

Session 3 Wednesday Night Gym By Marilyn Laszlo

Speaker 1:

Two, actually. "Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs. But I, with a song of Thanksgiving, will sacrifice to You. What I have vowed, I will make good, for salvation comes from the Lord."

Marilyn Laszlo:

I would like to welcome our speaker for tonight, Marilyn Laszlo. She grew up on a farm in Indiana, and she was called to Papua New Guinea to be a missionary, where she's now worked with Wycliffe for 34 years. And she translated the Bible into one of the languages of Papua New Guinea. And she told me before the session that she has two loves, and one is sports. She's a sports fanatic, and she also likes convertibles. So if you have a convertible, watch it closely the next few days and make sure you put your crook lock on. And please welcome with me tonight our speaker, Marilyn Laszlo.

Convertibles and the missionary image just doesn't really go together. I don't think it's fair, but that's the image that we have. So I'll have to wait till I get to heaven to get my convertible, I guess. I just want to thank the student body for inviting me. And you certainly have done an excellent, excellent job in this conference. It's well organized. I've been to a lot of college missions conferences, and this is certainly one of the very best, and I've been here before. It's always a--just fun place to be. To be on the college campus is one of my favorite things.

I've enjoyed the music. I don't know who that drummer was. Were you watching that drummer? I don't know how old that is [applause] but I don't know where it went. But also this thing about drummers, it's kind of a man's thing, but I don't know why about that either. But I would really love to play drums, and if anybody would teach me, that young kid, he's absolutely great. So, I appreciate the music.

It was in 1965 that I resigned from my teaching position. I was teaching history and physical education in high school for five years and decided to follow my dreams that I had as a very young girl. My grandparents came from Hungary and settled in northern Indiana, and we're farmers. And there's four girls in our family, and I'm the oldest of four girls. So I had to help my dad a lot with the farming and help my grandfather. He taught me how to milk cows like this. And I remember walking behind a single bodied plow behind a horse, holding my grandfather's hand, and just walking up and down the fields. And we're still in the same house that my dad built when I was born. And so it's a very simple background.

The speaker mentioned the movie this morning about the Hoosiers. Well, that's my background. That movie about the basketball team. And my graduating class was 13 in high school. And so it's the same, basically. The community hasn't changed that much. My grandparents never did learn English. I had to learn Hungarian. And my parents sent us to this small country church. It's a mile and a half down the road. We walked to church. It was a one room schoolroom building where my dad went to first grade to learn English. And isn't it--when I think about my roots, and I will never forget my roots, it's a very simple beginning--to think that I went to this church, this

little country church that had no more than 35 members, sat in the front pew when I was five years old and accepted Jesus in the same building that my dad went to first grade.

And I had a desire ever since I was very, very little, to be a missionary. It was a dream. And I remember when I was in junior high, I was driving the tractor for my dad and I had just heard a missionary to Russia speak at our little church. And I was on the tractor. And I loved being out in the field, nature. I just always felt so close to God. And I tell parents and I'm in churches and grandparents, I listen, never ever underestimate the power of the word of God on a little child's heart, because that's where it started with me.

And even though I've been with Wycliffe for 34 years, I still encourage Wycliffe to not forget that age level. And I'm encouraging them to write books for little children, and I like to take them to church because that is an important age. But I was out on the tractor and I was singing. I was talking to God. And I remember this prayer that I prayed. I said, "You know, Lord, I wonder when I grew up and I'm a big girl, if I could ever be a missionary and tell people about Jesus who have never heard." Well, that was probably kind of an innocent, immature, childlike prayer, but God never forgot it. And it was sincere, and that's what counts. It was sincere.

And of course, I went on to college and then I taught school. And I remember it was my second year of teaching and I love to sing. I love music. And I was singing in the choir in our little church, and I said to the--you know, I was kind of a rascal. I had a lot of energy. I didn't do really bad, bad things, but I was always talking and disturbing, and they were always having to discipline me. And it was no different in the choir. I was always talking and carrying on. Anyway, I was talking to the woman next to me and I said, "You know, Alfreda, this is going to

be my last year of teaching. I'm going to resign, and I'm going to be a missionary." But she looks at me and she says, "Marilyn, Marilyn, that is the wildest, craziest thing that I have ever heard. First of all, you're not the missionary type." "Well, maybe they won't notice."

Well I--you know, I don't know what the missionary type is. I'm sure I'm not the missionary type. Don't ever do that when you have children. And maybe some of you here do have children. Some of you are married. That had such an impact on my life. It was three years later. And so when I'm on college campuses or when I'm in churches, my encouragement to you is follow your dreams. What is down there? Don't try to be like me or some hero or somebody else out there. Be you, because you are very special to God. You're not all going to be going across the ocean to be a missionary.

I don't know what's down in there, but how does the Holy Spirit guide us? We're going to talk about that in a little while. How do you know that you're supposed to be here at Biola? And we'll talk about that. What's down there? It's interesting that there are four girls in our family and I'm the oldest. We are all very different. Same mother, same father, but all different personalities. All our physical features are similar. You can tell we're related. And yet we're all so different in our personality, different gifts. And it says in Jeremiah, "Before you were ever conceived in your mother's womb, I knew you. I knew your name, and before you were ever born, I set you apart."

