

Session 5A Thursday AM Sutherland Auditorium By Marilyn Laszlo

Speaker 1:

Marilyn Laszlo. And many of you heard her last night, and she's a Wycliffe missionary. She was in Papua New Guinea for over 20 years translating the Bible, and we have much to learn from her. So my prayer today is that your heart will be open as she speaks. And the passion that she has for people and for the Lord would be imparted to you. So please welcome with me, Marilyn Laszlo.

Marilyn Laszlo:

There's more ways than one to handle this. Thank you, Mr. Salman. Well, that was easy. It takes an engineer to figure that out. Good morning. After the seminar, I don't have a whole lot of time. I'll have about till 1:30 before I have to get to the airport. So I want to try to make myself real available to you. Ron, where's the best place? Maybe just stay right here if other people have some questions, and maybe we can address those because I know it is lunch.

Unless you want to reserve a table and we can all talk because I was a little bit late because there are people asking me questions around the booth, and I didn't have time to answer all the questions. So maybe you can think about that. I'm available at least 1:30 to answer some questions. When you have a group like this, it's very hard to ask questions, but maybe we could try it. You don't have a wireless mic where we could maybe-- we should take an offering and buy a wireless mic. This one won't reach very far. Okay, well, we'll work with that. Some of the things that I want to talk about this morning and some of the problems that we face as

missionaries, and often it isn't in our training and isn't in the anthropology books. We have to deal with it as we get to the field.

And one of the real interesting problems that I had was once we figured out the alphabet and figured out the grammatical structure and we made some reading books, then we were ready to teach the people to read and write their own language. So I remember this took about three years, maybe four years to get to that point. And I remember this old man, Nokian, that I was talking to you about, who adopted me, both of us, as his daughters. And he wanted to help us hurry up and learn this language so that we could start carving God's carving.

And so he worked with me. And they're excellent teachers. If we want to learn anything about teaching methods, just watch some of these people in Third World countries because they start teaching their little children at a very, very early age. The men are teaching the boys, and their teaching skills are incredible. How they learn all these things is very structured. It takes a long time to really understand their whole social structure. But anyway, this old man, Nokian, would come every day, and we finally figured out that alphabet.

We have six vowels in our language, A,E,I,O,U and [foreign language]. Now, [foreign language] is one of the most common vowels. Now, some of you that are taking the linguistic course, you probably know how to write that. But I'm trying to be real practical in developing this alphabet. So I am using the English typewriter. Australia was some other country, and that's English, but I've run out of vowels. What am I going to do for [foreign language]? Well, of course, the training helps us. And I decided to use the letter I a second time on the typewriter, backspace and put a dash through it that comes out like a plus with a dot over it. And that's our 6th vowel.

And then this old man started to help me make some reading books, simple stories, so that we could start our class. And very exciting moment. And I love holding these books. Actually, they're pretty tattered. But these are the very first books that have ever, ever been written in that language. This first book is called [foreign language], Banana Leaf Number One. [foreign language] Banana Leaf Number Two, [foreign language], Banana Leaf Number Three, and [foreign language], Banana Leaf Number Four.

Now, if you could get through these four books, you could read and write the language fairly fluently. Now, those of you that know enough about phonetics or certainly knowing anything about the international phonetic system, you could pick up any one of these four books and pronounce the words that are in it, because it is written phonetically. Now, one of the problems with English, for those of you, that where English is the second language, I imagine it kind of drives you crazy because it's not written phonetically.

For example, the word "fox." "Fox." How do you spell "fox"? F-O-S. Well, how do you spell "photo"? Yes, you got it. I don't know who did that to us. I have never been a good speller. And how do you spell "cough"? And there we go. We have three ways to write that sound. The F, "P-H" and "G-H." Oh, we don't we absolutely do not do that to these people. So one sound, one letter, and that's how it goes. Well, I don't know if you remember when you're in first grade. You're all young, so I'm sure you do. But I do remember when I was in first grade and I had a little red reader.

