



And the Word Came With Power

How God Met and Changed A People Forever

Book Review

– By Joanne Shetler and Patricia Purvis

“**A**nd the Word Came With Power is really a love story. From the beginning God loved the Balangao people, proud headhunters who lived on the magnificent rice terraces of the Philippines. And he loved me, a shy farm girl from California who was inclined to trust God and dream big dreams.” (And the Word Came with Power, pg. 7)

Joanne Shetler sat in her seat, stunned by the missionary’s logic. She reviewed his numbers in her mind. Only eight percent of missionary workers are focused on the least reached areas of the world. The numbers riveted her. They meant that she would have to go.

But where will I go? How will I know what to do? How can I be a missionary? When will I know that my work is done? These were her questions. The book *And the Word Came with Power* is the story of God’s answers to those questions.

Joanne sensed God’s call to bring the Bible to people who did not know Him. She followed this call by joining Wycliffe Bible Translators. God sent Joanne deep into the jungles of the Philippines, a two-day hike across switch-back trails and steep terraces.

She moved in among the Balangao people. “Why did you come?” the people asked her. She told them that she came to bring God’s Word. With that Word came power.

When Joanne arrived, she found one woman waiting for her. Someone once told Tekla about one true God who loved her. He was stronger than the spirits. Tekla stopped sacrificing to spirits in hope of finding this God. She waited, longing. People became angry with her and pressured her to sacrifice. Her strength grew weak. When Joanne found her, Tekla was near giving into them.

Joanne found other people in the jungle. She found an old man named Canao who adopted her as his

daughter. She found two spirit mediums serving the spirits at the threat of their lives. She found women dying in childbirth, and people tormented by their sin. Above all she found God to be powerful and loving enough to extend His hand to them all.

Before God’s Word came to the people, the Balangao lived in constant fear. When a child fell sick, they wondered how they offended the spirits. Maybe someone stepped on a spirit in the woods. Maybe they disturbed a spirit’s house. They sacrificed to make amends. The people had no power.

As Joanne translated the Bible into the Balangao language, one by one the Balangao people came to trust the one true God. The entrance of God’s Word brought light. The men began preaching it on Sundays. Old women learned to read and treasure it. Young men brought it to neighboring villages. The church sprang up around God’s Word.

And the Word Came With Power is a story of God’s love and mercy. It is the true story of how God led the life of Joanne Shetler and met the lives of the Balangao people. His power changed them forever.

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