

Missions Moment – Mark & Tammy Ruch May 2010

Every year St. Mark's sends a significant amount of financial support for Mark and Tammy Ruch serving in the Philippines with Wycliffe Bible Translators. But why do we do this? What's in it for us?

This may sound like a strange question but it is important to remember just why we as a church are engaged in world missions and why we are partnering with the Ruches in their ministry. St. Mark's mission statement states clearly that Christian outreach whether locally or globally is part of our calling to bear witness to the truth of God in Christ. Thus we support the work of missions throughout the world and the ministry of Mark and Tammy in the Philippines is a wonderful opportunity to be a part of what God is doing internationally.

While based in Manila at Faith Academy, a school for missionaries' children, Mark's primary role is to lead the Counseling Center which serves the missions community throughout the Philippines. Mark and his team of counselors need real wisdom and insight as they counsel missionaries with a wide range of concerns. Part of Mark's role, however, is to be available to Wycliffe and its leaders in particular who are facing major challenges these days. Wycliffe's director reports that their group there in the Philippines is going through more change this year than in the previous 57 years of their existence. During this time of transition, their leaders need wisdom as they consider making even more changes to become more effective and relevant in impacting people through Bible translation in today's changing world. Pray that Mark can provide the right kind of support and help.

For Tammy, a great opportunity has opened for her to be a part of an amazing national ministry called TAP which stands for Translators Association of the Philippines. Once a week she makes the two-hour trek to TAP by public jeepney, metro-rail and bus. Other days she works from home. So far a big portion of her time is spent being a go-between: helping to facilitate communication between this Filipino organization and members of Wycliffe which is obviously a more western organization. Even though they are speaking the same language (English), there's plenty of room for miscommunication due to cultural differences.

Tammy works for the Executive Director of TAP. Her most recent task has been writing up profiles for the 17 projects TAP is involved in the Philippines. Their ministries include Bible translation, literacy, and community development.

Providing God's Word for young emerging churches in minority ethnic groups is so important and a wonderful investment on the part of St. Mark's. By supporting the Ruches we are helping to see God's Word made available to those who would otherwise never have it. What impact then does the bible have in the life of a believer? Listen to these brief statements of how God's Word is impacting indigenous people there in the Philippines.

- “I’ve been reading the Bible for a long time in the national language...it was like eating a banana with its skin. Now that it’s in my own language, the banana is peeled!” - an indigenous Filipino man
- “This book has teeth; it bites my conscience!” – a Majukayong man
- “As we hear the New Testament in our own language, it’s like we’re inside a can, and as the can opener slowly slices through the lid, the sliver of light grows, little by little.” – Western Bukidnon Manobo people