That's an awesome thought to think that we've all been set apart and appointed. And then it goes on to Jeremiah says, "I know the plans I have for you, saith the Lord. Plans to prosper you, not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." And even as a very young girl, I thought, "Wow,

I mean, that's a pretty good deal." What happens along the way? Then God says, I know the plans. He has the blueprint of our life. What happens along the way? We make poor choices.

And we've all done it. Poor choices in our relationships, our friends, our boyfriends and our girlfriends, our marriages, our jobs. Poor choices. Well, praise God. We talk about the grace of God. Even though we've all made poor choices, God never gives up on us. Be you and trust God with those dreams. Often when I sign my book, I say, "Trust Jesus and follow your dreams." Well, three years later, I decided, I'm going to trust Jesus. I'm going to follow my dreams. Well, I was led to Wycliffe Bible translators, and I didn't know a whole lot about Wycliffe. Actually, I was led to Wycliffe through Brochures.

I knew that they went to areas of the world where languages didn't have the Bible in their own language. And I could hardly, hardly imagine that as a little girl, I carried a little white Bible with me ever since I was five years old. And I could hardly wait to the day that I could read it. And then when I heard that there were some languages in the world that didn't have the word of God, and if they were going to learn anything about God or anything about Jesus, they'd have to do it through the white man's language or through a foreign language, a national language.

And so I prepared to go and get the training because in some of the areas that we work in, some of these languages are unwritten. I mean, there's no alphabet. In fact, when I went to Papua New Guinea, which I was led to, it was a focus that year in 1965. The people that I went to work with had no idea that the words that they spoke could also be written on a piece of paper. They didn't know that was possible. Now, in Papua New Guinea, that's just one half of the island.

The other side of the [foreign language], there's about 900 and some different language families, thousands of dialects. And so we're trained as linguists, we're trained as anthropologists. We get a lot of cultural anthropology. And then we have three months of intensive field training to prepare. And I'll tell you, without the training, I wouldn't have been able to do this. And since I'm single, I have never been married. I work with another. So I started with another single woman. Actually, right now I'm working with my sister. She just came home from New Guinea. But out of the 6,000 or more members that we have in Wycliffe, most of them are young married couples. But there's a large percentage that's single.

I'm not sure what the percentage is, but I know when I've got to Papua New Guinea, this island just north of Australia, Australia is another country. There was about 400 of us there in 1967. And out of those 400 members in Wycliffe, I remember, I think there were about 34 somewhere, 35 single women. Three single men. Now, what, you know, what's going on here? It's still the same today. And I don't care what mission organization you talk to, and you can go and talk to all those where they have all their displays and you can talk to them. That is still true straight across the board in missions. And I try to think about that.

I tell people, I was just at Moody and I had a chance to talk in the men's dorm as well as the woman's dorm. And it's a very predictable question on the college campus. "How do you cope with this thing of being single?" And so I'm going to address that right now, and I want to talk about this percentage of single women versus single men. And I tried to think about just what goes on here. Well, I think about those three single men that were there in New Guinea. I want to tell you something. They didn't last very long. And when some of these young men come up to

me and say, "Well, you know, Ms. Laszlo, I'd really love to be a missionary, but I don't want to go single." I said, "Well, that's real wise." I said, "Except the fact that if you really want to find, some of the best women are on the mission field. And I can guarantee you, you won't be single more than a couple of months if you go to the mission fields, because that's where--some of the best women you're going to find."

So why is this? Well, first of all, men can't do it. Just as simple as that. No, no, really. I remember in New Guinea with these single men that were out there in these isolated areas. I mean, first of all, they become lonely very fast. The other thing is they don't take care of themselves. I mean, they don't cook rice, they don't eat right and pretty soon they're not taking a shower, they're not taking a bath. They're letting the hair grow. They get sick. And when they get sick, they're like little babies. They come into our mission station.

I mean, they've lost weight. They look pathetic. I want to tell you something. This is scriptural. Well, you all know the story. It's in Genesis. Remember Genesis? The story right at the very beginning when God created man, I imagined that Adam was single about 1 hour. God could see that this was not working. That's a very loose translation of the Hebrew. Well, you know, it is a very legitimate and valid question. A lot of single women that will come up to me, and I've had some even here in the cabin say, well, as far as I really do want to be a missionary, but I really don't want to go single. And I say, don't.

I think one of the most important things is that this has got to be settled with God. This has got to be settled with God. God has ordained marriage. But I think being single is really a very special

calling because when people ask me why I haven't been married, that's why I have addressed it in this book, "Mission Possible." It's in chapter 3, "Missions versus Marriage." The men that I dated, all the way through--I started with--in my age, we started very young, junior high. And we wore the guy's ring if he had a ring, and his jacket and things like that.

And there were three men that I was still dating. They were all athletes and always at college. And I assumed that I was going to get married. And I got very serious. And in fact, I would get too serious that I would allow the fellow to get too serious. Because I had the idea that I'm going to change him. He's going to want to go to the mission field because he wants to marry me. And then he had the idea that he was going to change me. And that doesn't work. And I get to a point where I'm ready to take that step and become married. And I couldn't give up my calling. I just couldn't give it up.

