



Off the Beaten Path

Living remote areas requires travelling in remote areas. Our 4x4 had given us lots of stories to write about over the years. Here are 3 of our most memorable.

Story # 1

We were travelling out from the tribe when all the sudden there was smoke from the front hood coming out. We stopped the vehicle and checked under the hood. The battery was half melted and in flames. We shut the hood quickly. We decided to keep going on the steep mountain road back to town because to stop the engine would mean no getting it start again and being stranded without any help.

As we got going again, we realized the brakes were not working. We had to use the hand brake to stop the vehicle from crashing into the rock face or going down the side of the cliff. Again we checked under the hood and noticed the battery terminal had actually been touching the brake line which in-turn melted a hole in the brake line releasing all the brake fluid.

Did we stop? No, we kept going and put the vehicle into the lowest gear possible which is 4x4 Low. This is an incredibly low gear, which allowed us to travel down the windy mountain road along with the hand brake to stop the vehicle completely.

When we finally arrived at our destination, we turned the engine off and realized our problem. Apparently the clamps that hold the battery had loosened up over time causing the battery to slide back enough to touch the metal brake line causing the fire.

Story # 2

We were travelling back to the tribe going up the steep mountain pass when we saw the rush of steam come out from the front hood followed by the smell

of coolant. We stopped the vehicle and discover the radiator had ruptured and radiator fluid spewing out. Did we stop. Heavens no, we filled up the radiator with the rest of our water and kept going. Again, spewing radiator fluid. Did we stop ? No , we actually found someone in the middle of the mountains to give us water and we kept going. Again, spew. This time a barrel of water. Again, a creek. Again, a barrel and another barrel. The radiator would blow every 5-7 kms .For another 80 kms there was water in the form of a barrel or a creek until we finally made it home. What are the chances of that happening ?

Story # 3

This is the most recent vehicle mishap we have had. We again needed to travel out of the tribe to get supplies,when all the sudden a snap while going downward. The steering wheel seemed to spin forever before it actually turned. Did we stop? No, we kept going and then all the sudden the steering started to make a loud moaning sound and all soon the steering became really hard. We managed to get to a place to buy some steering fluid. However, as we put it in we could see the red fluid leak out the bottom just as fast.

Did we stop? No of course not, we kept going another 90 kms through the steep and rough mountain pass to a repair shop. Every turn was a circus act because the steering wheel needed to be turned at least five times with brute force in order to get it to turn properly. We would often end up on the other side of the road still trying to turn, praying for mercy that no oncoming traffic was coming around the corner.

We finally made it to the repair shop. The mechanic said the steering rack bushings had given out and one bolt was completely gone and the hose was subsequently rubbing against the chassis which in-turn caused a hole to leak out all the steering fluid.

As ridiculous as these stories are, they are all true and very much a part of our memorable experiences living in a remote area of the Philippines. We are sure there will be lots more. Embarrassingly, our church sent us a lot of money to replace our vehicle but instead we have been sinking money into trying to get our old vehicle fixed so we can sell it. Please pray God will work something out and keep us safe in the mean time.

Hard Place

We have recently been facing lots of challenges in the tribe. It has been fascinating watching how tribal people face their own challenges and the depths they go to try to fix them. We have witnessed some strange and sad events lately.



Exhumed bodies

Often when there is sickness or hardship in the tribe, the sickee will try to divine why the sickness has occurred by way of a dream he had. The dream is often of a deceased member of the family who is crying out to them from the grave in want of something. It could be they are need of a blanket or they are complaining of the place they were buried etc. If the later, the body will be exhumed and moved to a more preferable area. A pig will be sacrificed and the body moved and reburied. In the last 2 months, there has been 3 bodies exhumed including that of an infant.

Actually, the families of these people have all faced difficulties in their lives and they cannot cope with the pain. 2 of those families have had child-rearing problems: the sons have turned to stealing and rude embarrassing behavior. With the other family there was sickness from a UTI infection. However, after exhuming the remains of their family members, their problems remain. The children are still ornery and the sickness is worsened.

It is very sad to watch sometimes as they often go into heavy debt to provide the animal sacrifices they need to appease the deceased spirits.



Jumping In

It has been a busy time for us for medical issues as well. One girl came to us the other day and she had severe burn all the way down her leg. She had spilt scalding coffee on herself. Christine changed her bandages every day for 2 weeks. Another girl came to us with a huge bump on her forehead. It almost seemed unreal. It was a infected and full of puss. Christine had to clean it out. It was the most disgusting thing I have ever seen. Yuck.

There simply is nowhere for them to go. They cannot pay for medical help and often when they do, the medicines or supplies are not there that they need. So, do we help or not ?? We do not pretend to be doctors but the alternatives are unthinkable. If wounds are not treated and simple antibiotics are not given, these people would succumb to a lot of pain and suffering. We have been in rock and hard place at times trying to figure out what to do. When things get serious we have to drive people out to the nearest town to see a doctor. Geff had to drive out 4 times this last month to bring patients out for severe abdominal pain.



Accumulative Effect

Well, does helping people make a difference ? God's word says , " We love Him, because He first loved us." Indeed it seems like people are affected when they receive help. There has never been so many people willing to come to church these days. Even Basaya , our neighbor, is coming after all these years. He even put a sign up that his son made on the meeting place where we meet every Sunday.

Some have renounced their "old ways" saying it doesn't work and desire to find a new and different way. Loisa is one of those ladies. She is going to lead and share this weekend for the first time because we will be away for training up north. Praise God.



Prayer Requests

Pray for our boys at school. They have tons of homework and lots of temptation not to get it done.

Pray for sickness that comes this time of year in the tribe due to the rapidly changing weather.

Thank You.
Harada Family