved. He described how, throughout the years, God was preserving for himself a family line in Israel through which the promised Saviour would come.

## JESUS

When enough Old Testament groundwork had been covered, it was finally time to introduce Jesus, the promised Deliverer.

Pete taught how God himself became flesh and was born of a virgin through the Holy Spirit. He was perfect and sinless. He also performed miraculous signs to show that he was *Zinat's* Son.

The Manjúi were awed that Jesus had the ability to fulfill their physical needs—he made food for thousands of hungry people, healed incurable diseases with a touch and even raised the dead! The Manjúis needed Jesus in their midst. He was *Zinat* indeed!

“Jesus was so good to provide all that food for them,” Laanis reflected.

“Yes, it was good that *Zinat's* Son helped the people,” others agreed.

Pete went on to tell them how Jesus' teachings all pointed to himself as the only way to Heaven. There was no other way. He told them how Jesus fulfilled all the prophesies of the Old Testament, which pointed to the One who was to “crush *Neshen-hewot's* head.”\*

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\*Genesis 3:15

As he taught on Jesus' death and resurrection, he explained how, as Jesus was pierced by nails and hung on the cross, he was dying in the place of all mankind.

"Jesus is the perfect Lamb of God. Just as the animals in ages past had died in the place of men, Jesus died in our place. Remember the lamb that Abel brought to sacrifice for his sins? Remember the Passover lamb that died in the place of the Israelite firstborn sons? Those were only a picture of what was to come. The blood of those animals merely covered the sin; they could not take sin away. Jesus is the final lamb. And his blood took away all of our sins forever."

Pete explained that Christ's resurrection demonstrated that the payment for sin had been accepted by God as sufficient. Jesus had broken sin's grip and defeated death.

"Jesus Christ is the only one who can save us from the punishment of death. He paid all that was necessary for our sins with his own death. Anyone who trusts in Jesus and believes that he has paid his sin-debt is forgiven and becomes his child. No longer will he spend eternity with *Neshen-hewot* after he dies, but will live with *Zinat* forever."

"This is *Zinat's* message," Pete said. "Does anyone here believe that *Zinat's* words are true?"

## RESPONSE

"I believe *Zinat's* words," Kalowi said, rising to his feet.

"Me too," Liwis echoed.

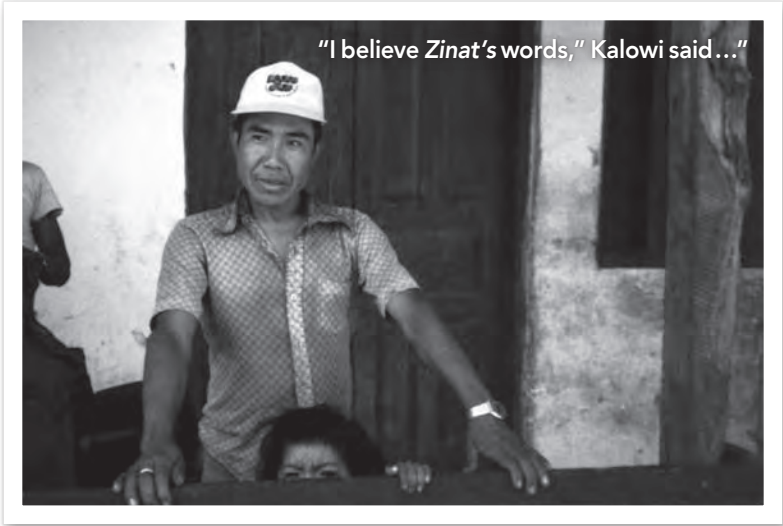
"I believe *Zinat!*" Wanyo exclaimed.

"I don't doubt *Zinat*," Laanis said. "His words are true."

One after another, men stood up and professed their faith in God.

"*Ha akaku pa Zinat!*" each one said sincerely. "I don't doubt *Zinat!*"





The next morning, women swarmed to the Humphreys' porch, calling out to Leah, "We want to say we believe too!" Soon, whole families joined in and made professions.

The village of Santa Rosa responded en masse. In the excitement of it all, no one wanted to be left out. By the end of the week, almost every adult who had attended the Bible lessons had verbally declared faith in Christ. A village-wide celebration ensued as they joined in singing the few simple choruses Pete had translated into Manjúi.

Pete sighed contentedly, greatly relieved. The rest of the team rejoiced with him—they had all worked together toward this goal. And now the people had understood.

But all was not as well as it looked on the surface.



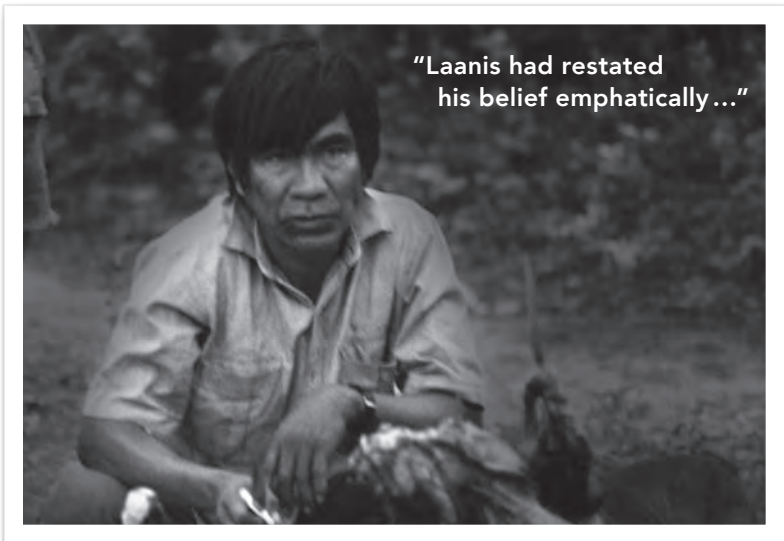


# THEY DIDN'T UNDERSTAND

*"When you consider how easy it is to misunderstand each other even when both parties are speaking English, you can see how there might be some areas of confusion trying to communicate important spiritual truths in a language that has no spiritual vocabulary."* Humphreys' letter home, 1990

## PROBLEMS

It was a sweltering night and the mosquitoes were ravenous. Although it was not the most pleasant walk home, Pete's heart was encouraged. He had been over for a visit with Laanis and his family. After some discussion about key biblical concepts, Laanis had restated his belief emphatically, "*Zinat* is the only one I trust. *Zinat* alone is powerful. I don't doubt what *Zinat's* words say."



Pete was thrilled. *Laanis really is getting it!*

That night, he drifted off to sleep with the thought: *That was worth all the sweat and the mosquito bites.*

But in the middle of the night, Pete awoke to the familiar sound of loud chanting. A shaman was summoning his *spirit helper* at the campfire, getting ready to retrieve a sick person's soul that had been stolen by demons.

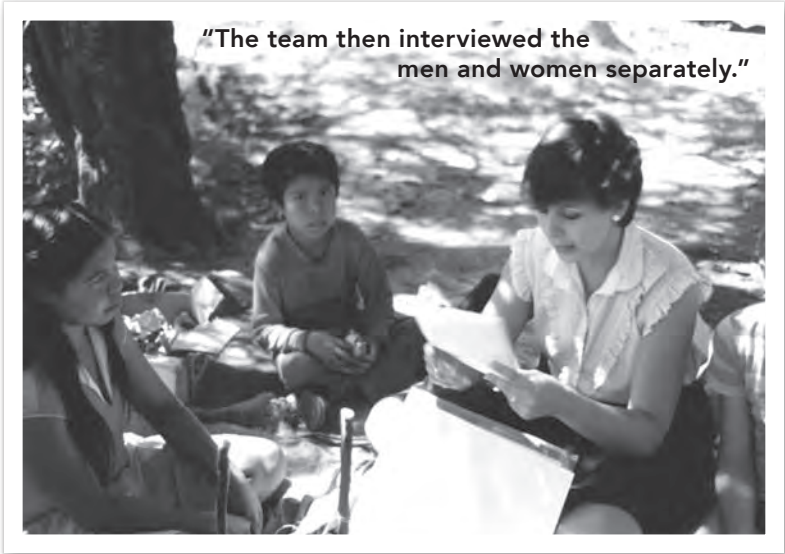
Pete leapt out of bed. He recognized that voice! It wasn't just any Manjúi chanter; it was Laanis! *What's going on? Pete's thoughts raced. Didn't Laanis just tell me a few hours ago that he only trusted Zinat? Why is he chanting to the evil spirits? He should know that these spirits work for Neshen-hewot and are enemies of Zinat!*

Pete felt dizzy as he leaned against the window sill of his bedroom, trying to sort out his thoughts.

"Lord, it has been 11 years since we've come to live in Santa Rosa," he prayed, his voice almost drowned out by the sound of the repetitive chanting. "I've learned the language and made meticulous preparations for each Bible lesson. I've taken extreme pains to tell the story as accurately as possible in light of the Manjúi worldview. The concepts have been taught over and over again. What's wrong, Lord? Why do they still not understand?"

## WHAT WENT WRONG?

To get to the bottom of the matter, Pete drafted a list of rigorous questions pertaining to the Bible's message of salvation. With much discussion, Pete, Leah, Nancy and Gordie selected 12 men and 12 women who represented a cross-section of those Manjúis who professed to be Christians. The team then interviewed the men and women separately. What they discovered was jarring.



The Manjúi "believers" had two problems:

**First**, they did not truly understand the Bible's message. Pete had assumed that if his message was translated, worded and delivered accurately, the Manjúis would automatically comprehend it and draw the right conclusions. But the Manjúis had never been taught to think logically—to reason a matter through. Not only did they need to *hear* the message accurately, they needed help processing the information presented to them.

Looking back, the mass response to profess faith in Christ had been a pure "people movement." No one wanted to be left out. Everyone quickly learned what to say: "I believe *Zinat's* words. I don't doubt them." They could even quote biblical answers! Yet, although their expressions of faith may have been sincere, their faith was not based on true understanding.

Instead, there were several misunderstandings:

- The Bible teaches that in order to enter into a loving relationship with God, one must first have the sin barrier removed. But the Manjús didn't see it this way. For the most part, they had reduced *Zinat* to a great benefactor who could potentially meet their physical needs and protect them. The need to be made right with a holy God was not foremost in their thinking.
- The Bible also teaches that man is a helpless sinner facing a sin penalty called death, a penalty that is not only physical, but also spiritual. However, the Manjús did not view themselves as helpless. And as far as eternal consequences were concerned, they were so preoccupied with surviving in the present that they spent little time pondering eternity. Yet, even though the sin issue was not prominent in their minds, they seemed to think that if it was somehow resolved, they would be able to manipulate God to their advantage.
- The Scriptures tell us that Jesus, God himself, came to earth and paid the consequence of sin with his own death. This payment satisfied God's justice and opened the way for man to be right with God. But the Manjús saw Jesus as a wonderful, caring man who somehow would be able to benefit them. He had multiplied the loaves. He had healed the sick and given sight to the blind. Jesus was a hero in their minds. Who wouldn't want him as a friend? But Jesus as *Saviour* was not prominent.
- To appropriate Christ's work for us on the cross, the Scripture tells us that we must put faith in him alone. But *faith* in and of itself does not save us. Rather it is the *object* of our faith—the person of Jesus Christ—that does the saving. But for many of the Manjús, their confidence for salvation was not in the person of Christ, but in the fact that they had expressed "faith." Much importance

was placed on saying the correct words: *Were they said right? Were they expressed accurately?* The Manjúis were trusting in their “right words” rather than trusting the person of Christ. In essence the Manjúis were placing *faith in faith*, rather than *faith in Christ*.

**Second**, the Manjúis had no qualms about embracing two different sets of belief systems at the same time, even if they blatantly contradicted each other. While they claimed to believe God’s Word as true, they still retained most of their old animistic beliefs.

For example, the traditional Manjúi beliefs regarding *spirit helpers* and their functions were still intact and viable in their minds. They didn’t seem to have any qualms that the same spirits they summoned for assistance worked for *Neshen-hewot* and were intent on their destruction!

Holding on to the ideas that they had been raised with, the Manjúis had simply added Jesus as an extra antidote for their fears, creating a false sense of security. They had mixed the lies of *Neshen-hewot* with God’s truth—illogical as it may have been. Yet, when one is possessed by fear, logic flies out the window.

## SYNCRETISM

The sound of Laanis summoning his *spirit helper* hours after he had affirmed his faith in God alone echoed in Pete’s mind. But the problem itself was an age-old one that has occurred repeatedly in history.

