

Story of getting the Bibles by boat from Kavieng

Told by Sherm Ainui, Umbukul, New Ireland Province July/1999 (Rendering in English by L. Fast)

[ds: I didn't read the grey text – just to keep the story a bit shorter in our meeting.]

On a certain Tuesday, I forget the exact date, I just know that it was a Tuesday we went up to get this Bible.

And we left here, just two boats we went with, and we were going along over there and we were discussing and as for me I was aware that 89 cartons is not possible for two boats, it would need five boats or four. And so I was determined that I must look for another boat, and so I sent Kamsal to go on ahead on the other boat and I went ashore again at Kone and I went and talked with my uncle Nipal about his boat and he agreed and he gave us a boat. So then it was three boats on which we were going up together, and there at Kavieng I was the first to arrive there and I came to the small wharf beside the market. On the wharf these guys Uncle Mane and Matthew Maraleu, Ben, they were all there, they were standing there and they had already taken all the Bibles over here from the big wharf.

We arrived and they told us that the car that had gone in to carry the Bibles had no permission to go up onto the big wharf, but when it drove up they looked at it and they said it was all right, they allowed it to come on when they heard that it was going to carry the Bible of this place in the vernacular. They agreed for it to enter but it had no sticker to enter there.

And they also told us another thing like this that this Bible when it came it had already been some days since then and several nights it had sat there on the wharf, and according to law it is like this, that if it sits under their supervision for some days and then we come there, before we pick up this cargo we first pay, pay up for their care and the ship it was on.

Well, when these people went in to go and carry these books they did not pay. They told them, 'Just carry them, take them for free.' And so they just picked them up and they went.

When I heard these reports I was very exceedingly happy that such a completely different thing had happened, and then I was standing thinking and I was thinking to myself, 'Wow, big one is a very good person and we have no money to buy these things but he makes a way for us. These things that were hard for us, now they are okay, they are easy.'

Well, we were there, there were only three boats but another two guys arrived and they said, 'Our two boats here are available to help.' So there was another thing that again made me happy, that people just freely offer their boats to help. And so there were now five boats and we loaded.

We loaded carefully all the cartons on the five boats distributed evenly and we waited for the guys who work in town, - guys from here - they drove back to look again on the ship, and to get petrol for going back down again. They went and they stayed a long time in town to get ready and we stayed at the shore. I myself was feeling hungry and thirsty but I was not able to go away and leave the guys to follow my own desire because we had not come because of our own desire to go around in town, and so I just stayed put there, even though I was hungry and thirsty I just sat there. And also all the guys were the same, they were hungry and thirsty but they were not able to go and leave the boats to go into town and get food for themselves or something for them

to drink. They were just sitting there and just let it burst them. They sat and after a long time they arrived with food.

So we ate and then we all started off on the boats and we went down to the Shell service station. We arrived there and we did not have enough containers to get all this petrol. It was very much petrol for the five boats because it was heavy and so needed a lot of petrol.

But when Kamsal went and talked with the people in Shell they gave us two drums for nothing and they told us, 'It's okay, go ahead and fill up your petrol from these two drums, it's okay, and these pumps you are pumping with, don't worry about them, you don't have to pay.'

And the guys who work there left their place of work and they came and stood on the shore. They were asking us, 'What is on these boats?' 'Why, it's Bibles.' 'Really? And did you come to carry Bibles?' 'Yes.' 'That's good, pump, pump!' They ran back up and they got some more pumps and came and gave them to us and we pumped. We pumped everything and we gave back the pumps and we started out.

But on our trip down, we left town and we saw this big cloud standing there ready to rain. And so I was worried because I did not have enough tarp to properly cover these books. And so I was thinking I should talk with the other guys but I thought to myself no, big one is surely looking after us. It's okay, it can't rain on us. I didn't want to speak with the other guys. When I thought this, that big one was looking after us, I didn't want to speak. We kept going.

While we were going, the rain was following us but it was not able to rain on us. We kept going and going and we arrived at Ranmelek, and we looked ahead, and another cloud was there, another rain cloud was ahead of us, but we kept on going on and when we arrived near Ranmelek, I looked back and I saw a rainbow was blocking the rain behind us. And so I stopped the other four boats and I told them, 'Look to the rear.' When they looked back they saw the rainbow, and I told them, 'Look, big one surely is looking after us.' And then the rain behind us stopped. The rainbow. But ahead of us a big rain was getting ready to start falling, and we kept going.

We kept going and going and just before we were approaching the rain about to go into it, we stopped again. We stopped and I told the guys to check our stuff that was under the tarp. 'And if someone is not properly covered, tell us and we will go ashore at a village and wait for this rain to first finish and then go again.' But we waited there and they said, 'It's okay, let's just go ahead in it.'

So we set out and went on. We all went ahead into the rain, but when we went ahead into the rain we did not get wet, but we saw the next boat on ahead and the rain was falling but it did not get wet. We went on, we were dancing because these marvelous things were happening to us, and that rain was going, it was fleeing from us, as if someone was forcing away, was pushing away the rain, and we went on ahead where it was good. We went on and we came to Vaungung and the rain was moving on down.

And all the people here at home they were standing and they saw the big rain. During that whole day they were watching this rain and they were worried because they knew that we had gone up to get the Bibles. As they watched and saw that this place was completely black with this big rain

they were worried. And we were also going on down and we saw this place was completely dark, the rain was covering up the world. But these people also were watching that rain and they got worried for us, but we actually were not wet.

So we got to Vaungung then and we were stopping there and we organized how we would continue going with the boats. And so we thought that we should go ahead all together all at the same speed. All the boats would go along at that speed and we would proceed along together. The last stretch of travelling to here to home. So we went on like that, all the boats going along at the same speed, and we went in a group together.