Maybe that's why I made the first one red. And I remember I had stories like "See Dick run. See Jane run. Run, run, run." Do you have that book, too? You're too young for it to have that book. And stories about Spot the dog. Well, we have to do the same kind of thing for these people, make simple stories, but they don't know anything about Dick and Jane or Spot the dog. So this old man was helping me make the stories cultural.

Well, since they're crocodile hunters and the python snake is one of their creation stories, this one story goes like this: "See the big crocodile. See the long python snake. Run, run, run." You know stories like that. No, it is true. You might want to come and look at these. But those of you that are interested in literacy and teaching, I tell you, I don't know how many literacy people we need, but it is an enormous number of people with large language groups, especially, like in Africa, we need a lot of help where there's 10 million people. Well, New Guinea's about the largest group of people, is about 10,000.

And so the translator does the literacy as well as the translation. But in other countries, we have to have help. Okay, I'm done. I got the books done. I got them printed, and now I'm ready to teach them. So we have village meetings. And so I stand up with the head man of the village, and I said, [foreign language]. "Now, I understand your language." [Foreign language] "Now, I want to teach you people how to read and write." Well, one of the very strong cultural things in this village is that you never shame someone in public.

Of course, their definition of shame can be a little bit different than ours, because when Nokian stood us up in front of the whole village and wanted to know why we couldn't speak the

language after six months, he wanted to help us. He thought it was because we weren't eating enough of their food. That's why. But anyway, so I'm talking to the village, I'm talking to the head man, and they've been watching us for about a year now. Oh, no. This is about two years. Three years have gone by, and we're still having trouble paddling a dugout canoe. We still go around circles and get caught in the current. Everybody knows how to paddle a dugout canoe from five years old and up.

We are still having trouble walking, climbing up their knots, out logs to their houses, which are 14ft off the ground. I mean, we look very clumsy. We're hanging on with all fours. They can run up those ladders without holding on, carrying loads on their back. They know that we don't know how to weave baskets. They know that we don't know how to cook their seagull and the fish right and all those kinds of things. We can't light a fire without a whole lot of paper and matches, and they can light a fire without, and they're just watching all this. Now, I'm standing up here in front of the whole village and with the head man and say, "I'm here now to teach you."

Well, they don't quite know what to say, because the only thing that they have seen me do for three years is carve on this banana leaf with this thorn. And we can't even walk through the jungle without tripping over vines and falling down and they have to help us up. They just think we are just totally hopeless. And yet I am standing here and I'm saying, "I'm ready to teach you." "Well," they said, "well, what is it you're going to teach us? I mean, we know how to build our houses, and we know how to build our canoes, and we know how to hunt and fish and make our implements for all of our work, our spears, our bow and arrows. And women, they know how to weave baskets. And why do we have to know how to read and write?"

Now I have a problem, and I don't remember Wycliffe teaching us the answer to that. Why do they have to know how to read and write? They've been living their lives as gatherers and hunters for generations and generations and knew nothing about reading or writing. I said, "Well, so I can tell you about [foreign language], the Big Father Creator." "We know about the big father creator." As I mentioned last night, they have the creation of stories. One clan came from the crocodile, and the other clan came from the python, third from the wild boar and the fourth from the wild cassowary bird. Through all those four creation stories, they could explain every part of creation.

So what do we do? Now, first of all, you got to be very careful that you don't make them look stupid, because they're not. Well, they're making me look stupid. They're trying to be very careful, but I got the point real fast. They are the experts. Well, in one of the videos that I have called "Come by Here," this was reenacted. I went to our mission station to check the orthography, the alphabet paper. And so while I was at the mission station, well, actually, it was Judy and I, both my partner and I.

While we were there actually, we were there for a couple of months, I decided to write a letter to the village people in their language. So I wrote this letter in their language, and I said, "I'm here if there's anything that you would like for me to bring back." We have these steel axes and the shovels and machetes, and they were Stone Age people when I got there, they only had stone implements. And so they were very excited about this. So I wrote this letter back in their language, and I ran off about 500 copies of this letter on the duplicator, and then I gave it to our

pilot. And I asked the jars pilot to fly over the village when he's out in that area, fly over our village and just throw them all out, throw all the letters out everywhere.