The problem is called *syncretism*—the mixing of different beliefs.\*

In Old Testament times, when Gentiles settled in the land of Israel, the Israelites instructed them in the ways of God. However, the Gentiles “*worshiped the Lord, but they also served their own gods in accordance with the customs of the nations from which they had been*

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\*The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives a basic definition for *syncretism*: An “attempted union or reconciliation of diverse or opposite tenets or practices, especially in philosophy or religion.”

*brought ... They ... persisted in their former practices. Even while these people were worshiping the Lord, they were serving their idols.”\**

In the New Testament, Paul wrote to the Greek Corinthians, who had also managed to mix their worship of God with their pagan idol practices: *“I do not want you to become sharers in demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of the demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.”\*\** Like the Corinthians, the Manjúis could not drink from both the cup of *Zinat* and the cup of *Neshen-hewot*.

Throughout church history, so-called “Christianized” people groups have added Christian beliefs and practices to their ancestral traditions to form a completely different belief system. On the outside, they have adopted Christianity—they worship Jesus, they “do” church. Yet, Jesus is just one among a host of many other gods, and their church services incorporate many old pagan practices. Whole religions and sects have emerged as a result of syncretism.\*\*\*

Pete knew that although the Manjúis had embraced aspects of the Bible’s message, much of their traditional worldview still dominated. With this new insight, Pete revamped his methods and prepared to teach the gospel message to the Manjúis—from the beginning, all over again.

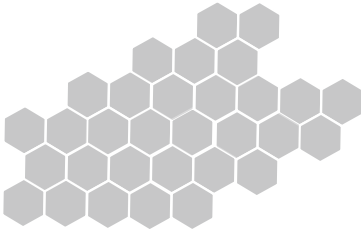
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\*2 Kings 17:33, 40-41 NIV

\*\*1 Corinthians 10:20-21 NASB

\*\*\*In the early centuries A.D., Christianity was infiltrated with ancient Roman, Egyptian and Babylonian paganism to form various sects.





# Tika-Halanan THE DECEIVER

*“So, we started back at the beginning, re-teaching truths they had already heard. This time we helped them learn to compare God’s Words with Satan’s ways, and see if they really could exist side by side. This process of helping them learn to digest information, and think deductively, has taken many years.”*

Humphreys’ letter home, 1995

*“By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.”*

Proverbs 24:3 NIV

*“And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

John 8:32 ESV

## A NEW START

In early 1990, Pete began to teach through the Bible once again. He confronted syncretism head-on by emphasizing the difference between a biblical and an animistic worldview. He made it clear that the Manjúis could not embrace their animistic views and believe God’s truth at the same time. What he did was like dismantling an old house block by block, while at the same time building a new one.

Instead of just presenting the story, Pete now began each lesson with questions.

“Who was the very first one to exist?” he asked, testing his listeners’ comprehension from the last lesson in which he had introduced the eternal, self-existing God.

Faint mutterings floated around the open-air classroom.

"*Zinat!*" Isnei answered.

"You are correct," Pete said. "*Zinat* was the very first one to exist. Now, where did *Zinat* come from? Was he made?"

"I don't know," several people replied simultaneously.

"No, *Zinat* wasn't made," Pete said. "He was always in existence. There was never a day that he did not exist. He was always there and he is always the same continuously."

He then asked, "Did *Zinat* create himself?" Logic would dictate that because God was not created, he did not create himself. But the Manjús had never been taught to think deductively.

"Well, what do you think?" he asked. They pondered and discussed among themselves.

"We don't know," they finally admitted again.

"He did not create himself," Pete finally told them. "He was not created. He, by himself, exists. Let me ask you another question: Did God have parents?"

Again, he gave them time to think through the question, and when all he got were blank stares, gave them the answer: "No, *Zinat* did not have parents. He was not born."

He continued asking similar questions to stimulate their thinking.

"Is *Zinat* now very old?"

"Is *Zinat* young?"

"Later on, will *Zinat* die?"

And so on.

He went back and repeated the same questions again, using different words. He did not move on any further in the lesson until they had understood the concept of God's eternal and self-existing nature and could confidently answer: "*Zinat* wasn't created. He was always in existence. He is neither young nor old. He is always the same. He will never die."

Next, building upon the foundation of the first concept, Pete taught: "*Zinat* is all-powerful. There is nothing that *Zinat* requires for himself. *Zinat* does not sleep. He never gets tired. He is not like us. If we don't have food, our hunger will kill us. If we don't have water, our thirst will kill us. We are not all-powerful, but *Zinat* is. There is nobody like *Zinat*."

Then he posed questions:

"What does *Zinat* require to exist?"

"Does *Zinat* get thirsty?"

"What does *Zinat* eat? What is his food like?"

"Who is more powerful, *Zinat* or a jaguar?" \*

"Who is more powerful, *Zinat* or a demon?"

"Who is more powerful, *Zinat* or a *spirit helper*?"

Questions of this nature were often uncomfortable, but required the Manjúis to contrast differing beliefs.

By the end of the exercise, the Manjúis came away with a much more accurate picture of the self-existent and all-powerful Creator God than they had ever known.

## INCONSISTENCIES

The lessons crawled by. It was a slow but necessary process. After weeks of teaching, they had barely gotten through the first chapter

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\*The Manjúis were deathly afraid of jaguars, the most dangerous predator in the Chaco.

of Genesis! But Pete had determined early on that the rate of teaching would not be dependent on a pre-arranged lesson plan. Instead, he would only move ahead when his audience had fully grasped a concept.

Block by block, Satan's deceptions were being removed and replaced with biblical truth. God was dismantling the "old house of error."

"The other day I told you that *Zinat* gave man an eternal soul made in his image," Pete said. "But how is it that you say a soul is *it-nan*—extinct—when a man dies?"

"That is what the 'old, dead ones'—our ancestors—have always taught us," Laanis replied.

"Wait, now," Pete interrupted. "What do *Zinat's* words say again? They say that a man's soul is eternal. So how is it that a man's soul can become *extinct* if it is *eternal*?" He said each word slowly and deliberately, helping them see the apparent contradiction.

Confusion spread over Laanis's face. Pete had just presented an outright oxymoron! Pete waited for his audience to weigh the two conflicting points of view.

"*Zinat's* words say the soul does not become extinct," Pete said. "It is not *it-nan*. Even though a man's body dies, his soul lives on forever."

Rephrasing the original question to test their understanding, he asked, "Can a soul be killed? If a person is killed, is his soul also killed?"

He could see the wheels spinning in the heads. The method of comparing truth with error was effective. Conflicting worldviews could not co-exist.

"What do *Zinat's* words say?" Pete asked. "They say that a soul lives forever. If a soul lives forever, it cannot be killed even if a person dies.

“There’s something else I want to ask you,” he went on without missing a beat. “Do demons have the ability to steal and kill a man’s soul?”

A hush came over the group. The question struck at the heart of their belief system. To deny that a demon could steal and kill a person’s soul would be to deny the very reason for their practice of shamanism!

Laanis squirmed uncomfortably. Kalowi and Wanyo stole glances at one another as if to say, *What are we supposed to do with this?* But as understanding dawned, Seyin and several others slowly shook their heads.

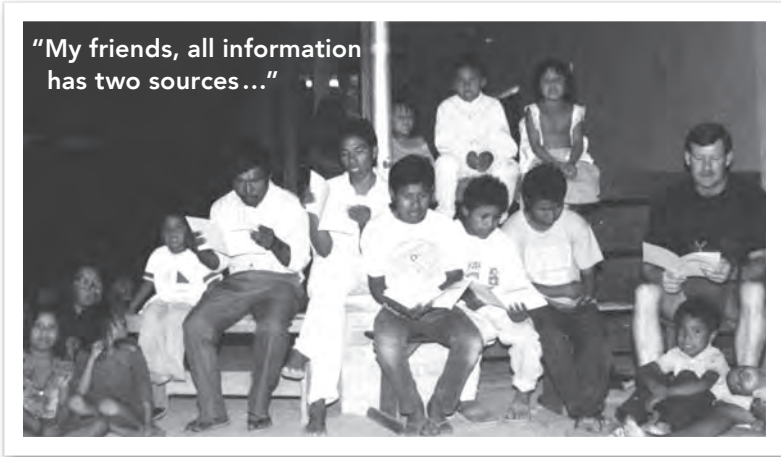
“What did the ‘old, dead ones’ say about this?” Pete asked. By referring to their ancestors, he softened the blow of his questions to these culturally non-confrontational Manjúis. He wanted them to see that he wasn’t there to point fingers at them, but to help them objectively distinguish biblical truth from error for themselves.

“You taught me that the ‘old, dead ones’ said that demons killed men’s souls,” Pete went on. “This is what they told you: ‘When a person is sick, a demon has stolen his soul. He wants to kill that soul.’ Is that right? You don’t need for me to tell you that.”

He looked straight at them.

“Now I want to tell you what *Zinat’s* words say. My friends, a demon does not know how to kill a person’s soul. A demon does not know how to steal a man’s soul. I know that’s not what you heard from the ‘old, dead ones.’ But that’s what *Zinat’s* words teach. *Zinat* is the only one who can tell us what is true.”

That day each Manjúi listener present had to answer a question in his or her own heart: Can I believe what *Zinat’s* words say even if it contradicts what my ancestors have always taught?



## LIBERATION

As Pete taught, his goal was to help the people “*come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who [has] taken them captive to do his will.*” \* They needed to understand the source of their animistic belief system.

Every time Pete taught a concept from the Bible contrary to that of the Manjúi religion, he would ask the question, “Where did that belief of the ‘old, dead ones’ originally come from?”

“I don’t know,” they would reply. “I don’t know where the ‘old, dead ones’ got that belief.”

“My friends, all information has two sources,” Pete taught. “It either comes from *Zinat*, the Creator of the world—and is therefore truth—or it comes from the deceiver *Neshen-hewot*, who opposes *Zinat* and is therefore not truth. If what someone believes is different from what *Zinat* says, then it must be false information and a lie of *Neshen-hewot*’s.”

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\*2 Timothy 2:26 NIV

By such logic, Pete helped his listeners line their belief system up against God's Word and trace their religion back to its source—*Neshen-hewot*. Over time the Manjúis developed a clear understanding that there was an ongoing battle between the Creator God and Satan, and their allegiance could only be to one party.

For example, the Manjúis believed that women who had just given birth could not eat protein foods. They had a lengthy list of illogical taboos that dictated certain animals, or animals of certain breeds or colours, could not be eaten under any circumstance for fear of making themselves vulnerable to the soul-snatching demons.

Addressing these food taboos one day, Pete asked them, "Where did your rules about food come from? From where did the 'old, dead ones' get this information?"

"We don't know," they answered.

"Well, *Zinat's* words can tell you where they came from. Remember that *Zinat* created all different kinds of food in the world for mankind to eat and enjoy? If *Zinat* has declared all food right to eat, then where did the food taboos come from? Did they come from *Zinat*?"

"No," Seyin answered, catching on to the logic.

"Remember that *Neshen-hewot* is the deceiver. Everything contrary to *Zinat's* words are from him. The food taboos are lies of *Neshen-hewot*. At some point, *Neshen-hewot* lied to the 'old, dead ones' and told them: 'You should not eat a duck that is black. You should not eat a black armadillo.' And the 'old, dead ones' believed *Neshen-hewot*.

"But why?" Pete continued. "Why did *Neshen-hewot* want to deceive your ancestors?"

They stared at him blankly.

“Now, listen carefully. I’m going to tell you why *Neshen-hewot* deceived your ancestors. The one thing that he wants is to destroy *Zinat’s* most precious creation—mankind. And the way *Neshen-hewot* destroys men and women is to deceive them into believing false information that is contrary to *Zinat’s* truth.”

He decided to take it a step further. “Let me ask you some more questions. When a woman has a baby, can she eat whatever she wants?”

“No,” Laanis answered.

“What can’t she eat?” Pete asked.

“She can’t eat any meat, milk or eggs,” Laanis replied.

“Well, what can she eat?”

“She can eat *eegah*—bitter cactus hearts—and squash. Other than that, there’s not much else she can eat.”

Pete knew that both *eegah* and squash contained minimal protein and virtually none of the nutrients that women need after having a baby. So he told them, “Women need food like meat, eggs and milk to recover from childbirth and replenish the blood they lose. *Neshen-hewot* knows that too. But he wanted to weaken the women in the tribe and make them die quicker. So he lied to the ‘old, dead ones,’ telling them that a woman cannot eat the very foods that she desperately needs after having a baby. *Neshen-hewot* doesn’t want the women to hear *Zinat’s* Word and be saved from their sins. He wants them to die and spend eternity with him in the Lake of Fire.”

It was as if the lights had been turned on.