But here at home they were seeing the rain and they were worried but they were watching and they looked and looked and they saw a light lighting up the boats. A big light was shining on the boats and they saw the five boats, they were going along but that light was shining on them.

We on the boats did not see the light but we all had the same sensation/feeling that on these boats we were carrying a person, who was a very special person.

As for myself, I was respectful of this thing I was carrying, because it was as though I was not carrying books but indeed a person, but a real person. And the other guys have come and told me that it was just like that, but they also sensed that it was not books, they were carrying a person. And so they were very careful that this person should not get wet, they were very careful for him all the way on the trip down.

So we came nearer, while these people here were seeing that light. We were approaching in a group, I entered first here into the passage, but when I looked up ahead over here, I saw that there were many people here, everywhere here in from of this house, all along the shore it was full, and people were running from over there, on the shore people were running this way, and people were running down here, and this area was completely full, it was very full of people.

So when I saw the people and I was still approaching over there, I started crying. I started crying when I saw all the many people like that who had come to meet this book. And I was happy and I was just crying.

Well we came right up near and we were pushing up the boats, we were all standing beside the boats and the people started singing. When the people were singing, they were singing along and it was not clear, because all the people were now crying. Everyone was crying and there was a sensation/feeling that came upon all the people. And all of us on the boats we were standing together over there in the water, we also were crying. And the singing was not working, only a few people were singing, they were determined to keep singing and all the men were crying. All the women were crying.

So then the song was over and the crying was continuing, but papa was saying that they would now pray, and they were praying but the people were still crying. It went on and it finished and they said that we the young men should carry up the books. So we decided that one boat would be unloaded first, then the next one and so on until all five boats were done.

Well the first boat was going and the young men were coming down, and they had said that only the young men were to carry but when they began carrying the older men, the big men they also

carried, the older women also carried. They came and put them down here and others took them up here into the house.

Well when all the carrying was finished, they readied the meal and we ate. We were eating and there were many people who were giving their words of thanks, words of meeting the book which now arrived here at home. And some people were telling about what they had seen, this light, this light they saw shining on the five boats while we were coming down.

We told them that we on the boats did not see the light but that we had had this sensation like this, we were not carrying just books, we were carrying a person. On all of our boats we were carrying a person, and so we had respect. While we were going along we had a very great respect so that we should not fool around and with bad fooling around on the boats or argue with each other or say bad things because we were carrying a person on this boat who was a very important person. And so we were determined to care very well for this thing that it should not get wet because of this sensation that it was not books but a person. Yes, those were our words to them like that.

Then I left the guys and I went up to auntie Tiu in the school and Melengga started telling me that when he was working up on the house he heard the boats. He ran down and he was standing up there and he looked down and saw a light shining on the boats, it was shining on all five boats. He saw it and he realized that this was a very marvelous thing. It was already turning night but he saw the light shining on the boats. When he saw this thing, he supposed that he was the only one seeing it, but many others were also seeing it. When he told about it, some other people also reported the same thing. Yes this very thing that Melengga saw, this light, and many other people here in this village also reported it. My mother and father also reported it. And the people at Metemaung also reported that they had also seen the light.

I am just telling them the same thing I already said that it is true, it was not just books we were carrying but actually a person. We ourselves felt it that we were carrying a person that was very special, and so we were determined to take care of that person. Yes, many people are telling about their experiences/feelings.

Just today a guy was telling me about what he had experienced at the time, that he also saw the light and when the boats were coming up to shore and he was walking along here and he did not wish to come over here because there were very many people and he was thinking that he would leave but while he was walking along here and he was about to walk by but he had a sensation that was special, and he thought that he should not go away, he should come and stand here and meet. When he was coming this way over here and we had come and was standing the sensation came to him and he began crying. He also cried when he saw the Bibles coming, he also began crying. The guy who expressed it like this, Vitolos, he is with us here. And I am telling you-two that he also saw the light, and the sensation and he came and also cried at that time. Like that. Thank you.

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Question: Why is it that this coming was so significant? Why did these signs occur?

Answer: My view is that when this word is arriving we all recognize that all these signs that appeared, they came from big man, because it is his very own word and that word, it is he himself. And so in that same view that I see that that word is God himself, so he made known to me that sensation that I was not carrying just books, but I was carrying a person, someone who it was very important to take care of him. It is a very important matter to me, and so I must take care of him. I believe that all those signs that appeared shows that God himself is showing that this word is not a mere/unimportant thing, it is very important this word, because it is God himself.

Question: Before there never was something like this and there won't be again a thing like this. What is your view on that?

Yes, that statement is very true, because when I was going to get the book, we were coming back down and I view it this way, I myself for me I view it this way that I surely don't want to not help in this work by not helping. I desired that I be part of the preparation and part of this work until it is finished, because it is only once that this thing will happen in my lifetime and in the future it is not possible that it will come again. My great desire is that at all times I be part of this work.

Question: Was the carrying of the books at Asoung something like the transporting of the books on the boats?

For myself I feel that it is very similar, but I was telling jokingly the guys - many people took my words as joking, but it is true for me, I was telling the truth - you must take very good care of this thing, you are not carrying just a book, in fact a person. But I was saying this based on my experience/sensation from the time of our carrying the books down on the boat, and at that time I was completely involved in this project, there was one thing - I don't wish to speak too much of this lest I insult everyone, but for myself, I saw it this way, when we arrived here, it would have been very good if on the following day, we had launched this book. That very same heavy/importance of sensation/experience we were still experiencing on that day, we would have waited only one night, and the next day launch it. The same importance was still in effect, it was still there.