And a real sad thing here is that often in my meetings, I had women come up to me and say, "You know, Marilyn. I know that God called me to be a missionary when I was very young." But I do tell women that going to college is certainly a good place to meet someone. Become married. Because basically you're all Christians and you're maybe heading in kind of the similar direction. But certainly when it comes to foreign missions, that's a big step. And it is a calling. Just like being a teacher is a calling or being an engineer is a calling, but don't think you're going to change that person.

I've never been sorry. I have never been sorry. And so that's why I did write about it in the book. It was very difficult to write. Wycliffe wanted me to write about the predictable questions on the

college campus. These are predictable questions. How do you cope with being single? And so I decided to write about my love life. Now, this is very difficult because there's three of these men are still in my home town, and I run into them, and I'm not about to put them in this book. So I wrote about the one that died.

It's interesting, when I was sharing this talk at Moody at Founders Week, and I got a letter just two days ago before I came out here to California. It was from a single man that actually heard the talk on the radio. I had the letter with me, and he says, "You know, Ms. Laszlo, you were absolutely right. We cannot handle it on mission field alone. And he says, I do want to be a missionary, but I do want to be married before I go." Well, I'm just going to write back to him. I said, "Go, you can go because you won't be married very long because there's many single women out on the mission field."

Now, the percentage of a woman finding someone is very slim. That's why I say you have to deal with that with God and have to have peace about it. Some women go, "I'm going single no matter--no matter what." And then they're miserable, totally miserable, and they make a whole lot of other people miserable. So you do have--that is a very, very difficult position, but you do have to have God's peace before you go.

The second predictable question that I was asked to write about, that you hear on the college campus, "How did you know? How did you know that you were supposed to be a missionary? How did you know that you were supposed to go with Wycliffe Bible translators out of all these hundreds of mission organizations? How did you know that you were supposed to go to Papua

New Guinea out of all the countries in the world? And how did you know that you were supposed to go up this river 500 miles to work in this little village called Hauna?" What was very clear, and we can know. But I'm going to say something, my friends. You will never know until you take a step. I mean, God can't close the door. He can't open the door until you move. And even if you're moving in the wrong direction, just move.

Well, I was moving when I finally resigned from my teaching position. I didn't know what mission organization to go with, so my pastor helped me. And so I wrote to five different mission boards. The only two that I can remember is Wycliffe and Team. And I remember I was on my way to prayer meeting, and I got out of my car. I was on the corner there where there was the mailbox, and I had these five letters. I got out of the car and I stood in front of that mailbox and I went, "Oh, my goodness, what am I doing? I mean, what am I doing, resigning from my teaching position? I mean, where am I going when Jesus says, 'Come and follow me'? I mean, where are we going?" The Lord isn't going to tell you where you're going until you take the first step.

He didn't tell Abraham until he started moving. What do I have to lose by dropping those five letters in that mailbox? I want to be a missionary. I don't know how to go about doing this. Take a step. I knew once I dropped them in there, there was no way I was going to get my hand and then get them back out. I dropped them in there.

Wycliffe was the very first to answer my letter. And like I said, I didn't know a whole lot about Wycliffe. And so then I took the next step and the next step, and I finally got down to the

University of Oklahoma, where we were given the linguistic training. And what Wycliffe has usually did was bring all the translators home from South America or Mexico to teach the course. And it's a three month course during June, July and August. I was there with about 300 others. And during the middle of the summer, and the reason I can remember, it was in July, it was near my birthday, which is July 20, they gave us an application paper. Another step.

Now, Wycliffe doesn't really tell you where to go. They want you to be led by the Holy Spirit, so they give you a whole bunch of priorities. And that summer, the priorities had kind of changed because I was planning to go to Mexico. In fact, I had told all my physed classes, I told all my history classes, I told my church, my family, everybody, "I'm going to be a Bible translator and I'm going to Mexico." Because I knew Mexico wasn't very far. But that summer, the focus had changed. It was now the South Pacific. South Pacific, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, the Philippines. You know, that's about 12,000 mile away. You can't go any further without coming around the other side.

And so I'm praying with everybody else there at Norman, Oklahoma, taking the linguistic course. And the Lord pressed on the hearts of these people, telling them to go to New Guinea where all these languages are, but praise God, I know where I'm going. I'm going to Mexico. So when they gave us the application paper on the application, the very first question was, "Where do you feel God is calling you?" Now, I didn't hesitate a second. First choice: Mexico. Second choice: Peru. Third choice: Columbia.

Now, what happened? How do you know when you are going in the wrong direction? Well, one thing happens is that all of a sudden you don't have peace. You got a nervous stomach, you get a headache, you can't sleep, you can't eat. You know what we do? We take Tylenol. That's exactly what we do. So we can relax and just deal with this. We take Tylenol. And when you stop and really stop and think about how the Holy Spirit leads us, well, that's exactly how He does it. In a very kind of quiet way. He's dealing with our stomachs, our heads. We can't sleep.

Well, being stubborn like I am, I remember was on a Friday. Oh no, it was on a Thursday. And so wake up, ask us to pray about this and hand these papers in on Monday. So Friday morning comes. I was working in the kitchen, I was doing the juice and stuff. I decided, I'm cutting all my classes, I don't want to be there. I felt like that just cutting all your classes, you don't want to talk to anybody. And I had this application paper. I got my Bible, I went up to my dorm and got my laundry, threw my laundry bag over my shoulder. I didn't want to talk to anyone. I was going to go to the laundromat to wash clothes.