Instantly, Laanis slapped his thigh and exclaimed indignantly: “Phst! Now I know why my wife almost died after she gave birth. It’s because *Neshen-hewot* lied to our ancestors and told us she could only eat *eesah* and squash. She became skinnier and skinnier until she was so small I could fit her in my hunting bag!”

Other Manjúis chimed in.

“*Neshen-hewot* is a liar!” Wanyo exclaimed.

“He deceived us!” Liwis said.

The Bible says, “*You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*” \* This was precisely what was happening as the Manjúis began to apply this newfound truth to their lives.

Soon after Pete had taught on the subject, a four-foot alligator showed up in Santa Rosa. Pete learned about it when someone asked to borrow his shotgun to shoot the “strange iguana” that had wandered into the village. Alligator meat was another no-no on the food taboo list. The Manjúis decided they would feed it to their dogs.

But seizing the opportunity to bring a Bible lesson to life, Pete walked over to the alligator carcass and asked the man who was taking it home if he would bring him some of the boiled meat. The Manjúis’ first response was shock. *Is it really okay to eat alligator meat?*

Later that afternoon, a group was gathered outside the Humphreys’ house to visit when the chunk of boiled alligator meat arrived. With a crowd of curious spectators surrounding him, Pete peeled off a chunk of meat and popped it in his mouth. All eyes were on him, wondering what might happen.

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\* John 8:32 ESV

A voice rang out amidst the gaping crowd.

“Give me some of that!”

It was Lanino, a soft-spoken young man. He had decided that he would trust God’s Word that all food was clean. Pete handed him a chunk of meat. Without any hesitation, Lanino put it in his mouth, chewed it slowly and deliberately, and swallowed the meat. A wide grin broke out on his face. He had been freed.

A young woman who was visiting Leah stepped forward and tried some too. Then several other Manjúis did the same. God’s truth was taking root in their hearts, and those who believed it were willing to act on it. Although not all the Manjúi spectators tried the meat that day, it was the beginning of complete liberation from *Neshenhewot’s* destructive food taboos.

A block from the old house had fallen.

## FATHER OF LIES

Another block that had to be removed was the Manjúis’ understanding of *spirit helpers*.

Almost all the Manjúi men functioned as shamans, so Pete asked them, “Your ancestors said the *spirit helpers* could retrieve snatched souls. Are the *spirit helpers* always successful?”

“No,” was the immediate response of many of the listeners.

“Why not?”

To which came the typical answer of, “I don’t know!”

“I would like to explain to you why your *spirit helpers* only appear to be successful now and then. Remember when I taught you about Lucifer and his demon followers? *Zinat’s* Word instructs us that the

same spirits you summon to assist you are actually servants of *Neshen-hewot*. They are demons operating under the pretense of being helpers.”

The realization that their *spirit helpers* were actually in league with *Neshen-hewot* brought a look of shock to everyone’s faces. Slapping their thighs in indignation, they muttered in disgust, “He deceived us! Can you believe that? He really deceived us!”

Pete asked, “Why do you think the *spirit helpers* appear at times to help you?”

They pondered the question silently. Then Laanis spoke up.

“Because if they never helped us, we would have stopped trusting them.”

In time the Manjúis recognized that *Neshen-hewot* had duped them, appearing to help them just enough to keep them blinded to the truth but not enough to keep them from death. They began to also refer to *Neshen-hewot* as *Tika-halenan*, which means “the person who continuously deceives,” an apt name for Satan—the “*father of lies*.”\*

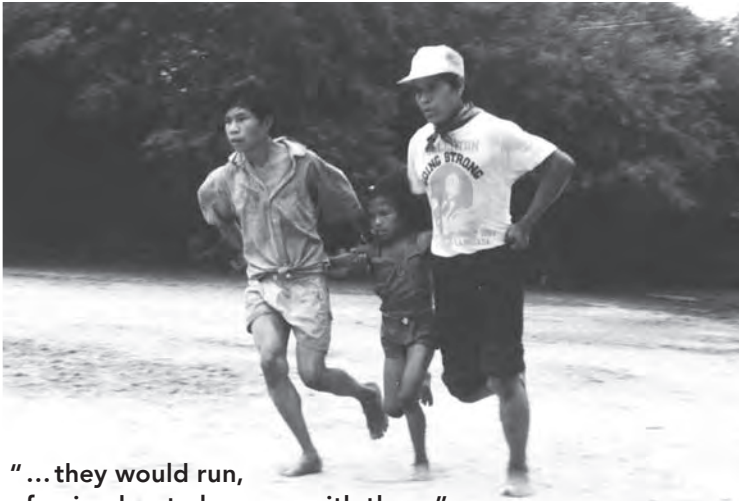
## TIPUMI

Back in November 1980, when the Humphreys had first arrived in Santa Rosa, the annual *Tipumi* ceremony was in full swing. Repetitive drum beats, one high and one low, echoed continuously throughout the village and the surrounding jungle. The incessant thundering of the drums—boom, BOOM! boom, BOOM! boom, BOOM!—was enough to drive one crazy.

Crowds of Manjúis sang and danced wildly to the drum beats. Others lay drunk and unconscious around a vat of fermented carob beans from which they had gorged themselves to inebriation. Babies who had wandered away from their unconscious mothers crawled over piles of limp bodies, crying at the top of their lungs.

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\* John 8:44 NIV



**"...they would run,  
forcing her to keep up with them."**

*Tipumi*—"drumming time"—was a month-long rite of passage for a young girl. The ceremony, fraught with demonic implications, culminated when the young girl was grabbed around the waist by two men. Holding her on either side, they would run, forcing her to keep up with them. When the men grew tired, reinforcements would take over. Soon it was obvious that the girl was in great distress, but they would continue to run until she fell to the ground, exhausted and unconscious. An appointed young man would then chant over the girl until she regained her senses. In their view, she "woke up a woman."

*Tipumi* was also a month-long "party," an excuse to escape the dreariness of Chaco life. Fueled by alcohol, normally reserved people would become violent and uninhibited. Verbal arguments over old grudges would escalate into brutal brawls. Sexual immorality was rampant. It wouldn't be until the carob season was over, and

everyone had sobered up, that they would become aware of the consequences. The weeks following *Tipumi* were marked with regret and unresolved conflict.

By the time Pete had begun re-teaching through the Bible, the Manjúis had eliminated alcohol from *Tipumi* because they feared that they would kill each other in their drunken, violent brawls. It also bothered them that they weren't taking good care of their children during this time. They decided as a community that they would stop making drinks from the fermented carob beans ... and that was the end of it!

Although the alcohol had been eliminated, the demonic and immoral aspects of the ceremony were still in place. One November evening, Pete walked past a group of *Tipumi* dancers gyrating around a drummer.

"*Laywot!*" a familiar voice called. Turning around, he saw Laanis running up to him.

"There's something I want to ask you," Laanis said. "Are our friends bad for what they're doing here?"

It was a pointed question. Laanis himself had plunged right into the activities with his friends, but Pete could tell that he was feeling strangely uneasy about his participation in *Tipumi* this year.

"It's not my place to judge your traditions," Pete said matter-of-factly.

That threw Laanis off. *Doesn't Laywot always teach us what Zinat's words say?* said the look on his face. He was even more surprised when Pete turned the question back on him.

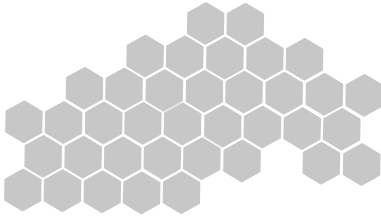
"Well, what do you think?" Pete asked. "Based on what you've heard from *Zinat's Word*, what would *Zinat* think?"

Laanis fell silent. He was being challenged to scrutinize his own traditions to see if they were in line with God's Word. The question

he needed to answer had to do with the origin of the *Tipumi* ceremony: Did this tradition come from *Zinat* or *Neshen-hewot*? Was *Tipumi* another one of *Neshen-hewot*'s deceptions passed on by the 'old, dead ones'? What did *Zinat* think about the drunken brawls, sexual immorality and animistic rituals?

Laanis would wrestle with these questions for some time. The traditions of his ancestors still held a strong grip on him. The "old house" still stood—but slowly and surely, it was being challenged by the truth of God's Word.

# Yet Tayeek WOE IS ME



Responding to an appeal for help, Don and Julie Flower, with their four children, had joined the Santa Rosa team in 1987. They brought with them experience gained in another church plant on the east side of Paraguay. By 1990, they were pouring their energies into a literacy program for the Manjúis. Each day, men, women and children were learning to read and write in their own language.

With Gordie providing translated Scripture, Pete encouraged the Manjúis' new ability. He began by explaining the importance of reading God's Word for themselves. Pete drew from their own folklore.

"Your 'old, dead ones' told the story of the heron and the fox," Pete said. "The fox opened the lid to the heron's cauldron and forgot to close it, so water gushed out and flooded the whole earth."

"That's right," Kalowi answered. "That's what they said."

"*Zinat's Word* also teaches us about a flood," Pete continued. "*Zinat* sent the flood himself upon the earth to destroy sinful mankind. But he saved Noah and his family from the flood because they believed him. Did I not read you this story from *Zinat's Word*?"

"Yes, we remember," Isnei said.

"Both stories tell of a great flood that covered the whole earth. But why did the story passed down by the 'old, dead ones' differ so much from the story in *Zinat's Word*?" Pete asked.

"We don't know!" They waited eagerly for the answer.

"Friends, we can only know the truth from *Zinat's Word*. Now, let me tell you the reason," Pete said. "Long ago, your 'old, dead

ones' knew the truth regarding the flood. However, because they did not have the story in written form, they forgot the details. As they told the story over and over again, it changed. Eventually, the flood story was transformed into the story of the heron and the fox.

"Remember that *Neshen-hewot* doesn't want people to know *Zinat's* truth," Pete continued. "The story of the flood has been greatly corrupted because it was communicated by word of mouth. But the story of Noah and the flood is not corrupted because *Zinat* instructed men to record the details in writing."

As this registered in their minds, the people exclaimed to each other: "Yes, *Zinat's* paper does not lie!"

"Gordie has translated some of *Zinat's* words into your language," Pete said. "It is important that you learn how to read it for yourself."

Eager to read, many Manjúis attended the literacy lessons faithfully. Not only did those lessons help develop their reasoning skills, it also prepared and equipped them to teach others using the written message of the Bible.

## THE COMMANDMENTS REVISITED

As the Bible lessons slowly made their way back through the Ten Commandments, the Manjúis were beginning to see for themselves the stark contrast between their old beliefs and the Word of God.

"What do *Zinat's* words say about stealing? What did I teach you yesterday?" Pete asked.

"*Zinat's* law says: 'Do not steal,'" Seyin answered.

"But what if I took something one day and I didn't get caught? What if no one finds out about it?"



A long pause. Although they had heard the commandment about stealing many times, most Manjúis had not given up their habit of “picking up” little things here and there that did not belong to them.

“What did the ‘old, dead ones’ say about this?” Pete asked.

“They said it is not bad if nobody knows about it.”

“But would *Zinat* say this is bad?” Pete probed. “Am I breaking his commandment?”

“It is still bad,” Isnei said firmly. “*Zinat’s* words say stealing is a sin.”

“Yes,” Pete said. “*Zinat’s* words say that stealing is always wrong, no matter if someone is looking or not, or whether someone finds out about it or not. Now, let me ask you a question. Is what *Zinat* says the same as what the ‘old, dead ones’ believed about stealing?”

“No,” they said.

“Then, who told the ‘old, dead ones’ that stealing is not wrong if no one finds out about it? If they didn’t hear it from *Zinat’s* Word, who have they heard it from?”

“*Neshen-hewot*,” several voices replied simultaneously.

Pete was overjoyed that they were finally catching on. It seemed obvious to them now that whatever did not line up with what the Bible taught had its source in Satan.

“But why?” Pete probed. “Why did *Neshen-hewot* lie to the ‘old, dead ones’ to make them believe that stealing is not wrong?”

“We don’t know!” they answered.

“*Neshen-hewot* knows that stealing is bad in *Zinat’s* eyes,” Pete said. “Yet he wanted the ‘old, dead ones’ to believe that it is not bad and keep doing it. If a thief takes something without anyone knowing, he thinks everything is okay. But if he gets caught later, what happens?”

“The owner gets very angry! He might club him,” Liwis said.

“Yes, that’s just what *Neshen-hewot* wants. He wants people to beat up and destroy each other because of their sins. Not only that, when someone steals, he sins in *Zinat’s* eyes and will be judged for it. A sinful person cannot live in *Zinat’s* presence. Without perfection, he will not go to *Zinat’s* place but will be punished in the Lake of Fire. *Neshen-hewot* used lies to destroy lives and prevent people from having eternal life with *Zinat*.”