So the pilot flies real low over the village to scare the village to death because they don't often see a plane, and their word for plane is "flying canoe." So anyway, no, it carries passengers.

Anyway, it's throughout all these letters, and everyone was just chasing these, what they call banana leaves, chasing them everywhere. And they picked it up and they had this piece of paper, and they turned it every direction and they saw that it had carving on it, and not one single person in the village could read it. So I came back to the village after a couple of months and I said, "Well, did you get my letter?" "Was that you? You carved that letter to us? Well, Marilyn, you know that we don't know how to read and write." I said, you don't know how to read and write? I said, this is one of the biggest languages on the Sepik River. "I mean, this is a very important, prestigious language. You've wiped out all these villages for years, and you're the greatest."

And I'm just building them up. And I said, "You know, I'm the only one?" And I started to read it. I said, "You mean I'm the only one that can read your language? I'm the only one that can write your language?" Well, now, the problem here is, am I shaming them or am I motivating them? Am I manipulating them? It's controversial. I'm in trouble with Wycliffe. Well, anyway, I said, "You know, I'm an outsider, I'm a foreigner, I'm a stranger, I'm a white skinned woman, I'm single, I'm all these things, and I'm the only one that could read and write your own language." Well, that turned it around.

The head man of the village said, "This is one of the most important languages on the Sepik River." They assign me 20 young men. Well, they were under a lot of pressure, and we did this underneath our house with a Coleman lantern. And of course, underneath the house we had it screened. We were sitting on just logs. Actually, they were old canoes, and we turned them upside down. We sat on the old canoes. And the rest of the village would get real close outside of the screen and just looking in there to see if this is really going to work. Can we really know how to read and write?

Well, we get a certain amount of training as how to design these reading books. Now, as a former teacher, this has been helpful. We were teaching the syllable approach. You take a word like "kara," which means me, and you divide it "ka" and "ra." Well, I thought this was about as simple as you can get. So I write it on the blackboard "kara," the whole word, and then I'd pull down the "K-A," and then I'd pull down the "R-A." "KARA." And they would say it, everybody would say, the whole class, "KA" and "RA."

I said, we put them together and it's "kara." I mean, this was not working. There was something going on here. Now, one of the things you have to be very careful, who's wrong here? Am I doing something wrong or they're just slow? I mean, we went for a whole week trying to just do this. "kara." "Nami." Which means I am going nah me. Well, you know what we were doing. Can you kind of suspect what we might be doing wrong? Anybody? Sue, what do you think we're doing wrong?

Good. You don't know the answer. I thought you knew the answer to everything. We assumed that the break was K-A-R-A but the break was K-A-R. "KARRA." It was a double R. "Karra." Actually, it's really not double R. It's a fuzzy border. You have to divide that R in half, and half of the R goes to the car, and then the other half of the R goes RA. Oh, my goodness. Well, you know, when you run into a problem like that, your first reaction is, "Man, they are never going to learn how to read and write. And it's your problem. You're the one that's making the mistake."

You don't want to go too far that way. And so finally, when we just doubled the R, put it on both sides, then they started to read and write very--because those 20 men, the guys, the whole rest of the village says, "Oh, what's wrong with your heads? This is your language, and why can't you read what she's carving on the blackboard?" Well, in a matter of three months, they got through all of these books. And, you know, it's interesting. I wouldn't have chosen those 20 men. I would have chosen the ones that were coming to the house a lot and seemed to be interested.

And this is another thing, you have to be very careful, because the village people know who is sharp, who's going to handle this real well. They know each other well. And so that's how the literature well, that's one of the issues that we faced. Another issue is that this wasn't in the anthropology books either. What about when you see the people that you're working with being exploited? Now, again, I just want to remind you, this is my story. This is Papua New Guinea. Africa is a lot different. Even though I was in Africa, I think some of these things still go on, but it's a whole different story.