Well, Friday, it was full and noisy. I couldn't handle this. I threw my bag over my shoulder, so I walked out on the sidewalk on campus. I don't know if you've ever been to the University of Oklahoma, but right in the center of the campus is the football stadium. I don't know if that talks about their focus, but anyway, those Oklahoma Sooners, they've always been a great football team. Well, nothing's happening during June, July and August. In fact, Wycliffe kind of took over the whole campus during that time.

And so I was walking by the stadium and the gate was open just a bit and I kind of pulled the gate open, went inside, nobody. Sixty thousand empty bleachers. I said, this is great. And so I remember going up to the top bleacher and opening my Bible and reminding God of dealing with this thing of Mexico versus New Guinea. Mexico versus New Guinea. There are 200 and some languages in Mexico that needed the Bible. I reminded God I gave up my paycheck, my teaching position, I gave up my apartment.

And I just had this brand new car I bought. Now I'm going to give my age away. It was a 1962 Galaxy XL, white convertible. Oh, man, if there's going to be white convertibles in heaven, that's okay. And God reminded me as I was reading Jeremiah and some of my familiar verses. And God reminded me, "Marilyn, I don't need your paycheck and I don't need your apartment, and I certainly don't need that white convertible. I need you to be obedient."

Well, I remember reading and crying and arguing and trying to get this piece and looking at that application paper in those first. "Where do you feel God is calling you?" Well, I lay down on the top bleacher up there in the hot Oklahoma sun, fell asleep. And then by the time I woke up, it was close to lunchtime and I was hungry. I was thirsty in that hot sun. I decided I still didn't want to go back to classes. I decided to cut all my classes and just continue on with this prayer thing.

And I decided to get a hamburger. And there was a hamburger stand across the street. So I came down all those beaches to go out and get a hamburger, come back in. Well, the gate was locked. The gate was locked. Well, it was noon, so I'll wait till they come back, unlock the gate. 01:00, 02:00, 03:00, 04:00, 05:00, they weren't coming. Well, I looked at that fence, 12ft high, three

rows of bob wire coming out towards you. I went all the way around that stadium. What they were doing, they were kind of remodeling the stadium. And I was getting very thirsty.

I was becoming dehydrated being out in the sun, looking for something to drink. All the water faucets had been removed, they were remodeling this no water. And so it looked like I was going to be there for a night. But while I went clear to the top bleach is that I could see all my colleagues going off in the distance to the dining room. And so I was up there waving and yelling and waving, and somebody waved back to me. That was the end of that.

Well, I will just say this. I was locked in this football stadium for two days and a night without food or water. It's the largest bedroom I've ever slept in. And it was only until I finally, out of desperation, I thought, I'm going to be a martyr here in the football stadium before I ever get to the [inaudible]. Because I know if they didn't come on Saturday, they weren't coming on Sunday, and they wouldn't be coming until Monday. But then they would find me dead on the 50 yard line. So until I gave up, and this is exactly what I did, I went out on that 50 yard line and I fell to my knees. I said, "Lord, I'll go anywhere, anywhere you want me to go. Just get me out of this place."

Now, if you want to know how I got out, you have to get the book. Well, I don't have time. I really don't have time. Anyway. When people ask me, oh, that is really mean. Oh, I know. Go ahead. When people ask me, how did you know? I tell them, it was very clear. Even though I was going in the wrong direction, at least I was moving. When I came back home in my first furlough, and we had to take another semester of linguistics during our furlough time.

And I remember being out there on the campus of the University of Oklahoma, and I went out on that football stadium. It was the same, during the same month, June, July and August. This time I kept my eye on the gate, and I stood on that 50 yard line and said, "Thank you, Jesus. Thank you for leaving me to Papua New Guinea." Because, my friends, God never makes mistakes with our lives. And so I have spent 23 years.

And it's interesting that these people that I went to work with in New Guinea, the Sepik Iwam tribe, had never seen paper. We were the first two white women to live among them. Now, as I get ready to share my story, I just want to say this. This is my story. It was back in 1967 that it began. The world has changed. There's not a whole lot of people that are monolingual anymore. These people were monolingual. They wore very little clothing. We were the first two white women to live among them. New Guinea has a few of those people left, but most of the world has changed. Most people have been reached.

So I just wanted to address that, because even though there are some like that still left in Papua New Guinea, most of the world are bilingual. Some of them even have churches. They don't have the word of God in their own language. One of the things I'd like to encourage you to do I'm going to hold this up. This is our Wycliffe magazine. It comes out quarterly. There's going to be three people back there after the end, after I finish. And there's one part in here. This is a very good issue. It's our spring issue. And there's one section here that is entitled: "What in the world is going on?"

Reports from five areas of the world provide an inside glimpse into the changing work and the global outreach of Bible translation. We have a whole different approach in this time and day of reaching these people that don't have the word of God in their own language. And I think you talked about these five areas: Asia, the Pacific, Africa, the Americas, and Eurasia. You'll find it's very interesting to pick this up. It's very attractive. It's well done. And there'll be three people out there than anyone that's interested in helping people get the word of God in their own language, not necessarily the translator. We need all kinds of computer people and so forth.

