

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

Ephesians 1:3-4 (NIV)



Winter Philippine Report

February — March 2007

Finishing Well And Planning Furlough

We are doing a lot of reminiscing these days, it seems. As we approach the end of May, we are thinking about all we have experienced since we came to this beautiful country many years ago. We are soon to say good-bye to the Philippines, our home for about 30 years.

Sally was the first to arrive, in March, 1977. She came as a literacy specialist.



Sally in her village house in Blagan, 1979

After Tagalog language school in Manila she moved to Mindanao and prepared for an assignment in the Koronadal Blaan language project.

Lola and I arrived in February, 1978, with Barbara and Hal. We went immediately to our Nasuli center on Mindanao to work in the Radio Department and the Pre-school.



1979 flight to Blagan to visit prayer partners, Sally and Kathy. From l-r: Lola, Barbara, Wendell (our pilot), Hal in the doorway, and Leon.

Through the years we have seen God lead and take us on some great adventures, all for the sake of Bible translation. We came here to assist in that task, and over the years we have seen many New Testaments and, more recently, whole Bibles come to completion. What a joy that has been!

Sally's life kept her busy training and supervising literacy teachers throughout the mountains of southern Mindanao. Many days found her riding horseback, launch, motorcycle, truck, or hiking to distant villages. The church among the Blaan grew by leaps and bounds in those days as many learned to read God's Word and put their faith in Christ as their Lord and Savior.

For Lola and me, we served one term on Mindanao and then transferred to the SIL Center in Manila, continuing our work there for two more terms. Always the focus was using our skills in support of Bible translation. Two more children joined our family, Sheri by birth, just before we left Nasuli, and Kristy by adoption.

The years rolled by. Barb and Hal finished high school and went off to college. Sally finished her work with the Blaan and went home to care for aging parents. About that time Lola and I went on furlough. It was then that Lola was diagnosed with cancer. After a 14-month battle she went to her Heavenly home ahead of us.

Three years later Sally and I married. At that time, Barb and Hal were both married, and we had one grandson. We came back to the Philippines with Sheri and Kristy. Today we are empty-nesters, all the kids are married, and we have seven grandchildren! The time has come to say farewell to the land our family has often called home.



Praise 'n Prayer

- Praise for the 30 years God gave us to serve Him in the Philippines
- Praise for the transfer of our Bagabag house and a smooth move to a temporary place for our last few months.
- Praise the Lord for provision of two ladies to take over the school work Sally has been doing. That is Bagabag School Principal and teaching 3rd and 4th Grades.
- Praise that Lola's brother, Dean, has come through heart transplant surgery so well. He writes of a good recuperation.
- Pray there will be a replacement soon for Leon to hand his work to.
- Pray for a safe trip to Mindanao and good farewell times with Pastor Cuma and friends there.
- Pray Rev. Cuma will be able to learn to do e-mail. This is a VERY big step.
- Pray we find a mid-size van type vehicle. We need wisdom for buying a car. (WBT no longer has a donor car program.)
- Pray for wisdom in laying out the complex trip for our furlough. As we get older, these many driving miles take greater consideration.

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Leon & Sally wed, June 28th, 1997

When we talk of “home assignment,” it is very important for all our friends and family to know we are not retiring. We will be doing the same thing we felt the Lord was calling us to when we joined Wycliffe many years ago. That is, supporting the vital work of Bible translation with gifts given to us by our gracious Lord. The change will be the location and the job description, but our heart’s goal—our desire for men and women, boys and girls to know Jesus—has not changed.

Our upcoming furlough will be pretty much as it has always been. That is, a great deal of driving as we spend time with family and our supporting team. Along the way, we’ll be sharing in the churches and with individuals that have their part with us in Bible translation. As much as possible, we’ll plan the trip to pass close to any who would like to see us personally. We’re happy to say of our last furlough, in 2002-2003, the Lord worked it out so we could visit everyone who asked us to visit them, except one party.

Here is the tentative schedule for our furlough months to visit family, supporting churches and individuals (*emphasize tentative!*):

- Early June: fly to US. Handle arrival issues such as buy a car.
- Mid-June to mid-July: travel up West Coast to British Columbia, east to Montana, then back to southern California.
- Mid-July: family reunion for Sally’s family, in Vermont (we hope to fly).
- Mid-July to late August: Southern California.
- Late August or early September: head to East Coast, zigzagging as necessary to visit people and churches.
- Mid-November: Arrive in Connecticut, our home base for our time in the Northeast.
- Mid-December to mid-January: Visit daughter Barb, husband Paul, and three grandchildren in Johannesburg, South Africa. (We’ve saved a long time for this dream!)
- January through March: visit churches and individuals in northeastern U.S.
- Early April: move to Waxhaw, North Carolina, to set up our home and take up new assignment.

Our home in Waxhaw (30 miles south of Charlotte) is unfurnished, so we look forward to creating our nest and getting acquainted with the area. We will have a

guest room, so please come visit. We’ll leave the light on for you. 💡

Before we leave...

We have some goals to reach before we leave here in early June. One is to finish our jobs well. Sally is working with others to hand over the reins as principal and teacher. A lady has already come to take Grades 3 and 4 for the next two years. Another teacher will serve as interim principal for the coming year. Leon hopes to leave the Publications Department and web-master positions in good shape. As of now he does not have any replacements.

In March we will make a trip to Mindanao to say farewell to Blaan friends. One of our goals while there is to teach Pastor Cuma how to use an e-mail account at a local internet café. By doing this we can stay in touch with the work easily. Sally hopes it won’t be our last trip ever to Blaan country to encourage the Blaan Christians.

For Our Trip Planning

Without committing ourselves beyond what we’re able, we are hoping to see as many of our friends and supporters as would find a visit from us convenient. If you would like for us to work with your location in designing our travel route, we need to hear from you by the first of May. This will help us lay out the trip plan and the possibility of seeing you.

Contact information. Our field mailing address is listed below. Also below is our e-mail address.

E-mail is the very best way to communicate with us and preferred by us. But we happily accept any method that works for you.

A phone call is possible by three ways:

(Remember we are 12 hours ahead of EST)

By cell phone: 011-63-927-243-0570

By landline: 011-63-73-805-8005 or 8006

By Skype: name is “dadtua” (Blaan for “old ones”)

(Please note: at this point, we are inexperienced with Skype, but willing to try.)

Dear family and friends,

It is exciting to be thinking about returning to our home country. Clearly all this planning for our furlough time and setting dates for visiting family, supporting churches and friends is not a simple task. We need your prayers.

As always, pray that in it all, we’ll grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

With joy in His service,

Leon Sally

Leon & Sally

See the color version of our letter by going to:
www.trinitynh.org/mis-winter.htm

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