Okay, let me give you the picture. They're crocodile hunters. And after the Second World War, the crocodile traders were coming up coming up the river and getting these crocodile skins. Now, our people had no idea what the value of a crocodile skin was. They're just totally vulnerable. They had no idea the value of money. In fact, when I got to the village, it was pounds and shillings, the Australian currency. And I saw some of these men smoking 20 pound notes. They were using it as a smoke paper. This money, the paper money. They said it had a good taste. And they had no idea what the value of this money was.

They thought the shillings were the most valuable part because it goes along with their word for money is [foreign language] which means shells. And they trade with these shells, in fact, to buy your wife, as a whole clan--it takes a whole clan to buy the fellow's wife. Everybody has to kind of pitch in. It depends on if the wife is strong and healthy. And the heavier you are, the higher the price goes. And I was the heaviest woman in that village. They could not afford me. Absolutely.

And it takes a lot of shells, and they decorate these shells up with bark and they use them as headbands and arm bands and the necklaces. But they've been passed down from generation to generation. That's their barter system. And so the word for money is [foreign language], which is shell. So that's why they thought the shillings were the most important thing. So I would watch these crocodile traders come into our village and the village people would beat the drums and the village would come with all their skins, lined it up all along the banks.

And then the crocodile trader said, [foreign language], "For this crocodile skin, I will give you one flashlight." They call it torch. One flashlight. And I thought, oh, my goodness, there's something wrong here, because I knew that skin was worth a lot more. And then for this skin, I'll give you a little bag of salt. For this skin, I'll give you four batteries. Well, see, a flashlight, they had never seen flashlights. And they use torches. They light a special leaf that would burn and light up their way down the path.

And so they had no idea what the value of batteries were or what the value of a flashlight was. And so when I was in the coastal town, I went to the government office and I got the price list for these crocodile skins. They measure it across the breast of the crocodile, and it's so much per inch. The crocodiles that they had were worth in American dollars, like four and five and \$600. They didn't know that a flashlight did not cost \$400. They didn't know that. How would they know that? And I thought, oh, my goodness. Now, as a missionary, what do I do about this situation?

Because that wasn't in the books either. And maybe it's in the books now, I don't know. I've told this story a couple of times. They may have gotten it in the books now, and I don't know.

Anyway, I feel as a missionary, we have to have kind of a holistic approach. They're not going to listen to anything you have to say about the gospel. Just look at Jesus' ministry, for one. He ministered to the sick, the poor and the hungry before he ever ministered to their spiritual needs. And you got somebody that's sick and hungry in the village and they're not going to be focused on learning how to read and write until you deal with all of that.

But when you come to this kind of situation, I mean, what's our responsibility? Well, I felt I had a real responsibility. And so the first thing I did before I even started teaching and writing, I started to teach them how to count money. Now that's real spiritual. I mean, that is real spiritual. So I got all the pounds and the shillings and I got all these men coming that were crocodile traders and I got some of the younger ones in and I started teaching the value of money.

So I had to get bags of rice and the flashlights and the batteries and cans of mackerel, which is our things that they sell in New Guinea. So I would line those up and then I would tell them how much this was. And then I asked them to bring a couple of crocodile skins and we started to teach this. And I tell you, it just blew them away and they were somewhat angry, but I said, "Okay, that is the value of learning how to read and write." And it started to really catch on. And so after I taught them how to count money and what the value was and brought in all kinds of trade store goods, then I brought in tape measures to get everybody a tape measure.

And Wycliffe couldn't understand why I was ordering this stuff over the radio. "Alpha Juliet, do you copy? Do you copy? I need four dozen tape measures." We got to get this on the plane.

Well, anyway, I gave everybody a tape measure. So then we started to learn how to measure.

Now, these people, I want to tell you something, if you ever--in a situation like this, I found that if you start with math before you start with reading, it really I mean, it catches on. And they're very sharp with mathematical stuff.