So we got to New Guinea. My partner and I were asked to consider the Sepik River area, which is the largest river in New Guinea. There were a lot of restricted areas during that time. Australia was controlling New Guinea. A lot of fighting during the Second World War. There were areas that we missionaries were not allowed to go to. So we can only go to the areas that Australia had patrol. Now, again, that's how God guides the steers and gets you right where He wants you.

And so Wycliffe wanted us to consider the Sepik River area. There wasn't any mission work being done there. But they didn't want two single girls more than one day's canoe ride from the nearest airstrip. Well, Australia had given us a rough penciled map, and on that rough penciled map were all the airstrips from Second World War. There were only two along the river. One was called Ambunti. We circled it. Now, not all the villages were even on the map. They were still mapping out Papua New Guinea.

But there was one village that looked like it was in the center of that whole tribe called Hauna. H-A-U-N-A. We circled it. Let me pray that God would help us to find that village. Well, we

have our own planes and pilots, and we got into our single engine 6 airplane, flew over the jungles of Papua New Guinea, and land on this little grass airstrip. But from there, the best that we could see, we have over 100 and something miles yet to reach this village, Hauna. Now, the only way we could get there was by dugout canoe. So we bought a 40 foot dugout canoe from the natives there at the airstrip, and we practiced.

Now, a 40 foot dugout canoe is long. And what we decided to do, we decided to modify our dugout canoe. We're going to modify the back end, and we hung a 25 HP motor in the back of our dugout canoe. We were not paddling all the way up river. Now, we nearly blew the natives away there at the airstrip because they had never seen a dugout canoe go 20 miles an hour. Wow, the speed. Well, we practiced, and then we loaded the canoe, and we headed up rivers. And I'm going to move very fast here because the time is going.

But how do you go about learning an unwritten language? Well, we learn in international phonetic system. We're not sure what we're going to hear. Our first six months goal is we got to figure out the alphabet. That's interesting. And this is an area where it really displays or portrays the supremacy of God. Anything that God creates has order. His system has structure, and rules and patterns. There's no such thing as a gibberish language. And so when we started to learn this language and I know most of you could do this, because first of all, figuring out the alphabet, we learned to put a symbol through every style in the vocal chords you're capable of making.

Now, a lot of you have had the linguistic course here, and without that, we'd be lost. So the training is important, but it's very doable. That's why the book is called "Mission Possible:

Letting God Work through You." Franklin Graham wrote the forward of this book. It's interesting. Franklin Graham, he's a good friend of mine. We both were at Founders, and we were checking in the hotel together. And Frank says, what are we doing here? People like us? I said, Well, Franklin, you're riding on your dad's name and your good looks. I don't know what I'm riding on. I'm just a Hoosier farm girl.

But the interesting thing, Franklin Graham has been to our village, he and his wife, and it's a long trip. It's all day. And he said, never ever again. He says, I will support you, I will pray for you, but I'm never going back there again. And so when he writes the Forward, he says, an impossible task. I'm telling you, the men can't do it. They can't do it. Anyway, see if you can do this. I remember going through the village with my notebook, my banana leaf, my thorn.

The very first word I got, I wanted to get the word for 'house.' And so I'm banging on the house. I'm banging on the house. And I keep saying this in English, 'house.' It gives the idea what I wanted. So they didn't even know what we were, let alone what we were trying to do. And I'm banging on the house. Anyway, they finally said this. [Foreign language] 'House.' Wow. I mean, my friends, you realize that I had just written the first word in that language that had ever been written since the Tower of Babel when all the languages and cultures and nations of the world were created.

Now, keeping in mind, as a Bible translator, I've given them the word of God in their own language. And I've got one word in my dictionary. I have a long way to go. And I remember walking through the village and gathering words and trying to figure out this alphabet and the

grammatical structure of the language. And this old man, Nokiyin, called me. [Foreign language] "Marilyn, come here, I want to ask you something." He said, [foreign language] "Every day, every day I see you walking through the village. What is it? What is it that you're carving on that banana leave every day with that thorn?" But, you know, we've been there six months, I thought by now they knew what we were doing.

And I looked at this old man, Nokiyin, and I said [foreign language] "I'm carving your talk." "My talk? You mean the words that are coming out of my mouth? You're carving on the banana leaf like the white man's talk?" You know, they had the idea that only the white man's talk could be carved. That was the white man's power. I said, no. I said, "You know, Nokiyin, God has created all the languages of the world and God has sent me here to give you all of God's carving in your language."

Well, I didn't know the language very well yet. Of course, he didn't really quite understand everything I was saying. But you know what, it was very early in our language learning that we discovered the word for 'supreme being.' And I have talked to colleagues all around the world who are working in over a thousand languages. And, you know, other mission organizations that are doing a lot of the same thing that we're doing, New Tribes Mission, they're doing a great work.

And Pioneer Bible and the Lutheran Bible Translators and some of the Baptist organizations are helping this. We're the largest, but there's a whole lot of people doing this. And I discovered that every single language has a word for 'supreme being.' Now, isn't that interesting? And our word

for Supreme Being is [foreign language], one of which means "the Big Father Creator." And I want to tell you, my friends, when these people started to talk to God, started to become Christians and started to pray, they say, [foreign language] "Oh, Papa, Papa, show us the road."