“*Neshen-hewot* has really deceived the ‘old, dead ones!’”

### MEEM! YET TAYEEK!

As God’s Word exposed the lies of *Neshen-hewot*, it became obvious that the Manjúis were being liberated from Satan’s grip. At the same time, there was a growing consciousness that they did not possess the righteousness required by the holy *Zinat*.

“Each person must pay for his sin—and sin can only be paid for with death,” Pete taught. “Listen to *Zinat’s* words: ‘*For Zinat will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.*’ \* The consequence of sin is eternal death.”

“*Meem!*” some listeners whispered, using a phrase that referred to grave news. “*Alas!*”

“*Yet tayeek!*” others murmured. “*Woe is me!*”

Not only were the Manjúis connecting the dots between Satan’s lies and what their ancestors believed, they were seeing for the first time that they, too, had been deceived by Satan into sinning against their Creator God. They knew they were in trouble. Nothing they had relied on in the past, such as obeying food

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\* Ecclesiastes 12:14 NIV

taboos, performing rituals or chanting to *spirit helpers*, could help them before the perfect judge *Zinat*.

*"Meem! Yet tayeek!"*

The audience grew all the more somber as Pete continued teaching. But to him, grim faces and incessant mutterings of *"meem"* and *"yet tayeek"* were clear signs that his audience was "getting it." They knew they were helpless sinners standing in God's judgment. They knew they were condemned and could do nothing to save themselves.

## THE LAMB OF GOD

"Though you can't save yourself from your sins, *Zinat* has made a provision for you," Pete told them, reminding them about the theme of the substitute lamb that had been woven throughout the Bible stories.

Each time the lamb had entered the story, Pete had pulled out a large hand-drawn picture of a lamb to help cement in their minds the image of the sacrifice. "Why did the lamb have to die?" he had asked each time.

He reminded them over and over again, "The lamb died because of man's sin. All sin requires a death payment. *Zinat* provided a lamb to die in the place of Abel, Abraham, Isaac, Moses and all the Israelites."

But Pete was clear to point out that the lamb's blood did not take away sin.

"The sin was still there. The blood was only a temporary provision, a covering for man's sin so that *Zinat* could enjoy a relationship with him. From the very beginning, *Zinat* had promised Adam and Eve that he would send a Saviour to conquer sin and death. In the

meantime, when the people sacrificed a lamb, it meant they were trusting in *Zinat's* promise to send a Saviour."

"We need a lamb to die in our place!" Wanyo said.

"Yes, there is a lamb for you," Pete said, building anticipation for the good news they had waited for so long.

By the time Pete taught on Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, the Manjús were no longer looking anywhere else for a sacrifice. They knew full well that Christ, the promised Saviour, was the final Lamb who died to take away the sins of the world.



## HOW SWEET IT IS!

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"* 2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV

*"How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"* Psalm 119:103 ESV

## A CHOICE

By 1995, the message of the Bible had been chronologically presented in five separate locations in and around Santa Rosa. Pete could sense that the "old house of error" had already been crumbling in many hearts, and they were ready to respond to the gospel.

However, as Pete tied up the last lessons, he wanted to avoid another emotional "people movement."

One evening he gathered the Manjúis together. On a large chalkboard, he had drawn up a chart that contrasted specific areas identified by the team that confused the gospel message. These areas corrupted their understanding of the identity and character of God.

<i>Neshen-hewot's Lies</i>	<i>Zinat's Truth</i>
A man's <i>spirit helper</i> is good. This spirit wants to help the man.	A man's <i>spirit helper</i> is evil. This spirit wants to deceive the man.
A <i>spirit helper</i> is not one of <i>Neshen-hewot's</i> demons.	Demons and <i>spirit helpers</i> are the same and have the same master: <i>Neshen-hewot</i> .
A <i>spirit helper</i> can return the snatched soul of a person to his body.	A person's soul cannot be snatched by sickness or bad dreams.

<i>Neshen-hewot's Lies</i>	<i>Zinat's Truth</i>
A <i>spirit helper</i> wants to help or save a person.	<i>Neshen-hewot's</i> goal is just to kill people, not to help them.
A person can call on and use his <i>spirit helper</i> and believe <i>Zinat's</i> words at the same time.	It's impossible to believe <i>Zinat's</i> words and use one's <i>spirit helper</i> at the same time.
A <i>spirit helper</i> knows how to help or save a person.	Only <i>Zinat</i> knows how to save a person.
A person can believe what <i>Neshen-hewot</i> says and what <i>Zinat</i> says at the same time.	A person who is <i>Zinat's</i> child has turned to <i>Zinat's</i> Word as the sole truth.

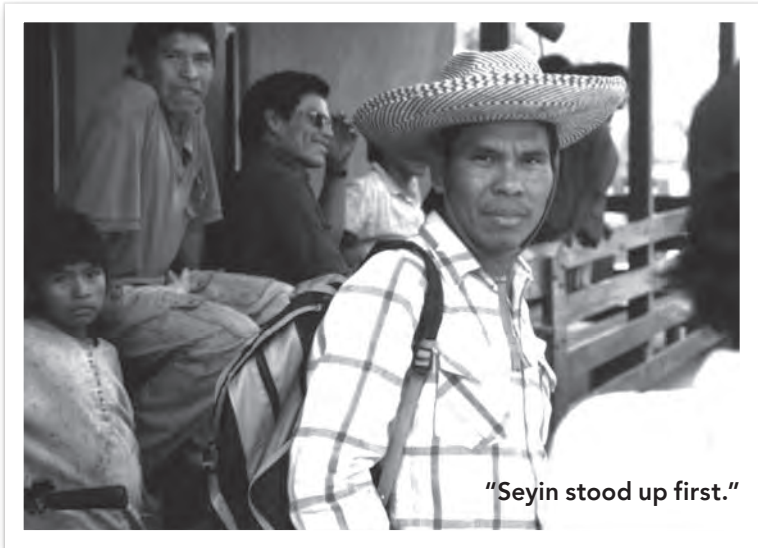
"My friends, you can either continue to trust *Neshen-hewot's* lies or believe *Zinat's* truth. Remember, it is unacceptable to believe these contradicting views at the same time. You must choose."

Pete wanted to give each person sufficient time to make a decision and not push them into an emotional agreement. To help them, he passed out paper copies of the chart to those who were literate. They could take time to review it and think about it.

However, he wanted to give those who had already made a choice an opportunity to affirm their faith publicly. "I'd just like to know, is there anybody here who wants to tell everyone his inner thoughts?" he asked.

Seyin stood up first.

"I have been thinking and thinking about this," he said in a determined tone. "I want to tell everyone that I believe only *Zinat*. I am turning my backward parts toward *Neshen-hewot's* lies, and am choosing to turn my front toward *Zinat's* message. I believe that Jesus died on the cross as the substitute for my sins. I have no doubt this is true."



Then Isnei stood up. "I, too, believe *Zinat's* words to be true. Jesus erased my sins by his death on the cross. He was the lamb who died in my place."

Following Isnei, Laanis's oldest daughter Limina stood up to give a clear testimony of her faith. "I believe that the blood of Jesus is exactly what was required for erasing my sin."

During this time, Pete noticed that Laanis, who had been sitting quietly off to one side, looked more and more agitated. All of a sudden, he jumped up.

Pointing to the left-hand column of the chart, he exclaimed angrily, "If you're telling me that I have to doubt all of those ideas and only believe what *Zinat* says, then I'll just have to go to the Lake of Fire!" At that, he stormed off.

As culturally expected, a dozen more family members scurried off behind him.

The others looked down as Laanis left the group. The silence was deafening. The remaining Manjúis were at a crossroads.

Pete noticed that two of Laanis's daughters, Zitila and Limina, together with their husbands Isnei and Liwis, did not follow Laanis. They had made their choice! In a stunning violation of a cultural norm, they had publicly disagreed with the family patriarch.

Pete addressed the rest of the Manjúis, "My friends, you've all heard our friend Laanis make his choice. I'm not sure where you want me to go from here. You know what I've always told you: I will teach as long as there are people here who will listen. I've also told you that if there comes a time when no one will listen, I must leave."

Immediately, Liwis threw his hands up in a pleading gesture. "Teach *me!*" he begged. "Even though my father-in-law has left, we still want to be taught."

"Yes! That's right!" others agreed.

Limina





That night, eight Manjúis publicly professed their faith in Christ. A church was born.

## REPENTANCE

Two days later, Wanyo visited Pete in his shop. With a solemn look on his face, he told Pete he had something important to discuss. He got right to the point without the usual chit chat. Opening his cactus-fiber bag, he carefully pulled out a piece of paper. It was limp and well worn, and the words were smudged in some places. It was one of the copies Pete had passed out two nights ago with the contrasting columns.

*“Laywot, I have read this piece of paper at home many times and have gathered my sight together,”* Wanyo said, using the common Manjúi expression of having painstakingly thought through an issue.

He pointed a weathered finger at the left-side column. *“My father and grandfather taught me exactly what is written here on this side of the line. I had never questioned those beliefs before in my life. But, on the other side,”* he said, moving his finger to the right column, *“Zinat’s Word says the complete opposite to everything the ‘old, dead ones’ taught me! I went back and forth between the two columns, and I asked myself, ‘What am I going to believe? Who am I going to trust?’*

*“Well, I’ve made up my mind!”* Wanyo said with conviction.

He took the piece of paper and folded it in half along an already creased line so that the two columns were on opposite sides. Then he clasped it between both hands out in front of him with *“Neshen-hewot’s lies”* facing up.

*“All my life I thought these things were true,”* he said as he looked down at the list of *Neshen-hewot’s lies*. *“But now, I have heard Zinat’s words.”*

With the paper still between both hands, he turned it over with deliberate precision and brought the other side up. *“I am turning*

my back on what I previously believed to be true and am now facing Jesus,” he said. “I now believe *Zinat’s* words alone.”

In that simple act, Wanyo had culturally expressed biblical repentance: having a *change of mind* about what one believes to be true. Wanyo had turned his back on *Neshen-hewot’s* lies and had put his trust in Christ alone.



About two weeks later, a weary and contrite Laanis showed up on Pete’s porch.

“*Laywot*, I have been very unhappy.” Setting his pride aside, he confessed, “I knew that *Zinat’s* Word is true. But I did not want to admit that *Neshen-hewot* had deceived me.”

The expression on Laanis’s old, weather-beaten face softened.

“*Laywot*, I was wrong to go on believing all that the ‘old, dead ones’ passed down. I know *Zinat’s* Word is the only truth. I believe only *Zinat* and admit that I have been deceived.”

When the rest of the team were told this good news, they rejoiced and glorified God for his powerful work in the heart of their friend. By the end of the month, dozens of men, women and children had given clear testimonies of their faith in Christ. And God was “[adding] to their number daily those who were being saved.”\*

In November 1995, 15 years after the Humphreys had arrived in Santa Rosa—and 24 years since Norm Fry and his team first set foot in the barren Chaco in search of the elusive Manjúi tribe—Pete and Leah were able to send a letter home with the joyful announcement:

*It is incredible to be writing this letter—to tell you that God’s church in Santa Rosa has been born, and is growing*

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\*Act 2:47 NIV

*rapidly! I almost feel like we should add height and weight data to the announcement of this special birth, but no one would hold still long enough!*

## SWEETER THAN HONEY

The first official “church meeting” in Santa Rosa was held in the Humphreys’ living room on September 25, 1995. The excited new believers gathered for the first time to worship and pray together.

In the middle of a prayer, Pete heard the familiar sound: *Pop, pop, pop, pop!*

It was the unmistakable sound of cheek flicking—the happy melody that usually ensued when the Manjúis were gathered to eat honey. Here and there, others began expressing their delight the same way.

*“In-ká-hai!”* the Manjúi believers exclaimed as they flicked their cheeks. *“How sweet it is!”*

*“In-ká-hai! Your Word is so sweet, Zinat!”*

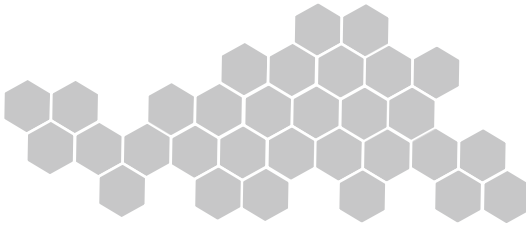
These new believers were *“tasting and seeing that the Lord is good.”* \* Overflowing with joy, they were expressing satisfaction as they savoured his truth—thanking and praising him with a simple act of worship.