They basically can only count up to 20. Ten fingers and ten toes. And so our word for 20 is the whole man. [Foreign language]. That means man, all the man's fingers and all the man's toes.

Now, if you want to get up to 60, you got to line three men up. Well, when you get into the New Testament and Jesus fed 5,000, I mean, how am I going to do 5,000? I mean, that's a lot of fingers and toes. Well, that's another kind of a problem. But anyway, so we started to learn how to measure.

Then as I was going through these classes, I had young and old mixture, I could see who was catching on real fast. So most of them were the younger fellows that actually ended up to be those 14 boys that started to do translation with me. And so I got them the calculators.

Calculators. They're not wearing any clothes yet, but they're holding a calculator. And they really found this very fascinating. I used the blackboard and then used the calculators with about ten of these men and started to show them how to add, subtract. And of course, you had to learn how to multiply.

Well, it blows my mind that it takes them very long to learn this. And again, it shows the supremacy of God. Like I was saying last night, everybody out there, everybody out there has been prepared by God for this book. So we got the calculators. Well, then, my main translator, Paul Hooni, who works with me on the translation, we check everything that the other 14 men are doing. So we're up in the house. My house is up on the hill in the center of the village. And it looks right straight down on the river. One clan is on that side of the river, another clan's on this side of the river, and then two clans in the back of us. So this hill is right in the center.

And so, coming into the village, I can see every canoe that comes into the village. Then it comes to like a Y. It goes around that hill. So it comes, the crocodile traders. Paul and I are up there

translating. We see the canoe come in. And I said, well, who's that? And he said, well, it's the crocodile traders. I said, okay, this is it. This is the test.

So I can hear everything that's going on. They beat the drums, guys bring all the crocodile skins, lay along the banks. And I'm looking right down on this. And the crocodile trader comes in and says, "Okay, for this skin, I'll give you two batteries. For this one, two flashlights and some salt." And it's going down. I said, okay, Paul. Now, Paul at this time was probably 13, 14 years old. I says, "Okay, put your calculator in your pocket, put your tape measure and get your calculator. Here's the government list of the prices. Go down."

But he was anxious, so he went down and he says and they're very, very polite and courteous people. They really are. And then he said, "Excuse me, master. Excuse me, master." [Foreign language] "What you're doing to my people, I don't think this is right." And that crocodile says, [foreign language] "you fasten your mouth. You shut up. You're nothing more than a jungle monkey." Oh, my word. And Paul very quietly says, "Excuse me, master. [Foreign language] Excuse me, but I just want to show you." Pulled out his tape measure.

This was so great. And he measured the crocodile skin, had his notebook, and he wrote it down, so many inches. Got out the government piece of paper and he said, "[Foreign language] For this crocodile skin. It's so much, I don't know, sixty cents." Or I think it's more than that. And so he wrote that down. Then he got out his calculator. It just absolutely blew this guy out of the water. And he said, "For this crocodile skin, you must give him you must give him 300 kina." It was like, \$300.

I tell you, since that day, and I think that was around 1974, I tell you, they will never be exploited. And that news traveled up and down the river. We had people coming and wanted to take this class on how to count money, and they wanted tape measures. I was on the radio, "mic Oscar, mic Oscar, I need 100 tape measures." But the people have been so appreciative. But you know, what a breakthrough that was. Kind of scratching where it itches kind of thing. And a lot of these things you're not going to find in books, but the people will never, ever forget about that.

Okay, now, when it comes to clothes, this is a question that you get more in churches than in schools because especially where you have a school like this, where you've got cultural anthropology courses. But one of the first things that people see, especially with the first two videos that I did, there's some nudity, and they think, well, did you finally you get clothes on those people? Well, you have to be very careful with this. Now, I know in New Guinea, this is a pretty unique situation. I don't think you're going to find anything like that in the Philippines or Africa, maybe in South America. I don't think so.