This old man was so excited that he decided to adopt us as his daughters and he became our village father. And he had come. They only wore gourds and vines and bones through their nose, didn't have a lot of clothes. And it was this to this man that we figured out the alphabet. Now, once you figure out the alphabet and the grammatical structure, then it's time for translation. Now, in our situation, it took four or five years to get to that place. In Africa where you're dealing with very educated people and even South America now, and in other areas of the world, some of these alphabet are already developed and they're written. And basically we need to translate the Bible.

But in this case, this is where we're starting. It took us that long. Now, how do you find words like justification, sanctification, salvation? I mean, how many times have you used those words today in your everyday vocabulary? Well, they're not using them either. So how do we find these words? Through unusual stories. One word that took us about seven years to find was the word for 'soul.' I mean, how do you point to it? How do you act it out? Eternal life. That which lives on when we die.

And so we get it through these unusual stories that we have the people tell on the tape recorder. I mean, that's how we found a word for salvation. Somebody nearly drowned and I had them tell the story on the tape recorder. And you're going to get some different vocabulary. Our word for

salvation is very interesting. Basically, it means the 'Supreme Being.' [Foreign language] the Big Father Creator throws out his fishing net and rescues us from destruction. Very colorful. Well, this word for 'soul.'

Well, I was working with 14 young boys. And they're gatherers and hunters. So every day they go out and gather and hunt for their food. Well, as young boys, you don't go very deep in the jungle because of the wild boar. In fact, if you go boar hunting, you go with 20 to 40 men. What they do is they take their dogs with them and the dogs kind of round up the pigs. And these men all have their spears. And when the dog rounds up the pig, these men also throw their spears and then they all climb a tree. Until the pig, you know. So you just don't go wild boar hunting as a young boy by herself.

So Ronnie [foreign language], one of my main translators, I guess he was about twelve years old by now. Anyway, he was going to go out and find something to eat. So he had his little bow and arrow, he had a spear, he had his dog, and he was going to paddle out past the lake, out to the jungle area, parked his canoe and he would kind of go around the edge, shoot some birds and maybe some tree animals, possum or something like that. Anyway, the dog started to chase a wild boar.

And so then Ronnie was chasing the dog, [foreign language] and deeper and deeper and deeper into the jungle until they were lost. Now, in the 23 years that I've been in the village, nobody's ever gotten lost. That's a way of life. If they get confused, they're not sure which direction to go, they climb the tall trees to see where the river is, and then they head towards the river. They were

lost. Ronnie, having asked Jesus into his life and being one of my translators, they hadn't learned how to read or write yet. So he'd sit alone and say, [foreign language] "Oh, Papa, I lost the road. Show me the road."

Well, back in the village, they keep very close tab of everybody in that village. Very close social structure. And so they knew that Ronnie [foreign language] and had not returned. And now the sun was getting ready to go down. Ronnie would climb a tall tree and he'd plead with Papa God. And back in the village they started to beat the drums. They beat the drums. They beat the drums. And they had these big shell things that they blow, and they were blowing the shells. And now the sun is getting ready to set and Ronnie [foreign language] climbed the tallest tree in desperation just before the sun went down. They said, [foreign language] "Papa, show me the road." [Foreign language] "Papa. Papa. I don't want to lose my name. I don't want to lose my name."

Back in the village, the wailing started after the sun went down because they just felt, well, that's the end. That's the end of Ronnie [foreign language]. And he'll never survive. That boy will never survive. The drum will through the night. I was sick. The drums was beat all night long. The wailing was all night long. Well, Ronnie knew how to start a fire without matches. And he kept a fire going, sat down, leaned up against the tree with his dog and just kept praying. And then the next morning, the drums are still beating, the wailing is going on. Two of the other translators decided to go out and try to find Ronnie's canoe. And they found the canoe. They had some drums with--a drum with them, and they had this shell. And they had this jungle yell.

And Ronnie yelled and they made contact. We found Ronnie. Came in. I had to put the story on the tape recorder, my friends. It was the most exciting story that I have ever heard as far as the testimony. And as I wrote it out word for word and underneath each of the language words, I put the English meaning. A lot of the phrases I didn't know. There's some idioms in there. And you can kind of tell by the context of the story what these other phrases mean. We got to this phrase [foreign language] "I'm going to lose my name. I don't want to lose my name."

I said, Ronnie, what does that mean? Oh, [foreign language] that means it's over, it's the end, it's finished. I'm no more. It's done. [Audio cuts off] And so you test it out, you experience. And I said, you know, Ronnie and all the other translators are there, and I work with 14 of these young boys. I said, "You know, Jesus has come, that we might have a name forever and ever." Oh, my goodness. It was so electrifying. They all stood up and they said, "You mean that's what you've been trying to tell us for seven years? Jesus has come and then if we have Jesus into our life, we're always going to be and our name is never going to be finished?"

We found the word for 'soul.' And you know, this is so powerful because names are so important. When you read in the Old Testament, you know that you get through these chapters of all those names. We skip what we're doing. Have you ever wondered why all those names are there? God is keeping track. God is keeping track. When we're doing Genesis, they got so excited. "You know, Marilyn, we know the first two people of the world. We know the first two people of the world. Adam and Eve."

And, you know, once they learned how to write their names and we figured out the alphabet, because their names are very difficult and they hate when people mispronounce their names. And they said, "Marilyn, does Papa God know how to say my name right?" I said, yeah. "Does he know how to write it right?" When we finished translating, one of their favorite verses is found in Revelation. And, you know, I often say, well, that's probably why I never really got married, because of my name. I love my name. Laszlo. It's Hungarian. And the reason you know it's Hungarian is because of the way it's spelled, the S and the Z.