*In-ká-hai*—a word that once had been used to describe honey, the sweetest thing known in the Chaco, was now used for the Manjúis’ newfound joy in Christ. They had something far sweeter and more precious than honey. Whereas honey offered them a brief escape from their bitter world before, the salvation of God now offered them hope for the future and an eternal joy known only to those who chose to believe his Word.

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\*Psalm 34:8





## EPILOGUE

*God is building his church here in Santa Rosa. It is not made of cement, or adobe bricks, but of men, women, and children who have decided to believe in God alone.*

Humphreys' letter home, 1995

*In Manjúi culture, something that is never really outgrown is the tendency to make people “pay” when they refuse what you’ve asked for... As the Holy Spirit has begun to teach Manjúi hearts, and as they have been obedient and receptive to the Word of God, they have started pulling away from this traditional response. In fact, to our amazement, they began to be thankful and appreciative. They would come to the house with a bike that needed welding and say, “My friend, can you help me? But not today—maybe this weekend would be good for you? Whenever you have time.” God’s word has an amazing effect on every aspect of their culture.*

Humphreys' letter home, 1997

### THE MANJÚIS TODAY

When the first team arrived in Santa Rosa, only about 90 Manjúi people were scattered throughout that region. Their very existence was in jeopardy. At the writing of this book, there are 400 to 500 Manjúis who call Santa Rosa home. Over 2,500 live in the greater area. This population explosion has not just been the result of better health conditions and secure water and food sources. Though these and other factors have been important, the population grew exponentially and most markedly when the Manjúis discarded destructive cultural practices.

## WORSHIP

The church in Santa Rosa today is not represented by a building or structure, but by the Manjúi people who comprise the local body of Christ. The church meetings are loosely structured gatherings directed by the Manjúis themselves.

The first worship songs were written to upbeat melodies of well-known children's songs. For example, the following is sung in Manjúi to the tune of *Yankee Doodle*:

*I don't doubt God,  
I believe his Word.  
He saves me, I'm rejoicing,  
I'm headed to his place.*

Originally, Leah played the tunes on the keyboard and the autoharp and Pete recorded them on audio cassette tapes. These tapes were distributed to the Manjúis, who played them on manual cassette players.

The Manjúis are familiar with praise songs written to the tunes of *Pop Goes the Weasel*; *I'm a Little Teapot*; and *Hail, Hail, the Gang's*

"... Leah played the tunes  
on the keyboard ..."



*All Here.* Children walk around the village singing them at the top of their lungs.

A songbook has been compiled and distributed. At the church gatherings, a designated worship leader exclaims, “Okay, it’s time for the men to sing! Number 40!” and after that, “Okay, now it’s the women’s turn! Number 25!”

Their voices, loud and clear, give praise to *Zinat*, the Creator of heaven and earth.

## HOPE

Shortly after the church was born, it was struck with a tragedy that tested the faith of the new believers.

Pete and his youngest son Deryk were in Filadelfia buying supplies when a Mennonite rancher pulled up in a truck next to them and a familiar face from Santa Rosa poked out from the passenger’s side. Wuike’ had some bad news.

“I am very, very unhappy, my friend,” he said. “Our friend Hanimo has died.”

Pete was shocked to hear of the news. Hanimo, the Humphreys’ next-door neighbour in Santa Rosa, had been an outgoing fellow with a great sense of humour. He had been one of the first believers to publicly confess his faith in Christ.

Pete and Deryk learned that Hanimo had died of a stomach aneurism. With heavy hearts,



they buried Hanimo's body in Filadelfia the next day. Arriving back at the ranch where Hanimo's family was living temporarily, they proceeded to do a most difficult task: deliver the news. How would the Manjúis respond to death now that they had the truth?

The news shook the whole camp. Hanimo's widow, Tina, and her seven children began to grieve. There was brief talk about disposing of Hanimo's belongings.

But then Tina's brother Seyin stepped forward.

"Friends," he said to the gathered crowd, "we used to be afraid of death before we heard *Zinat's* words. We would burn a dead person's clothes and destroy his belongings because we were afraid his soul would linger on and haunt us. We would cut our hair so that his ghost would not recognize us.





“But now, we do not need to be afraid. We know *Zinat’s* Word, and we know where Hanimo is—he is in *Zinat’s* place. We will see him again when we go there. So, we don’t need to burn his clothes and destroy his belongings! We don’t need to cut our hair! We should act according to *Zinat’s* words. And Hanimo would have wanted his sons to have his things instead of having them destroyed.”

The believers agreed with Seyin, praising God that Hanimo’s soul was in Heaven and that they would all see him again. They comforted Tina and her children, and even offered to build Tina and the children a new house near her relatives.

At a church meeting soon after, Tina and her oldest son stood up and gave their testimony.

“We are still very sad at the death of my husband,” Tina said, “but we are comforted and joyful knowing that Hanimo is with *Zinat* in Heaven, and we know we will see him again one day!”

Pete was moved to tears as he witnessed the Manjúis’ amazing transformation. He thought back to the time when death to the Manjúis meant total despair, gut-wrenching wails and fear. Now, with the promise of eternal life, the Manjúis would no longer *“grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.”*\*

Now they had hope, and what a difference that hope made!

## OUTREACH

From the very birth of the church, the believers expressed concern for their unbelieving family and friends, whom they referred to as those “yet deceived.”

Three Manjúi men—Isnei, Seyin and Wanyo—were chosen to be trained as Bible teachers. They dived into learning and were quick to put into practice what they had learned.

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\*1 Thessalonians 4:13 NIV

These men co-taught those “yet deceived” using the material developed and refined over the years in Santa Rosa—full Bible lessons typed out in Manjúi. They taught as they had been taught, reading the lessons word for word. Reading preserved accuracy and ensured clarity, as much of the material was still new to these three men. The “yet deceived” came with great eagerness to hear their fellow tribesmen who were now teaching alongside Pete.

Halfway through the chronological Bible teaching, Pete had to make a prolonged trip to Asunción. To his great delight, upon his return, he found that Isnei, Seyin and Wanyo had continued teaching without him and 20 second-generation Christians had been added to the church in Santa Rosa!

During this time, Seyin had also begun teaching his uncle Laweyin, the blind shaman who had taught Leah his language. Laweyin felt he was too old to learn. Seyin, however, persisted in teaching him the truth.

One day Laweyin visited the Humphreys. “I have something to tell you,” he said excitedly. “Last night, I was chanting to my *spirit helper*. All of a sudden, I was attacked by fire ants. I got up on top of a table and continued chanting. But the ants found me again! I started wondering if *Zinat* was trying to get my attention.”

As Seyin continued to teach him, the day finally came when Laweyin declared: “I’m through believing *Neshen-hewot’s* lies. I know that I have sinned, and Jesus paid my sin-debt. I believe only what *Zinat* says!”

Tears overflowed as he told of his new understanding and realization of his future hope. What joy it was for Leah to tell him that one day his blind eyes would see again! And the first One he would see would be the Lord Jesus.

## WEDDING

The work of the Holy Spirit was evident in all aspects of the believers' lives. After a short trip out of Santa Rosa, Pete came back to some delightful news.

"We had a wedding in Santa Rosa," Isnei told him, eyes gleaming.

"A wedding!?" Pete looked at him with wide eyes.

"Yes! After you taught us about marriage, we understood that a man and woman should not live together until they become husband and wife in God's eyes. I taught the young couple about their responsibilities, and they made promises to each other. We had a party to celebrate. So they were married!"

## BAPTISM

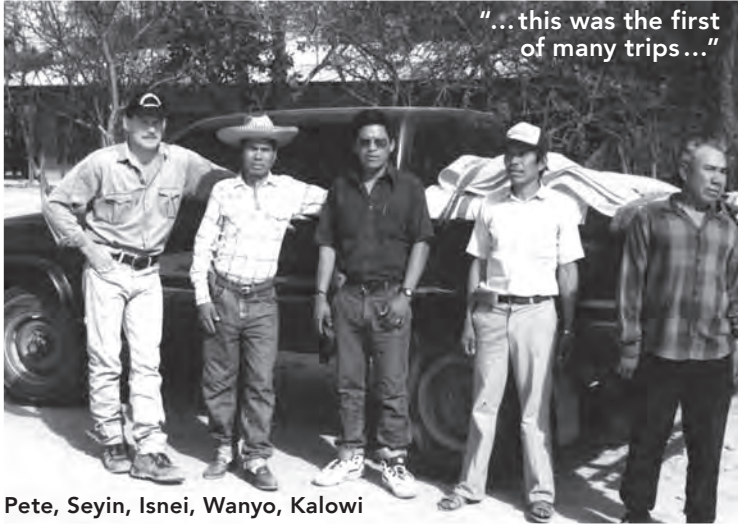
Another memorable day was the first Manjúi baptism, a service held on July 8, 1996. Eighty-five believers were baptized, including first- and second-generation Christians. Shaun, Pete's 17-year-old son, and Jeff, Gordie Hunt's 21-year-old son, were also baptized. Both had waited many years for the privilege of being baptized alongside their Manjúi friends.

Because there was no stream or lake near Santa Rosa, a five-foot-deep pit was dug in the ground and filled with water. By the end of the afternoon, those emerging from the water were almost unrecognizable—they were covered in clay! But that did not dampen the spirits of the newly baptized believers. They worshipped and praised God for his miraculous salvation that had *"rescued [them] from the dominion of darkness and brought [them] into the kingdom of the Son he loves."*\*

Subsequently, when other new believers joined the church, it was not the foreign Bible teachers who baptized them, but Isnei and Seyin, their own Manjúi Bible teachers.

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\* Colossians 1:13 NIV



## WITNESSES

As the church in Santa Rosa grew in maturity and size, the Manjúi outreach did not stop at Santa Rosa. The new Bible teachers were ready to spread their wings.

They were reminded about their distant relatives down at the Pilcomayo River who had never heard the words of *Zinat* in their language. After much discussion and prayer, the church took up an offering for an outreach trip. Pete accompanied Seyin, Isnei, Wanyo and Kalowi as they travelled to the river.

Leah joyfully reported to friends back home:

*The men were off! As they travelled southwest to the Pilcomayo River, they asked God to show them what to share ... The four men and Pete were gladly received by the Pilcomayo River Manjúis. They were fed a generous*

*amount of fish, and the river Manjúis listened with interest to the message and music that was brought. Several of them would have returned to Santa Rosa with our men if they could have!*

This was the first of many trips that the Manjúis took as the church reached out to the world around them in obedience to the Great Commission.

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” \**

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\*Acts 1:8 NIV

# HOW TO USE THE STUDY GUIDE

## FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

- Read the whole story first before beginning the **Study Guide**.
- In Topic 1, read the “Consider” question and reflect on an answer.
- Now read the commentary below the question. Reflect on whether this changes your answer or not.
- Repeat the process with the next “Consider” question.
- In the “Apply” portion, simply follow the instructions.

## FOR SMALL GROUP STUDY:

*First, start by reading the story: Forward to the Epilogue*

- **Option One:** Each individual read the story alone. Then use the Study Guide during your small group get-together.
- **Option Two** (Recommended): Read the story together out loud as part of your regular small group program. Then complete the **Study Guide** together. To read the story as a group, decide the reading plan using one of three options:
  1. One reader do the reading for the group.
  2. Two good readers read alternate sections.
  3. Those who wish, take turns reading paragraphs.

Direct all readers to the list of characters (pg. 8) and read the names together, so that everyone feels comfortable with the pronunciation.

If you read together, you can end the first three sessions with a general discussion on what each person thinks of the story thus far.

*Next, read and discuss the Study Guide: Topics 1 to 6*

The **Study Guide** is divided into six topics. They are best discussed in chronological order, though they do stand alone.

Read the “Consider” question to the group. Allow time to ponder individually before discussion. Then read to the group the commentary that follows. (Stop reading before the next “Consider” question.) Based on the commentary, discuss additional thoughts or insights. Then, move on to the next “Consider” question and do the same.

At the end of each topic are practical applications. Some are exercises while others are more reflective in nature. These can be thought through as a group.

*We suggest the following format for a total of nine sessions:*

Three sessions of one hour each to read the story together. (As an option, this can be done on personal time before the group gathers.)

Six sessions of one hour each for the six **Study Guide** topics.

*Each member of the group should have a Bible, notepad, pen and their own copy of “in-ká-hai.”*

## STUDY GUIDE

# TOPIC 1: CREDIBILITY

**Consider:** How does the credibility of a messenger relate to the credibility of the message? What positive or negative examples can you think of?