But they just didn't wear clothes. I mean, the women didn't wear anything except string skirts. The children didn't wear any clothes at all. And the men, sometimes they wear the gourds and a vine, and sometimes they didn't even bother with the gourd. So I know of stories of missionaries that came into Papua New Guinea, and that's the first thing they wanted to do is cover the people up. And what happened was, and this became very serious, they connected Christianity with putting on clothes. And if you want to be a Christian, all you do is put on clothes. And certainly if you want to come to church, you've got to have nice clothes.

That's the wrong message. Salvation has nothing to do with what we wear or what we don't wear. You know, this old man, Nokian, one of the first believers of the 162 medicine men, the oldest man in the village, that was-- adopted us as his daughters. I tried a few things. I thought, this guy is coming here every day. Sometimes he doesn't anymore. The gourd, it's very distracting. I said, now we have to do something about this. And this is my problem, not his. But we had a box of used clothes, and we got into this box of used clothes. We found a pair of men's Bermuda shorts. They were green, had nice green belt. We gave these to Nokian. Oh, my goodness. He had never held any clothes before. He was so excited. He was the first of all the people in the village because when he would help us all day, we'd give him a gift. We'd give him a gift in appreciation for his help.

Usually fishing line, fishing hook, something that they really could use. Well, this day we give them these green pants because he was just coming with just this vine around his waist. That was it. And so he came and went out of the house, went down the steps and got into his canoe, paddled across the river. And I could see him walking through the village on his side of the clan, holding up these pants. "Look! Look what the two white misses have given to me." He was so excited. And everybody gathered around Nokian.

He comes back real early in the morning and start helping us with the language. He calls up to the house and he said, "Marilyn, I'm here and I'm all dressed up in my new clothes." And we were just finishing breakfast and I said, [Foreign language] I said "Come on up. We're finished eating." So he comes up to the steps to my house. He walks through the screen door. Now we

have this bark floor, so it's kind of bouncy. And he's just got his shoulders back and just bouncing just as proud as he could be. Oh, my goodness.

You know what Nokian had on? Just the green belt to the pants. I said, Lord, really, if you want clothes on these people, you have to do it in Your way and Your time. With the women. Now, the women, I decided to try bras so people would send mission-- missionaries, they get a lot of used clothes, boxes of used clothes. And so there were some bras in there. So I gave some of the women bras. Well, you know what they did? They put them around their waist and used them as pockets. So that wasn't working either. Those are all mistakes. I'm telling you. Those are missionary mistakes. Not there. That's not their problem.

Okay, one other problem that I faced. When I started to do translation, now the social structure centers around the brothers. All the brothers live together with their wives and children, one big house. So, you know, when somebody gets sick, everybody gets sick because they're living very close together. There's like four or five families in a big house. And so with these translators, these young boys that were starting to help me and we would be around a big table in my house and we were doing translation.

But what happened when the white man finally came into New Guinea? They introduced the cold. The cold. They never had colds. And I know you've seen pictures like this and their nose will be running and sometimes it's just hanging there. It's hard to look at. Anyway, so I've got 14 boys around the table, these young fellows, and they all have colds. And it's just hanging there.

They would go outside, they would blow their nose like my grandfather used to do, this way.
And anyway, this is kind of gross.

So I decided I'm going to introduce the handkerchief. And now, two of our fellows had been out of the village, had been to our mission station, when we had to check some of our grammatical stuff. So they saw this handkerchief thing. So when I passed it out, I got a couple of dozen handkerchiefs, and the mission station is wondering, what am I doing? I'm ordering tape measures. Now, I'm ordering handkerchiefs. But anyway, I got everybody a handkerchief. And so I could hear them all buzzing and talking. What is this thing? It's just a very small piece of cloth. It's certainly not big enough to wear.