And one of the first things I look at when I come on campus or in a church is look to see if you spelled my name right. Because if you leave out the S or the Z, you have totally destroyed my whole nationality. And I really can't handle that. And I know that God knows how to spell my name. Laszlo. I remember I was giving the story in Wheaton. It was a couple of years ago. And when I finished, two men came up to me. The whole student body comes up and they greet you. And they were up on the platform and they said, you know, Ms. Laszlo, do you realize that you don't have to give up your name today to be married? Now, I don't know if they were proposing or what, but, hey, do you know if that is really true, I'm available. I am available. I don't have to give up my name.

But, you know, when we finished, one of the favorite verses that found the Revelation listen to this is beautiful. "He who overcomes will like them, be dressed in white. I will never black out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and His angels." Today, in that village, there are 500 believers out of 800 people, and their names are written in the book of life. And I remember when I finally started school, I was teaching them how to read and write. I remember one of the very first letters I got. I taught them how to write a

letter. Now, they had never heard about letters. They couldn't understand how a letter could travel 12,000 miles and still find you.

Well, that's another story in itself. And maybe I'll share that in a seminar. But this was one of the very first letters I got. And I had left several aerograms, self-addressed. And it was just before I was coming home on my furlough. I left all these self-addressed envelopes there. Now, they did have a big meeting. The big men came into the house. One of the things they were very afraid of, that they were afraid I was going to go home and get married. Now, I don't know why that this was such an issue and I tried to figure it out. I think because the fact that we're women, we're in the safest place in the world to be, first of all, in that village.

Secondly, we're in the safest place in the world if we're in the center of God's will. That's another question that people ask me. And I think that the reason they didn't want me to get married, because we're probably easier to wrap around their finger. They can get out of us a lot. I'm not sure. I think we're nonthreatening. I know in South America, if we had sent two single men, they probably would have been killed. We sent two single women and because they were non-threatening but anyway, they finally came in, just came into the house just before we were ready to leave for furlough.

And they had discussed this all night long. And they decided, okay, we decided that it's okay for you to get married. If you go home, it's okay. But when you come back, you have to leave him at home. Listen to this letter from one of my main translators. [Foreign language] "Good morning, Mama Marilyn. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, this is my first time to carve some talk on

the banana leaf. My hand is not good and I do not know how this banana leaf will ever find you. My first talk is this: the big men in the village still have this big worry in their throats."

The throat is the center of feeling emotion, life. You ask Jesus into your throat, not into your heart. So if you want to tell your girlfriend or your boyfriend that you love and say, "Honey, I love you with my whole throat," it comes out better. "They said that you should not think about getting married while you are at home. This is their worry. Don't give your name away. They said that you should not let any of the men grease you up." Now, grease you up is the same as butter you up. Men are the same. No matter where you go in the world, they're all the same. They said, "Don't let men grease you up. That would not be good. You are now one of us, and we will decide whom you will marry. But Mama, first you have to come back and finish the carving about Papa God. We need to have Papa God's carving in our own language. So please, Mama Marilyn, do not think about men."

Well, that's pretty good advice. "So, Mama, this is my last talk to you. My talk is finished. Your brother in Jesus. Paul Hunney." Am I supposed to be finished now? What time am I supposed to be finished? Around nine. Is that clock right? Oh, boy, isn't that good? Okay, I have one more story I'd like to tell before I finish here. God has a sense of humor. We all know that. And the team that God gave me when we started translation, there were two old men.

One is this old man Nokiyin, that was so excited. He wore just a gourd and a vine around his nose [inaudible]. No. Then there were 14 little boys that were running around the jungle naked, five, six and seven year-olds. They were the gang of the village. They wanted to also help with

the translation. So my house is a thatched roof house, up on stilts, bark floor. So here I have 14 little boys and two medicine men. And that's my team for translation. Well, we start with Genesis, the creation story, the beginning. Well, they have their creation stories.

One clan came from the crocodile, another clan came from the wild boar. The third clan came from the wild cassowary bird and the fourth clan came from the crocodile. Well, through those four creation stories, they can explain every part of creation. And the interesting thing is, if you study their creation stories, they're not all that far removed from Genesis. Now, doesn't that blow your mind? But I asked them, where did the crocodile come from? Where did the python come from? Oh, well, our ancestors said in the beginning was the crocodile, in the beginning was the python.

I said, no. In the beginning was [foreign language] the Big Father Creator. And then the crocodile. So visualize this. Here they are, sitting on the bark floor. Then we start with Genesis. In the beginning. I want to tell you, they were so excited about this creation story, how God created everything up in the sky, the sun, the moon, the stars and everything in the water. They're river people and all those fish that they go hunting for and all those things in the jungle that they go hunting for. But every day as we gather together, as we're translating Genesis, one of the little boys would say, "Marilyn, when are you going to tell us how papa God created man?"

I said, well, we're not there yet, we've got all these other verses here. But every day we gathered together sitting on the floor, and one of the boys would say, "Is this the day? Is this the day you're going to tell us how Papa God created man?" I said, this is not the day. We have all these

verses and it's in chapter two. Well, they didn't know anything about chapter two, but we finally got there and I said, okay, this is the day I'm going to tell you how Papa God created man. It goes like this. [Foreign language] Papa God created man from the mud, the dirt, the ground.