*“Often, when we think of reaching people for the Lord, the first thing we want to do is share the gospel. But we have found that there are a few things that must take place before the gospel can be shared...”* Humphreys’ letter home, 1988 (pg. 43)

The very first day Pete and Leah set foot in the dust of the Chaco, they had with them a long list of things that needed to happen. They had to find a reliable water source, build a house, set up a generator and learn the language. Foremost, however, was something even more crucial—something that had to take place if the gospel was ever to be understood and believed by their Manjúi hosts.

*“Pete and Leah knew that the Manjúi would not trust God’s message if they did not trust them, the messengers.”* (pg. 48)

There is a very strong correlation between the messenger and the message. The Santa Rosa team knew they had to be seen as credible, trustworthy messengers. If they were not regarded as honest or reliable, then regardless of how trustworthy the message, the Manjúi would not give it any serious consideration.

Pete and Leah went about completing their other must-do tasks while spending time with the Manjúi around campfires, hunting, gathering honey, treating the sick, listening to stories, sharpening machetes, teaching socio-economic skills and hugging children. During the course of daily living, the Manjúi were exposed to the kind of people they were. The way Pete and Leah treated each other and those around them, the way they spoke, how they made



decisions and behaved in stressful situations, and the outward expression of their values and morals allowed them to gain the trust and respect of the Manjús.

Eventually, each family was no longer seen as strangers; they became credible, trusted friends. What the Humphreys had to say was now important. They were in a good position to share the Good News.

Centuries earlier when the Apostle Paul first set foot in Asia, intent on sharing the gospel, he too strived for credibility.

*"You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me..."*

Acts 20:18-19 ESV

Paul knew that everything about the way he lived either helped or hindered how people perceived the gospel. When the time did come for him to share the Good News, his Asian friends found that the messenger and the message lined up. Paul's credibility helped them realize the trustworthiness, importance and even attractiveness of the message he proclaimed. Had he ignored the fact that people connect the way you live with the gospel's credibility, his communication of the Bible would certainly have had far less impact.

The Holy Spirit is paramount in the process of building trust. For many people, their first encounter with God is interacting with a Christian who exhibits the indwelling Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). When the fruit of the Holy Spirit is evident in the messenger, the gospel becomes believable.

**Consider:** How is credibility relevant for short encounters compared to long-term relationships?

Every relationship is either moving toward or away from an opportunity to share Christ. For some, like the Manjús, it's a process

that may take years. For others, trust comes surprisingly quickly. God intends to use both long-term relationships and short-term encounters to direct people to Jesus Christ.

When the Jewish religious leaders falsely accused Paul of instigating riots, he was brought before King Agrippa to make his defence. Paul took advantage of the opportunity to share his testimony regarding Christ.

*“Agrippa said to Paul, ‘In such a short time are you persuading me to become a Christian?’ Paul replied, ‘I pray to God that whether in a short or a long time not only you but also all those who are listening to me today could become such as I am, except for these chains.’”* Acts 26:28-29 NET

Our lives are full of brief interactions with people who we see on a regular basis—at the grocery store, at the bank, at work, or at the bus stop. We may never have the luxury of spending extended periods of time with them, but we can still convey a sense of credibility in the way we relate to them. This includes being ready with a smile or extending a courtesy such as asking, “May I help you?” We should also be careful not to exaggerate, make overly dramatic comments, or complain and grumble about life. Instead we need to be honest and gracious in our interactions. These simple acts can be surprisingly effective in building the kind of impressions which may one day lead to sharing the Good News.

**Consider:** What if, in the past, you had “blown” or damaged your credibility. What can be done now so you can still share the Good News at some point in the future?

Even well-meaning Christians have experienced difficult or challenging relationships and interactions that have marred their credibility. In such a case one may need to humbly and honestly acknowledge the fault and seek forgiveness and reconciliation. It would also be appropriate to right the wrong and make amends. It

might take some time to regain trust, but with help from the Holy Spirit, sensitivity and genuine love, opportunities may come to meaningfully share the gospel.

*“Whatever happens, conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.”*

Philippians 1:27 NIV

**Apply:** Who has God placed in your life and how can you build credibility with them?

**Long-Term Relationships:** Is there someone who comes to mind that you’re quite certain does not know the Lord? How does he view you? Does he see you as someone with credibility or does he keep you at a distance? Are there things you can do to correct a wrong impression and slowly move toward an opportunity to share the gospel?

**Short-Term Interactions:** In your daily routine, what are the fleeting but regular interactions you have with people (e.g., your mechanic, pharmacist, beautician, cashier, waitress, etc.)? How can you relate to them in a way that builds credibility? Who among them can you pray for and begin to build a relationship with?

## STUDY GUIDE

# TOPIC 2: BEGINNINGS

**Consider:** Suppose someone said to you, “If you put your trust in Wadhue, you will be able to achieve happiness and eternal life!” Would you believe him? What possible questions might you want answered before deciding to act on his advice?

*“Pete knew that the Bible, given to mankind by their Creator, is itself a divinely revealed teaching outline. In the same order that God revealed his message over the ages, Pete would teach the biblical message chronologically, from beginning to end, progressively giving the Manjúi the whole picture of God’s redemptive plan. Before he could tell them about the Saviour, he needed to lay the groundwork of who God was and what he was like.” (pg. 58)*

Here is another scenario: What if, a few weeks after arriving in the village, the Humphreys wrote a prayer letter to their supporters that read, *“The gospel has come to the Manjúi people! The John 3:16 tracts were very well received and many indicated they wanted to receive eternal life. Praise the Lord!”*

Should such a letter be cause for concern? Why? After all, John 3:16 is the gospel and it is true, and apparently it was accepted and believed by the people. So what would be the problem?

The problem that Pete and Leah recognized was that a truncated gospel message would never have worked with the Manjúis because they had no background as to who God is and what he is like. It would be akin to you believing in Wadhue because of that simple statement from your friend. Would you know who or even what Wadhue is? Is Wadhue a person, a planet, a rock, a tree, or an animal? You would have no clue. Likewise, even a “simple” verse like John 3:16 would have been totally meaningless and without context for the Manjúis.

No matter where in the world the gospel is being conveyed, assuming too much is a dangerous pitfall. In this case, it would be a fatal error of communication to assume the Manjúis would have clear understanding of the message just because it seemed obvious to their Bible teachers.

With this in mind, here is some food for thought:

- Just because the speaker and listener use the same vocabulary, we should not assume that the listener correctly understands the speaker's intended message.
- Just because biblical truths and concepts appear simple and "self-evident" to the speaker, we should not assume that no explanation is needed and that the listener properly understands their meaning and significance.
- Just because the message of the Bible is meant for everyone in the world, we should not assume that a person's worldview has no bearing on how they view and understand the Bible's message.
- Just because we are aware of the dangers of making assumptions and are careful to avoid them, does not mean we are immune from making assumptions ourselves.

This means that when sharing the gospel with the Manjúis or with people in your neighbourhood, the only safe assumption is to assume nothing!

**Consider:** In the Gospel of John, we read that ...

*"... these things are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."*

John 20:31 NIV

This, out of all books in the Bible, is an evangelistic book. Read through John 1:1-3:16 as if it were your first time. Note each word,

phrase, person, place, event or concept that you and an unbeliever might not understand or might find meaningless or confusing. You will note many words or concepts in this passage of Scripture that are used without explanation. Why is this?

When John penned this gospel it would have made complete sense to those to whom the apostle was writing. In that day,

*“... the law of Moses [had] been preached in every city from the earliest times and [was] read in the synagogues on every Sabbath.”*  
Acts 15:21 NIV

The people of that day had the context for all John wrote. But now, 2000 years later, few have that context. How can we be certain that someone coming from a totally different part of the world, with a very limited background, has an accurate understanding of these terms?

When Pete began introducing the Manjúis to the God of the Bible, he used a unique approach. He did not start in the Gospels. Rather, he began at the very beginning with the Books of Moses. As he moved through Scripture, the Manjúis were introduced to a Stranger—God himself.

It is the same approach that Jesus used with his own disciples. Even though they were very familiar with him, he didn't assume anything. Instead, after his death and resurrection, he appeared incognito to two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus. Jesus began ...

*“... with Moses and all the Prophets” as “he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.”*  
Luke 24:27 NIV

The phrase “Moses and all the Prophets” was a first-century way of saying that Jesus started with the first five books of the Bible—as written by Moses—and then went on to draw upon the content of the

Old Testament—as penned by the prophets. Simply put, Jesus began his explanation regarding himself by beginning at the beginning.

Since almost two-thirds of the Bible is a “ramping up” to who Jesus is and what he did for us, it only makes sense to include this background information in any presentation of the gospel. Giving the context helps people come to a right understanding of God’s Word.

Those working in remote locations cannot risk hurrying through the gospel by skipping the divinely revealed foundational portions of the Bible. Jesus himself took the necessary time to make sure his disciples connected the Old Testament Scriptures to himself. Everyone who wants to help their friends, family and neighbours clearly understand the nature of God and the message of God’s Word, ought to carefully consider their approach, avoid assuming too much, start at the beginning, and be ready to take the necessary time to do so.

**Apply:** When you have an opportunity to share the Good News, are you tempted to hurry to the “crux” of “how to be saved”? Take the time to explore, beginning at the beginning, to gain an understanding of how you can communicate the context for the gospel message. See Appendix IV for resources to help you do this.

## STUDY GUIDE

# TOPIC 3: COMMUNICATION

**Consider:** Can you think of methods that present a clear, understandable gospel? Do these methods work for people who are not gifted communicators?

*“The whole team was aware that the Bible’s message had to be communicated clearly and accurately...” (pg. 63)*

For the Santa Rosa team, years of toil and sacrifice had all led up to this. They had lived among the Manjús, learned their language and culture, built relationships, and served them with the love of Christ. They knew well that it would all be for nothing if they couldn’t convey the Bible’s message in a meaningful way—in a way that was both accurate and understandable.

*“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”*

Romans 10:14 NIV

Foremost in the mind of anyone who shares the Good News is the daunting reality that he or she is conveying the Bible’s message—the God-breathed, life-giving words of the Creator of the universe! It must be clear if it is to be understood and believed.

*“... [Pete] decided to err on the side of caution. Instead of jotting down an outline to teach from ad-lib, he wrote each lesson out in detail and read the script word-for-word.” (pg. 63)*

Anyone who knows Pete Humphreys can attest to his ability in communication. He skillfully engages in public speaking and has taught in a variety of venues around the world. So what were Pete’s reasons for publicly reading his lessons instead of preaching or teaching ad-lib?



His rationale for taking a read-aloud approach had both biblical precedents as well as practical advantages. These are insightful considerations for those who want to share the Bible's message clearly—whether they're gifted speakers or not.

The book of Nehemiah tells of an occasion when the people of Israel were gathered together to hear God's Word. The spiritual leaders of the day then proceeded to "... read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read." When they understood, they not only "celebrate(d) with great joy" but spread out and proclaimed all they had learned "throughout the towns and in Jerusalem." (Nehemiah 8:1-18 NIV)

Centuries later, we find instructions that the Apostle Paul gave to his young disciple Timothy, listing for him—and for us—helpful ways to live. In it, he stated,

*"... devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture..."*

1 Timothy 4:13 NIV

**Consider:** What are some possible benefits of reading Bible lessons aloud—both for Pete teaching the Manjúis and for your own situation?

In addition to the biblical precedents of reading aloud, there are practical advantages. These include:

- **Accuracy:** Pete knew that the truth of the Bible's message should not be compromised in any way. Both he and Leah painstakingly developed lesson scripts where every single word was wrung out to ensure precision in communication. When it came time to teach, Pete was confident that he had not forgotten or overlooked anything important. He was sure he was expressing everything he needed to say in the best possible way.
- **Focus:** When distractions come up—as they frequently do—it can be quite a challenge to stay on track. For example, Pete taught

during the hottest time of day. Often his voice was drowned out by the northerly wind. Between the heat and wind, it was hard to maintain focus on the lesson. However, reading the lessons aloud helped him and his students to follow what was being taught. When something wasn't clear in the minds of his listeners, Pete was able to go back and clarify their understanding because he knew exactly what he had previously said.

- **Transferability:** After the birth of the Manjúi church, Pete trained three believers to teach the message of the Bible using lessons he had developed over the years. When he returned from an extended trip, he found that the men had effectively continued the teaching in his absence, resulting in 20 new believers! They had simply taught as Pete taught by reading.

The biblical precedents as well as the practical advantages of a read-aloud approach make it well worth considering for everyone, regardless of whether a person is a gifted communicator or lacking verbal skills.

Sometimes people shy away from sharing the gospel because they are afraid they may say the wrong thing. Others feel they are unable to put into words what needs to be said. An approach that utilizes reading prepared lessons provides confidence to many who want to share the Bible's message clearly and accurately. If you can read, you can lead.