And so the two other fellows that have been out of the village oh, we've seen this. This is the white man's thing. Now, our word for snot is "slope." I mean, it sounds just like a slope. And so the two guys are saying, well, there's something about the slope. The white man, they'll take their handkerchief and they blow their slope into this piece of cloth, and then they fold it up and put it in their pocket and they carry it around. Oh, they said the women the women, I mean, they can feel a whole purse full of slope. They blow it and they open their purse and put it in. And so I guess she wants to I don't know what she wants. She wants to save the slope. When you were little or if you've ever seen parents try to teach their kids how to blow their nose, that's a skill. And so they said, well, so the two guys were trying to demonstrate how this works. Well, do you do it like this? You blow it in there and you fold it up. So they all started to do this. They said, well, is that enough? You think that's enough?

Oh, gosh, this is so awful. And so they got a bunch of it in there, and then they all folded up. You know what they did? They all got up and came to me and put a whole pile right in front of me because they thought I wanted them to save the slope. Another mistake. We got 15 minutes. It's 11:30. What time do I finish? I always forget when I finish here. 11:20? Okay, I have five minutes. Okay, I have one story I want to say, but is there anybody I just want to give you a chance.

Is there anybody that really wants to ask me a question? Because I know I'm going to have to get out of here pretty fast. Anybody? Just stand up and ask it? Yes, way back there. Music, dances and songs. Where are you from? Oh, you know what? I've been over there to Africa. Well, I've heard you, haven't I? Were you with this group in Iowa? Oh, yeah. Just before I came to this conference, I bought the CD. I was at a big conference in Iowa. And how many were in that group? Six, they were all from Africa.

It's inborn, it's innate. There's no way as a white person we could ever imitate their music. It is just so wonderful. And so I bought the CD and I was copying the CD just the day before I flew out here just so I could have it in my car. Like I said, just wonderful. Music, I think, is international. I don't know of any group of people anywhere in the world that doesn't have music. We have music. And when we started to translate, they have the drums, they have a lot of bamboo flutes, they use gourds in a stick and they use all kinds of instruments.

And the rhythm is very different from ours and from the African rhythm. But it's great music. What happened was when we started to translate and when a boy reached puberty, they leave the

parents' house and they go to a single boy's house. Now, you can imagine, wouldn't that be crazy if we had that in our culture? You get reached puberty age and all the young boys get to be in another house. Well, anyway, what they do is they're practicing. The old men are teaching them and they're learning how to beat the drums and all these instruments.

So these fellows that were translating with me, after a day of translation, they would go to the single boys' house at night and they would put several verses of scripture to music. We have over 200 scripture verses in their music. I don't know if any of you went to Ron's ethnomusicology class, but that's what he kind of teaches. We not only translate the language, how do you express that? You stand up and tell these people how do you say that we translate the music? No, we don't say it that way. Nice and loud. Loud.

You don't really translate him because we don't fit the musical structure. So we create totally different lyrics. And you can take like scripture verses and then put that to music or create your own lyrics. But it has to fit that music and express more or less the ideas like we have in our games. But you can't really-- [inaudible]

And we do need ethnomusicologist. So those of you that are interested in this kind of music, you can use your talents and come to our village. I would love to invite ethnomusicologists to our village and just help them develop some more of their songs. It's interesting if they'll take a western hymn and they'll try to imitate this, they'll take a Western hymn, you can't follow them. I mean, the whole rhythm is so different and it just drives us crazy. But it's just a natural where they're not doing the timing right in the music.

But anyway, any other question? We were able to answer that one. Anybody else have a question? Yes. How did they accept me as a woman? That's a very good question. When we first pulled into the village, they didn't know we were coming. We had never seen these people before. Several canoes came out to meet us and surrounded us. And these men were standing up in the canoes, and they said something to us. We had no idea what anybody said, but we went to shore. This is a monolingual situation. We were trying to find somebody that had been out of the village that knew a little bit of the trade language or had some contact.

Well, they beat the drums, and they got the entire village gathered together. This is the very first hour in this village. The whole village, 400, and some people gathered together. There are the two of us sat along. One leader after the other got up and gave a talk. We had no idea what anybody was saying. We knew that we were the center of their attention. They would circle around us and they would pinch our skin. They were feeling our hair, looking at our faces. We were weird.

