

CARABAO & CAMERAS by Don & Pam Leonard

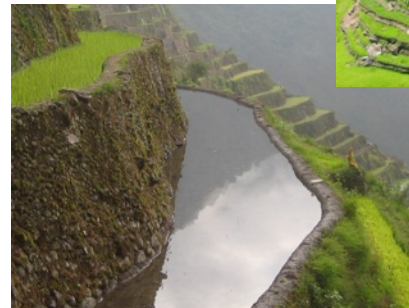


CARABAO



Carabao are not carabou. Carabou are reindeer in Alaska. A carabao is a water buffalo in Asia. They're your farm tractor ... the primary means for feeding your family ... the national animal in the Philippines where my wife and I served as missionaries for twenty years.

Carabao are especially valuable to the *Kankanaey* people who live in the rugged mountains of north central Luzon. This is the people group that Pam and I were called to serve among in 1979. For centuries, the *Kankanaey* had carved rice fields out of their mountain homeland using carabao to transform the steep slopes into magnificent terraces. Terrace walls are called *kabiti* - thousands of stones puzzled together with stunning accuracy and durability. It takes years to build a *kabiti*. The work is grueling and dangerous. Some grow to be 40 ... 50 ... even 100 feet high. You don't want to fall from one. Neither do you want your carabao to fall. Without a carabao, the work would be impossible and your family would go hungry.



As members of Wycliffe Bible Translators, Pam and I had a unique assignment in Luzon. We were a "second team" to Larry and Jan Allen, brilliant linguists translating the Bible into the *Kankanaey* language. Like building a *kabiti*, this was a grueling and demanding task. It took the Allens 27 years to finish the New Testament and a panorama of the Old



Testament. Motivating the *Kankanaey* to read and study the Bible was also a daunting challenge. Not because they didn't love their language. They did. Many simply couldn't read it because they had never seen their language in print form before. Plus they were animists. This meant that instead of trusting in the sacrifice of God's son for the payment of their sin, they sacrificed chickens and pigs to the *anito*; unseen spirits that controlled every aspect of their lives. Like all of us, the *Kankanaey* needed to come under the saving influence of God's Word in order to be set free from their deep-seated customs and beliefs. And God provided an amazing way for this to happen. In fact, the *Kankanaey* were not only able to hear the Gospel in their own language ... they could also see it!

CAMERAS

By 1986, a half dozen books from the Bible had been published in the *Kankanaey* language. Among them were the gospel of LUKE and the book of GENESIS. That same year, while on furlough, Pam and I discovered that GENESIS and LUKE were also available on 8 VHS tapes called the New Media Bible. While Bill Bright from Campus Crusade negotiated with the New York producers for 1+ hour of LUKE footage to make the JESUS FILM, my Wycliffe colleagues and I bartered for every chapter of GENESIS (6 hrs) and every verse of LUKE (4 1/2 hrs).

When asked, "In what language?" I answered, "None!" The reason was because I intended to dub these films into *Kankanaey*. Actually, Pam and I didn't do the dubbing. Sammy Dangpa did. Sammy was my *Kankanaey* sidekick who couldn't wait to show the *Kankanaey* that Abraham and Jesus could speak their language. Entire villages attended Sammy's film showings, sitting in rapt attention as he shared his personal commentary on each episode that they had just watched. Then one day Sammy asked me for a video camera so he could make his own gospel videos with local believers. Their first production was shown at the dedication of the *Kankanaey* New Testament in 1990, attended by more than 20,000 people. More importantly, all 7,000 *Kankanaey* New Testaments got sold and distributed within a month!

Twenty years later, Sammy is still using his video camera to *PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL THROUGH VIDEO* in Luzon. This has also become the focus of a major media initiative that Pam and I now spearhead in Asia for Wycliffe called Project VIDEO.



GOD'S TWO CARABAO

Sammy always liked to compare his video camera to a carabao. Both are simple technology, he would say, that get a lot of work done. This is what inspired the strategy we continue to use in Project VIDEO today called *God's Two Carabao*. One carabao represents the ethnic evangelists in Asia who actually do the MINISTRY. The other carabao represents local congregations in the U.S. who view it as their MISSION to provide these evangelists with cameras and to recruit one or two members to go on a short-term trip to Asia to deliver them. For more information on how your congregation can become directly involved in reaching a people group in Asia with the gospel through video:



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Don and Pam Leonard

Don & Pam Leonard have been missionaries for more than 30 years. Ordained as a Lutheran pastor in 1975, the Leonards served for 20 years in the Philippines where they pioneered the use of vernacular videos in dozens of language programs. *“Proclaiming the gospel through video”* became their passion. It’s also the goal of the major media initiative they now spearhead in Asia called Project VIDEO. The goal of Project VIDEO is to equip and train local evangelists to make and distribute Christian videos in their respective languages that concurrently promote the use of the translated scriptures. The strategy used in Project VIDEO is known as “God’s Two Carabao.” The Leonards live in Chiang Mai Thailand half the year and the other half in Austin, Minnesota.

Please pray and consider your role in enabling them in this call.

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