And then Papa God, He formed this mud. And then papa God, he blew wind into the mud. Oh, I mean, it was very quiet. And these little boys were looking up at me, at their dark eyes and their mouths were open. And then one of the little boys said, "Is that it?" I said, that's it. I said, oh, my goodness. They're not going to believe this creation story. And they started to buzz and they started talking. Pretty soon, one of the old men said, we've always wondered if we really just came from a crocodile. We've always wondered if we've really come from the python.

My friends, I'm not aware of anyone that's in the village that's questioned this creation story. Now, how does that work? Well, we went on and we found another difficult word, the word for 'sin.' Now, that's not really all that hard to find, but how do you really point to it or act it out? But our word for sin is [foreign language]. Now, it's hard to explain what that actually means in English. It means a whole lot of things. It means like, stinking, rotten garbage. It means it's no good, it's awful, it's wrong, it's bad. It means all those things.

So I said to them, what is [foreign language]? I mean, what do you consider bad or what do you consider wrong? "Oh, well, one thing in our culture, you shouldn't lie." "Another one, in our culture, you shouldn't steal." And then the two old men that were working there, and they said, "Well, you know, you shouldn't kill. We shouldn't be killing. We know that's wrong. We shouldn't be killing with these other tribes, that has to stop." And then they said one of the old

men said, "Well, you shouldn't sleep with another man's wife and commit adultery." And then he said, "You know what's the most important in our culture? You should never, ever, ever show disrespect to the elders and especially to your mother and your father."

I said, wow. I mean, where did you get this? Who told you this? Where did this come from? "Oh, our ancestors. Our ancestors, they've been passing it down for generation to generation to generation." Oh, my friends, this is it. This is it. How is it? How is it that Christianity works far and above any other religion in the world? How does it work in this community? How does it work in your family? How does it work in Los Angeles? Chicago, New York, China, Russia. Africa. My friends, it works because every single person in the world has been created in God's image.

We've all come from the mud, you know, we're no different than anybody else that's walking around out there. And the laws of God are written on the hearts of all men. And every single person here and every single person in your family in China, Russia, Africa, New York, wherever has been prepared by God has been prepared by God for this book to either accept it or to reject it. And my friends, that's why it works. And, you know, that's why Jesus can say to us, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel." Because, my friend, He did not give us an impossible task to do. And I want to tell you something.

That's why God can use somebody like me. I'm not really very smart. I'm really not. I'm just a simple Hoosier farm girl that God called on the tractor when I was in junior high. And God has chosen people like you to reach the world. We're all missionaries, my friends. There's a lot of

different people here majoring in different fields, and that's exactly what we need. We also need to turn our country around. We need to reach the public schools, we need to get into the media. I mean, there's not going to be a lot of foreign missionaries coming from this country if we don't turn our country around.

We finished. It took us 23 years, but we finished. The word of God in their language, they chose the color. It's green. The color of the jungle. [Foreign language] Papa, God's carving. And, my friends, there is no way that I can describe the emotion in that village when boxes of these Bibles were coming up the river in a dugout canoe. June 13, 1990. They haven't had it that long. Every single thatched roof house in that village was beautifully decorated with leaves and flowers and branches and orchids. And when we heard the motor on that dugout canoe come into our village, every single person in that village was lined up along the banks of the river and they were waving these branches and these leaves.

And as that canoe came in, they all shouted, "the Word of God has arrived. The word of God has arrived. The word of God has arrived." For the very first time, the word of God had arrived. I don't know what you think about your Bible. You probably have more than one. Sometimes we don't carry it around with us. We hardly carry it to church. My friends, this is the word of God. This is what makes it work. It shouldn't be very far away from our fingertips, because anytime we are holding this book and reading God's word, we render Satan helpless. I don't know what you're planning to do with your life, your time, your money, but I do know one thing. You're very special. You're very special to God. And don't let anybody ever tell you otherwise.

And God has chosen you in a very special way. And I want you to encourage you to follow those dreams. Follow it down there. Take that step. [Foreign language] "But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem and all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." And to our colleagues, our friends, our family, our community, our schools and the world. "And there before me was a great multitude that no man could count, from every tribe, from every nation, from every people, from every country, and from every language." Let's pray.

[Foreign language] Papa God, we are grateful. We are grateful that we can hold the word of God in our own language. But, Papa, I don't understand why You've chosen to work the way You do, using people like us. Because, Papa, we often fail You. We're often whining and complaining and selfish. But, Papa, You have chosen to use people like us. And as I look across this enormous group of young men and women and I realize that some are not sure just what they will be doing after they leave this place, wherever they may go, help them to be in the center of Your will.

Help them to be right in the center of Your will and to be a shining light. We don't have to go very far, Father, to have compassion. All we have to do is hold a little dying baby. All we have to do is just get a little dirty for God and just get out there and to witness. And there will be a shining light. To go across the street. And sometimes the people that are just sitting next to us need encouragement, Father. Doesn't take a degree to be kind and to be polite and courteous and gentle. Encouraging. Oh, Papa, help us to have this passion to reach those that don't know you. In Jesus name, Amen.