Later on that we were told that this long village discussion, I don't know how many hours it lasted. Was a long time. That the first half hour of the discussion they were trying to figure out. They were trying to figure out if we were male or female. Well, thanks a lot. This is what you call a humble beginning. Well, it only took them a half an hour to figure it out, and they decided that we were neither. We were "it." That's even more humbling. After a while, they referred to us as UBA. They thought, well, maybe we're the ghost of their ancestors returning.

But then when they saw how we paddle dugout canoes and all this thing, they said, "No, our ancestors would know how to do this a whole lot better than they do." They did not accept us as either male or female. What happened was I got sick, and I got a very bad case of malaria. Then they saw when I walked through the village, through the jungle, I was gathering words for trees, and there were several men out there. And we were going and I pointed this tree and he'd say [foreign language], and I'd write [foreign language] and then I'd put tree.

Well, now they're interested in knowing how we say these things in our language. And so they'd say, [Foreign language] "How do you say that in your language?" I said, "Well, we call that a tree." Well, then we'd go a little farther and point to another one. And he'd say [foreign language] I'd write [foreign language] nice short words, and they say, [foreign language] How do you say that one?" I said, "Well, we call that a tree." And we go point to another one. And he'd say, [foreign language] I'd write [foreign language]

I said, "Well, we call that a tree." I didn't know the English equivalents. In my dictionary, even today, there are hundreds of words. They know every single tree, they know every single flower. They know every single bush or butterfly. And the interesting thing about butterflies, there's different names for the different butterflies. We just say butterfly bugs. I mean, hundreds of bugs in the jungle, they have a different name for every bug. My dictionary today is just bug, bug, bug, bug, bug, all the way down. You know what they said? Well, the English language certainly is very limited, isn't it?

But while we were out there doing that, the thorns kind of tore up my skin and my legs, my arms, my legs, and started to bleed. I mean, what a commotion that cost. And I didn't know what was happening because they were all coming up and they were looking at the blood and they're taking some and tasting it and they said, you know, it's just like our blood, same color, and spirits don't bleed. And then they all got infected and I got very sick and I had a high fever. Well, spirits don't get high fevers and spirits don't get sick and spirits certainly don't cry. That's when I arrived as a woman, not through all of my wisdom, knowledge, degrees, through my weaknesses.

And in closing, let's just read this. That's interesting. I nearly died a couple of times. I don't have time to tell the story, but it is in the book, and I have the books here. So if you want to get the book here, because I am going to leave. In 1 Corinthians, and I think somebody referred to this, I think in the very first day of this conference, 1 Corinthians, chapter 9, starting with verse 19, it says, "Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave. That's what we are. I make myself a slave to everyone to win as many as possible. Having the law, I became like one, not having the law, in order to win those not having the law, and to the weak."

And I don't really understand the sentence: "Through the weak, I became weak to win the weak." And I think it was the sickness. To those who had malaria, I had malaria. To those who had typhoid, I had typhoid. And I can name a whole lot of others. In order to win those who have had malaria and who had typhoid. "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means, I might save some." Whatever it's going to take. Whatever it's going to take, my friends. What is it going to take? What is it going to take to win your mother and your father, your sister, your brother, your friend or your neighbor? Sickness.

And it was through all of those weaknesses, not knowing the names of the trees, not knowing how to paddle a canoe. I mean, that's when I arrived. I became one with them. And today those 14 little boys that were running around the jungle naked. Five, six and seven year-olds. They stuck with me for 23 years until we got this book done. What was interesting, not one of them got seriously ill, and not one of them died. Now, when the life expectancy when I got there was between 30 and 35 years of age and the infant mortality rate was about 90%. And yet none of those boys, every one of them today, are in the village.

They're all leaders in our church. Six of them are pastors. How does that work? I want to tell you something. The village still buzzes and talks about these 14 young men. How did that happen? Well, it's pretty powerful. Just remember, God never makes mistakes with our lives. Trust Jesus and follow your dreams. God bless you. Thank you.