**Apply:** Consider reading Scripture out loud in your personal "Quiet Time" or together in your small group. If you are in a group, you can take turns reading aloud the Bible or a Christian book, a chapter at a time (not necessarily material specific to small groups), ending with a discussion of the content.

If you would like to guide someone through the gospel using a read-aloud method, refer to Appendix III for appropriate resources.

## TOPIC 4: UNDERSTANDING

**Consider:** What does it mean when someone claims to believe in Christ for salvation but doesn't act like it? What questions or concerns are raised in this scenario?

*"Pete awoke to the familiar sound of loud chanting... it was Laanis! What's going on? Pete's thoughts raced. Didn't Laanis just tell me a few hours ago that he only trusted Zinat? Why is he chanting to the evil spirits? He should know that these spirits work for Neshenhewot and are enemies of Zinat!"* (pg. 84)

Even though Pete taught the gospel carefully, and even though many villagers expressed trust in Christ for their salvation, Laanis almost immediately fell back into old habits. The Good News, it seemed, caused *little to no* change in his life. Pete's legitimate question was, "What went wrong?"

It's a troubling scenario that isn't peculiar only to tribal settings. Terms such as *backsliding* and *falling away* are sometimes used to characterize the sinful choices and persistent old habits of some "believers." This has been a serious concern since the early Church.

*"Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan."*

1 Timothy 5:15 NIV

Problems sometimes become apparent shortly after one professes faith in Christ. Other times, such concerns emerge many years later. Over and over again the disconcerting question is asked, "What went wrong?"

Often the tendency is to attempt to determine whether the struggling person's faith was "genuine" or not. A litany of possibilities is posed: His faith must have been weak, false, intellectual or emotional. (It should be noted that these descriptors are not found in the Bible.) Whatever the case, everyone concerned—both the one

struggling and those nearby—are left bewildered. Did he ever really believe in the first place? The understandable conclusion often made is that the person must not be saved.

That may well be. Or it may not. What is clear in Scripture is that God doesn't want us, as believers, to simply stand by on the sidelines and look on. So, how would God like us to respond and help those whose actions are not in line with the Good News they profess to believe?

When Pete became aware that he was faced with a problem in Santa Rosa, he didn't begin by admonishing Laanis for chanting to the evil spirits. Neither did he scrutinize the validity of his faith. Instead Pete's first course of action was to determine Laanis' **understanding** of the gospel message itself. Were Laanis and others clear on who Jesus is and what he accomplished by his coming to earth and dying on the cross?

*"What they discovered was jarring ... Although (the Manjúis') expressions of faith may have been sincere, their faith was not based on true understanding."* (pg. 84-85)

The Bible makes the link between **faith** and **understanding** very evident. When Philip met with the Ethiopian eunuch, he asked him,

*"Do you **understand** what you are reading? ... Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus."* Acts 8:30,35 NIV, emphasis added

When Jesus told the parable of the sower and the seed, he gave this explanation:

*"When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not **understand** it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart."*

Matthew 13:19 NIV, emphasis added

The Bible emphasizes the importance of helping people come to a proper **understanding**—and thus, have the proper basis—for putting their trust in Jesus Christ. When one’s choices are disturbingly inconsistent with the faith one professes, the first and most important step is to ask questions in order to determine how well the person **understands** the gospel’s message.

**Consider:** What questions do you think Pete asked the Manjúis in order to check their understanding of the message of the Bible? What would be critical for the Manjúis to answer correctly to show they truly understood?

The Bible teachers asked questions that addressed four key aspects of the gospel:

1. Who is God? What is their view of God and is it accurate with what the Bible teaches?
2. What about sin? Is their view of themselves consistent with the biblical picture—that of being helpless sinners?
3. Who is Jesus and what did he accomplish? Do they understand why only Jesus could die in the place of sinful man?
4. What is a right response? Who or what are they personally relying on to be right with God? Anything but faith alone in Christ alone is the wrong answer.

From the answers given, Pete realized that what the Manjúis believed was not consistent with what the Bible teaches regarding these points. He then chose to start again, going back to the very beginning in order to re-teach and clarify what the Bible actually says. He re-framed the same questions in different ways to check for accurate understanding.

*“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.”*

2 Timothy 3:16 NLT

When we are faced with people who are constantly making choices inconsistent with the gospel, the biblical and most helpful thing we can do is to make sure they have a clear and accurate understanding of the Good News.

**Apply:** In Appendix I, there is a questionnaire titled “My Understanding of the Bible’s Message.” Write out answers for the ten questions and then compare your answers with the sample answers provided.

When you share the gospel message, keep a copy of the questionnaire handy and ask your friend to fill it in. This will help you clarify your friend’s understanding of the message of the Bible.

## TOPIC 5: CONFUSION

**Consider:** Though the Manjúi people expressed trust in the Bible’s message of salvation, at the same time, they held on to their traditional beliefs. Why was this problematic?

*“Laanis had restated his belief emphatically: ‘Zinat is the only one I trust. Zinat alone is powerful. I don’t doubt what Zinat’s word says.’”* (pg. 83)

The first time Pete taught the Bible, the verbal response from many, like Laanis, was that they trusted *Zinat*. Pete was elated, saying, “This is what makes it all worth it!” But Pete’s joy quickly turned to uncertainty when he realized the Manjúis had retained their traditional religious worldview, such as chanting to the spirits. After careful questioning, it became evident to the Bible teachers that the Manjúis were holding contradictory ideas at the same time.

*“[They] simply added Jesus as an extra antidote for their fears, creating a false sense of security. They had mixed the lies of Neshenhewot with God’s truth—illogical as it may have been.”* (pg. 87)

A significant part of the problem, Pete realized, was syncretism—the Manjúis were mixing biblical truth with non-biblical ideas. When the mix involved the critical message of salvation, it was sobering to realize that many who professed faith in Christ may not have been saved at all.

Syncretism is a common and rampant problem found in mankind’s response toward God. It has been so since ancient times. One example is recorded in 2 Kings: “[The Israelites] feared the LORD and served their own gods” (17:33 NASB). Even though the Israelites “worshipped” God, they also chose to do their own thing and pursue their own wishes.

Similarly, the Manjúis continued to cling to many of their traditional beliefs, even though these beliefs were in conflict with what they had been learning about God and sin.

The Santa Rosa team had three choices:

1. They could embrace the traditional religion but with a “Christian” adaptation. For example, they could direct the Manjúis to chant to the Holy Spirit instead of demonic spirits.

This option is fraught with problems. For example, sometimes those who have been accustomed to the use of drumming to call evil spirits are encouraged to “dedicate” a drum to God in a ceremony that mimics a traditional “spirit” ceremony. In continuing this religious practice, often the original significance is subtly transferred into their Christian experience, believing that God’s Spirit can be “summoned” by drumming, or that a drum can somehow “be possessed” by the Holy Spirit. Such ideas are contrary to the Bible.

If syncretism is not responded to with clear teaching, then serious error can develop in a multitude of areas. Unfortunately, Bible teachers have frequently fostered or been blind to syncretism. The result is a form of Christianity characterized either by weak believers or a lack of true regeneration.

2. As a second option, they could forge ahead and ignore the syncretism. They could get people involved in church ministries and outreach. They could address the chanting problem with: “What are you doing?! You’re supposed to be believers now! Chanting is sin—cut it out!” Hopefully, with time, the Manjúis would outgrow their animistic superstitions.

This second option is based on hope, but rarely is hope fulfilled. History has shown that syncretism ignored can embed itself to an almost intractable point.

3. Fortunately, neither of the first two options happened in the Manjúi work. Instead the team decided to slow down and sort out the confusion. Although it was arduous, Pete started over again at the beginning. He taught, using the same outline, as if they hadn’t



heard the content before. This time, however, he helped them think through biblical truths in contrast with their old beliefs. Eventually, the Manjúis came to recognize that one cannot rely on both God and traditions for salvation. Holding contrasting beliefs was not an option. Pete helped them identify and reject lies, replacing them with a clear understanding and reliance on Christ alone. They had a *change of mind*—a biblical repentance—turning from believing their old spiritual traditions to believing *Zinat's* words. Sorting out the problem of syncretism wasn't easy, but it provided the best possible foundation upon which to build the Manjúi church.

To construct a sturdy house of biblical truth, the *old house of error* must be dismantled, block by block and piece by piece. It is critical that the irreducible minimums of the gospel not be clouded or compromised by error. If the error is not displaced, it corrupts truth in a person's mind; God's truth would be built on a faulty foundation. The gospel is a message to be believed or rejected, but never adjusted.

**Consider:** If the Bible teachers had decided to ignore the syncretism, what possible problems would the new church have faced?

The new Manjúi church would have been built largely around biblically confused people. It could have included three types of church-goers, common to many churches:

1. Those who have a false sense of hope. These people have not trusted in Jesus alone for salvation. They are also dependent upon other things—good works and various religious activities—that they believe will please the Lord. They cling to the false hope that what they “do” will be acceptable to God.
2. Those who drop out. Such people have a flawed understanding of the gospel. For instance, like the Manjúis, their misunderstanding might involve “[reducing] *Zinat* to a great benefactor who could

*potentially meet their physical needs and protect them. The need to be right with a holy God was not foremost in their thinking.”* (pg. 86) Though such people may have chosen to “believe” in God, their “belief” is based on mistaken concepts of God and his promises. Those who have such erroneous ideas become disillusioned with their newfound “faith” and drop out. Often they will reject any further explanation of the gospel because they think they have already tried “it” and “it” has failed them.

3. Those who are biblically confused. These people may understand enough to be saved, but their lack of a solid, biblical foundation frequently results in a vulnerability to distorted, unbiblical ideas. This results in a lack of peace, joy, security and fellowship. Just like the Manjúi, their faith may be focused on faith—having said the right words. (In our case it may be on having said *the right prayer*, having *gone forward* or *been baptized*.) Often they are unable to clearly explain what the gospel is all about. Some wonder if they are really saved. Others think they know what the Bible is all about and so have little interest in any further study.

If the new Manjúi church had been built on confusion, the church planters would have faced a very difficult challenge.

Furthermore, if Pete had done nothing to correct the misunderstanding, those who chose to reject the message at that stage would have, in fact, been rejecting an inaccurate perception of the Good News. As a result, many would have been inoculated against any further hearing of the Word, presuming that they already knew it.

Most of these tragic results can be avoided if syncretism is recognized as a serious problem and dealt with swiftly and methodically.

**Apply:** Syncretism is not easy to spot, especially in ourselves. Being conscious of the potential problem is a good step toward keeping syncretism out of our lives. See Appendix II.

# TOPIC 6: AMBASSADOR

**Consider:** What does the Bible say about the role of believers in sharing the Bible’s message with a needy world? Is it only the responsibility of those with specialized training, such as the Humphreys? Where do the rest of us fit in? Jesus said,

*“... go and make disciples of all nations, ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”* Matthew 28:19-20 NIV

This wasn’t simply a suggestion but rather an explicit command. And, it is a command applicable to all believers, not just a select few. But why? The Apostle Peter helps us to understand God’s heart for the world when he wrote,

*“[The Lord is] not willing that any should perish ...”*

2 Peter 3:9 KJV

The heartbeat of Christ’s mandate is for every believer to be involved in the task of sharing the gospel everywhere and at all times.

*“... if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way.”*

1 Peter 3:15 NLT

As believers, we have a very specific and clear job title: “ambassador.” The Bible says,

*“... we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.”*

2 Corinthians 5:20 ESV

An ambassador is an appointed diplomat sent by a country as its representative. It’s a high and honourable calling, given by a president, prime minister or king and laden with both privilege and responsibility. As Christ’s ambassadors, we represent God himself,

appointed for the special assignment of sharing the Good News of salvation with the unsaved.

The assignment of some ambassadors, such as Pete and Leah, entails them moving far from home to a foreign land to live among strangers.

For others, being an ambassador means staying right where God has strategically situated them. They are meant to represent Christ within their family circles, neighbourhoods, workplaces, schools, communities and countries. It is here that they are to lovingly impact the people around them by gently and respectfully sharing the hope that they have in God.

**Consider:** As an ambassador for Christ, where is your “world” and what does it look like? What does God expect of you in your role as an ambassador? Have you given any consideration to the possibility that God may want to lead you to represent him elsewhere in the world?

