



from Our World to Yours...

eberhard newsletter

july 2023

Dear family and friends,

Our last letter mentioned all the travel that I (Dave) would be doing. This letter is to recap.

APRIL: The Philippines and Thailand—4 tasks



⇐ 1. Opening talk at the Global Voice event - where we gathered data from 13 different indigenous languages of the Mindanao region of the Philippines.

⇒ 2. Giving the opening keynote address to the LSP - Linguistics Society of the Philippines—in Iligan City. Was honored to be made an honorary member of the Society.



↓ 3. Walking through the Language and Identity Journey in Davao City, Mindanao. In the first 3 days we trained 25 participants to become 'Alongsiders' - specialists who are trained to walk alongside minority language community leaders that are trying to strengthen their endangered languages. Most of these trainees were already professionals who worked with indigenous groups - some of them university professionals working in indigenous education, and others were government researchers doing revitalization. We even had 5 young people that came all the way from Papua New Guinea to be a part of this training! Then we invited leaders from 3 indigenous communities of Mindanao - the Obo Manobo, the Tagakolu, and the Klata - to be part of the Phase 1 workshop of the Journey. Along with the tribal leaders (the Datu) - we also had some of their religious leaders present - an evangelical pastor among the Klata and a Catholic priest among the Tagakolu. The new 'Alongsiders' got to practice their new skills - and the indigenous leaders came away with new tools to take back to their communities. Always a privilege to make new friends in a new part of the world.



4. Finally, a quick trip to Chiang Mai, Thailand, to spend some time with SIL language surveyors during their annual International Language Assessment meetings. I stayed for a few extra days with Stan Anonby, an SIL colleague and friend with whom I am currently conducting a research project that assesses the use of translated scriptures in minority languages. We took advantage of our time together to analyze our data (based on language data from Sulawesi, Indonesia) and then flesh out a rough draft for a research paper that we intend to publish later this year. This research provides a possible answer as to why some translations are not being used, and could have major impact on the way that Bible translation is done around the world in the future.

MAY: Belgium

End of May found me in Belgium co-presenting a paper with a Croatian linguist on "late vernacular acquisition" - an unexpected type of language use where some minority languages are not spoken until after childhood. We received valuable input from some major sociolinguists who were present, and plan on publishing a co-authored paper on this fascinating type of language acquisition later this year.

JUNE-JULY: Brazil

⇒ Late June to mid-July was for another "Introdução a Sociolinguística" course (Intro to Sociolinguistics) in Brasília, Brazil. 15 students (14 in-person, 1 online) - all preparing for cross-cultural ministry. Always a sacred privilege to teach young minds, a generous gift to be with Brazilians, and a profound joy to be able to do all of that in Portuguese.



On the homefront from Julie:

Many of you commented on my side notes from our last letter, so I thought I'd share another of Andy Squires' songs with you. This one is called Kingfisher. Go here to listen to the whole song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gC6H9LcJqAk>. It's got some beautiful poetry and imagery. It makes me weep every time I listen to it. But I quote here one stanza:

*When I get where I'm going
There's a woman in the dust
We have wrinkles on our bodies
Proving love's been good to us*

In between Dave's trips, we celebrated our 39th anniversary. This verse says a lot – we aren't the cute young things we once were, but we have survived many ups and downs, joys and disappointments, happiness and sorrows - TOGETHER! We hope to have many more (wrinkled) years ahead of us.

And then we get to the next few lines, which our daughter says reminds her of me:

*She's standing proudly
Squinting in the summer sun
Satisfied, surveying
All her hands have done.*

Yes, today this means my temporal garden. But that would also be a nice epithet as I (we) look back over life. No, we haven't done all we had hoped and planned to do, but hopefully we can look back contentedly over what life has been, and is, and thank God for all those big and small moments of life.

*Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. Psalm 90:12 (NIV)
Oh! Teach us to live well! Teach us to live wisely and well! (from The Message)*

Thank you for continued interest in our work. We are grateful for you.

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