Regardless of where we may function as an “ambassador to the world,” we need to be ready to share the gospel at all times. To be effective ambassadors for Christ, our role includes the following:

1. We need to be praying.

*“Pete never taught a lesson without an immense amount of prayer and preparation.” (pg. 63)*

So what should we be praying for? In order to be an effective ambassador, we need to pray as the Apostle Paul did:

*“Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.”* Ephesians 6:19-20 NIV

2. We need to intentionally mingle with the unsaved.

*“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity...”*

Ephesians 5:15-16 NIV

Just as Pete and Leah made time for the Manjúis as they lived among them, so we also need to make time to be genuine friends with those we want to reach. This may mean stepping out of our comfort zone, sharing in what interests others, and having meals and coffees together. It may also mean listening to hours of “empty” conversation and being exposed, first-hand, to the spiritual darkness of lives and relationships that are without Christ.

As believers, we are to be salt and light in the world. But this can only happen if we are among the unsaved. This means that unbelievers need to have opportunity to observe our lives. If the choices we make, the words we speak and the activities we engage in appropriately represent Christ, it will help us make the most of every opportunity—creating occasions to share the Good News.

### 3. We need to be doing it.

*“It was this eternal soul of a human that God cared most about, that He wanted to save. And it was for the souls of the Manjúis that Pete and Leah had come to Santa Rosa, to tell them about God’s saving plan.” (pg. 62)*

Pete and Leah did it—they went to live among people with whom they wanted to share the gospel. Perhaps we will be like them, moving across the seas to live among those who have yet to hear. Or, perhaps we will be doing it right where we are today. It may be that God will bring the world to our doorstep. Opportunities for us may come in different ways and in different places. There may be sudden opportunities—times when the Lord brings people across our paths who are hungry for answers. Or, opportunities may occur

after a long period of building trust. But whether long or short, one thing is for certain: Giving the Bible's message to the unsaved is not meant to be a passing fad—it is a way of life. It's a lifelong lifestyle.

Even when we are determined to be ambassadors for Christ, things will not always be easy. Just as the Humphreys faced difficulties, even setbacks, so will we. Our challenges may never be quite like theirs. Nevertheless, we will face various kinds of hardships. They may come in the form of a demanding boss, a wayward child, busy schedules, physical limitations or fear.

*"Lord, help me," Pete prayed. "This is going to be tough." (pg. 77)*

Regardless of how large our mountains may loom, we can pray just as Pete prayed. It is encouraging to see how God removed the mountains one by one. He helped Pete, Leah and their fellow teammates to become effective ambassadors for him. God enabled them to bring the message of salvation to the Manjúi.

**Apply:** As an ambassador for Christ, how should you prepare yourself for your role? What training or preparation do you need? Think especially of how you can prepare yourself to be able to share the gospel when God places someone in your life. See Appendix IV for some training suggestions. Pray for God to bring people into your life, to arrange opportunities and times where you may bring good news to others. Pray for courage—and then do it!

# APPENDIX I

## MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE BIBLE'S MESSAGE

1. According to the Bible, who is Jesus?
2. The Bible states clearly that all people are sinners. The Bible describes an eternal consequence for sin. What is that consequence?
3. The Bible says that sinful man cannot live in the presence of a Holy God. This has two ramifications:
  - a. Everyone must personally pay the consequence of sin—eternal separation from God.
  - b. Even if the consequence for sin was removed, man is not perfect. Only perfect people can live with a perfect God.

What did Jesus do to deal with both of these problems?

4. How can we be acceptable to God? Must we “do” something?
5. Why did Jesus have to die?
6. Do you believe that when Jesus was dying on the cross, he was dying in YOUR place for your sin, as your substitute, paying the sin-debt YOU should have had to pay?
7. Has God clothed you in his righteousness?
8. Why did you answer question #7 the way you did?
9. Based on what you understand of the Bible, if you were to die tonight, where would you spend eternity?
  - Heaven?
  - Hell/The Lake of Fire?
  - Not sure?
10. Why did you answer question #9 the way you did?

**MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE BIBLE'S MESSAGE** (*Sample Answers*)

The sample answers below capture key thoughts that are important to each question. Significant points are underlined.

**1. According to the Bible, who is Jesus?**

Jesus is God. He is also known as the Son of God who came to earth as a man. He is fully God and fully man. Jesus is not just a prophet, good man or godly teacher.

(References: John 10:30, John 8:58, John 1:1 compared to 1:14, Isaiah 9:6, Titus 2:13)

**2. The Bible states clearly that all people are sinners. The Bible describes an eternal consequence for sin. What is that consequence?**

God created man perfect, to have friendship with him. Sin broke that friendship. As a result, sinful man can no longer be in God's presence. The consequence of sin is death, not just physical death, but eternal separation from God in Hell.

(References: Romans 6:23, Isaiah 59:2)

**3. The Bible says that sinful man cannot live in the presence of a Holy God. This has two ramifications:**

- a. **Everyone must personally pay the consequence of sin—eternal separation from God.**
- b. **Even if the consequence for sin was removed, man is not perfect. Only perfect people can live with a perfect God.**

**What did Jesus do to deal with both of these problems?**

Man escaped the death-consequence when Jesus died in man's place as a substitute. Jesus was fully able and willing to pay for man's sin because, being perfect, he did not have his own sin-debt.



God also provided man with his own perfection through Jesus. Man is declared righteous or perfect in God's eyes. No longer does God see man's sin, but rather, he sees man clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

This means that man can be reunited with the perfect God. After physical death, man will live an eternity in God's presence as his friend.

(References: 2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 4:25)

#### 4. How can we be acceptable to God? Must we "do" something?

To be acceptable to God, we need to believe that Jesus is God; that he died for our sins and was raised back to life.

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

John 3:16 ESV

Jesus said this. Do we believe it? Are we willing to take him at his word? (John 4:50) If we do, then the verse says we have eternal life.

There is nothing that we can "do" in and of ourselves. Our acceptance by God is not a reward for the good we have done. Rather, it is a gift from God, borne out of his grace toward us.

(References: Acts 16:31, Romans 3:21-22, Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 6:23)

#### 5. Why did Jesus have to die?

Because God is just, all sin requires punishment. Because God is loving, he had no desire to punish us. Jesus' substitutionary death allowed God to punish sin without punishing us.

(References: John 3:16-17, 2 Samuel 14:14, Leviticus 17:11, Hebrews 9:22)

6. **Do you believe that when Jesus was dying on the cross, he was dying in YOUR place for your sin, as your substitute, paying the sin-debt YOU should have had to pay?**

Yes, I believe it applies to me personally.

7. **Has God clothed you in his righteousness?**

Yes.

8. **Why did you answer question #7 the way you did?**

The Bible says that a man is justified by faith, so that those who trust in Jesus can be confident that when God sees them, he no longer sees their sin but rather sees them clothed in his perfect righteousness. I trust in Jesus.

(References: Romans 3:28, Philippians 3:9)

9. **Based on what you understand of the Bible, if you were to die tonight, where would you spend eternity?**

- **Heaven?**
- **Hell/The Lake of Fire?**
- **Not sure?**

Heaven, for sure.

10. **Why did you answer question #9 the way you did?**

The Bible assures us that if we believe in Jesus, we will have eternal life. He has promised, and I believe Him.

(References: 1 John 5:11-13, John 10:28-29)

# APPENDIX II

## *True or False?*

Read each statement and determine in what way there has been a mixing of the Bible with a different belief system. See if you can identify verses in the Bible to clarify these misconceptions.

1. Love means being tolerant, accepting and non-judgmental.
2. God helps those who help themselves.
3. God is okay with me worshipping him in whatever way I am used to, whatever way I like, as long as I know I am focused on Him.
4. Horoscopes are just another way of God revealing the future to me.
5. Since God loves us, and we are the King's children, he will give us what we ask. He has promised.
6. The most important thing in life is that we are happy.
7. It is wrong to say anything that might offend people.
8. Just do what you feel is right. Your instinct will agree with the Bible.
9. When we meditate we should cleanse our mind of all thoughts. It is helpful if we repeat a Bible word over and over again.
10. Centering prayer, yoga, beads, incense, mantras—all may have ancient roots in the mystic religions, but if I just think about the God of the Bible, then they are harmless, even beneficial.

# APPENDIX III

## A “BE READY” AMBASSADOR

Evangelism tools are not as common as one would think. Gospel tracts, which at one time were the bread and butter among outreach tools, often contain too little information to accurately explain the gospel in our multicultural, biblically illiterate world.

In that light, GoodSeed International has focused its attention on equipping believers with tools and training similar to what was used by the Humphreys in Santa Rosa. It is the goal of GoodSeed to help every believer make evangelism a lifelong lifestyle. Below are tried and tested resources to help a believer become an effective ambassador for Christ.

**Step 1.** Acquaint yourself with tools that present the gospel clearly. See the list of books in Appendix IV.

**Step 2.** Educate yourself on how God carefully unfolded the gospel narrative in the context of the whole Bible. This is the way the Manjús were taught. Resources include the Ambassador Series.

What’s in a Name DVD

Flying Truth in Formation DVD

Unlocking the Biblical Worldview DVD

And Beginning with Moses



**Step 3.** Be ready to “Give Away” the gospel at any time, using a tool that explains the Good News. To do this:

1. Identify your “personal distribution points.” These are places where you might hand out a gospel tool. They may be your home, car, or office. Keep some in your workbag.

2. Prepare a “Be Ready” box stocked with resources that would be appropriate for the type of people you are most likely to meet. Your box might include translations, audiobooks, videobooks and even tools for children.



3. Consider likely scenarios you may encounter and rehearse the words to use. For instance, you might say to a waitress at the restaurant, *“Thank you so much for taking care of me today. I’d like to give you a book. It’s about the Bible and it explains it from A to Z without twisting your arm. It really helped me understand what the Bible is all about and I’d like you to have this copy.”* (If you come from a culture where it is appropriate to give a “tip,” make sure you give a generous tip. Do not give the book in place of a tip.)

Or perhaps you find yourself talking with a friend about religion, karma or fate. You could say, *“You know, we were talking about religion (karma, etc.). I’ve found a book that helped me understand things like that better. It’s a book about the Bible and what it has to say about life. I’d like to give it to you. I think you’d enjoy reading it.”*

**Step 4.** Be ready to “Guide a Course” such as the “Worldview Rethink” curriculum. This may seem a little daunting, but if we are prepared, it seems God leads us into situations where a family member, close friend or an acquaintance may ask about the big questions in life: ones that pertain to life, death, and life after death. “Worldview Rethink” is easy to use, requires minimal preparation and has been very well received for its objectivity. Whether you prefer to read or watch, you are able to guide a person through this course.



# APPENDIX IV

## RESOURCES TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS

The following resources share the same lesson architecture that was used among the Manjuús. They begin with an introduction to the Creator as he creates and then progress chronologically through key Old and New Testament stories to the Ascension of Christ. In the process, they provide the context necessary to understand who Jesus is and what he accomplished on the cross.

The tools are worldview-sensitive, addressing questions typically asked by those of a particular belief system.

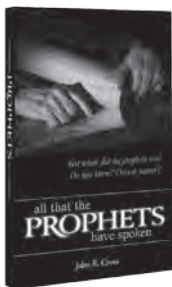


### Christianized Worldview

#### The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus

For those influenced by Christianity—whether Protestant, Catholic or Orthodox.

- **To Give Away:** available in Standard Print, Large Print, as an Interactive Edition (with a DVD), AudioBook, VideoBook (6 DVDs) and in multiple translations.
- **To Guide a Course:** available with Leader's Guide, Training DVDs, WorkBook, Visual Aids and Promotional Tools. Go on our website or contact us about the "Worldview Rethink Curriculum."

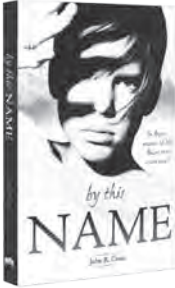


### Islamic Worldview

#### All that the Prophets have Spoken

For those influenced by Islam. This book is 25% different than *The Stranger*.

- Available in Standard Print, with WorkBook and in multiple translations.



## Eastern Worldview

### By This Name

For those influenced by polytheism, pantheism, atheism, agnosticism or animism. Ideal for a post-modern, post-Christian, secular society. This book is 60% different than *The Stranger*.

- Available in Standard Print, with WorkBook and in multiple translations.



## Children's Worldview

### The Lamb

Fully illustrated.

For children—ages 4 and up.

- Available as a PictureBook with CD, as an AudioBook, DVD, PowerPoint, and in multiple translations.

**Resources to “Give Away” or to “Guide a Course” are continually being developed. To find out more on these and other resources, as well as ideas and suggestions on how to use them, visit [www.goodseed.com](http://www.goodseed.com).**

**GoodSeed®** is a not-for-profit organization that exists for the purpose of clearly communicating the contents of this book in this language and others. We invite you to contact us if you are interested in ongoing projects or translations.

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