

in-ká-hai
HOW SWEET IT IS!

Chantal Chen

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To those on the front lines and behind the scenes alike who strive tirelessly to bring the gospel to those who have not yet heard.

acknowledgments

This book is the effort of many individuals who, by the grace of God, worked together to make it possible.

I would like to thank John Cross, who entrusted me with this project, taught me the ins and outs of chronological Bible teaching, patiently guided me along the way and oversaw it to completion. I am grateful for Paul Humphreys, who first envisioned the concept of this book and made all the necessary arrangements to bring it into being. And thanks to his son, Scott Humphreys, who penned the insightful Study Guide that truly made the book what it is. Thanks extends also to Rachel Bader, Amos and Jennifer Kwok, and David Cross, who contributed behind the scenes to bring this together.

I am indebted to Pete and Leah Humphreys for graciously trusting me, a complete stranger in the beginning, to put their story on paper. They have become precious friends in the Lord through this process! Thank you for telling your story and staying involved throughout the process to ensure that the doctrine is correctly represented and the story best communicated. Thank you for your transparency, humility, dedication and godly example.

I appreciate those who helped me in the writing. Russ Smyth, Elaine Yoon and members of the Coeur d'Alene Bible Church Writer's Guild were kind enough to provide me with valuable comments and feedback.

Gratitude goes to my husband, Derek, and all the family and friends who have stood behind me and prayed for this project. Our churches in Chicago, Evanston Bible Fellowship and Evangelical Taiwan Church, have faithfully supported us.

Although told in their voice, this is not just Pete and Leah's story. Time and time again, they have talked about the countless others

before and after them who have sacrificed much so the Manjúi people could hear the Word of God. These individuals, many unnamed, served in various capacities, such as Bible teachers, support workers, linguists and other vital roles. Their work and dedication cannot be ignored. Of the few I can identify here, I would like to thank Norm Fry, Gordie Hunt and Jeff Hunt for providing me with their insight regarding Santa Rosa, Manjúi culture and the Manjúi church.

Indeed, there have been too many wonderful stories, too many touching testimonies I wish space and time would allow me to include. I am grateful to all those who have served in Santa Rosa, and to the Manjúi believers, for allowing their story to be made known. It has been a blessing to me, and it will surely be a blessing to more people than you will ever know.

To maintain ease in reading and remain consistent with the Bible text chosen, lower case initial letters have been used for pronouns that relate to God.

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THE MANJÚIS

(The accented syllable is represented by capitalized letters.)

Manjúi (people group) Mahn-HOO-ee

Hanimo (M) Ha-NEE-mo—Humphreys' neighbour. Husband of Tina.

Isnei (M) Eesh-NAY—Son of Meyin and known as the local thief when he was young. Later, the husband of Zitila.

Juana'a (F) WAH-na-uh—A young single mother with three children. Suffered from TB.

Kalowi (M) Kah-LO-wee—Gifted orator and leader in the Manjúi community. Pete's language helper.

Laanis (M) LAW-nees—Shaman and family patriarch.

Lanino (M) Lah-NEE-no—Soft-spoken young man.

Laweyin (M) Lah-WAY-yin—Blind shaman in his 40s. Leah's language helper. Uncle to Seyin.

Limina (F) Lee-MEEN-uh—Daughter of Laanis and wife of Liwis.

Lisa (F) LEE-suh—Baby daughter of Laanis.

Liwis (M) LEE-wees—Stocky young man. Husband of Limina.

Meyin (M) MAY-yin—Father of Isnei.

Nina (F) NEE-nuh—Daughter of Laanis.

Nowai (M) No-WHY—Uncle to Laanis.

Sesa (M) SEH-suh—Son of Laanis.

Seyin (M) SAY-yin—Nephew of Laweyin. Brother to Tina.

Wanyo (M) WAN-yo—Young man in the tribe.

Wiwita (F) WEE-wee-tuh—Wife of Laanis.

Tina (F) TEE-nuh—Wife of Hanimo.

Weinkil (M) Wayne-KEEL—Shrewd shaman, feared by the tribe.

Zitila (F) Zee-TEE-luh—Daughter of Laanis and wife of Isnei.

THE TEAM

(Bold-faced names are mentioned in this book.)

1971-1978	Norm & Iris Fry Made initial contact with the Manjús.
1971-1977	Verl & Susie Koons Made initial contact with the Manjús.
1972-1982	Gary & Mickey Stous (married in 1979)
1973-1976	Rich & Dee Perik
1974-1975	Curt & Mary Wildish (short-term help)
1974-1987	Steve & Ithie Jackson (married in 1978) Physical aspects of ministry.
1977-ongoing	Gordie & Nancy Hunt First Bible teachers, then Bible translators.
1978-1979	Roland & Betty Connery
1980-1997	Pete & Leah Humphreys (Cheralyn, Shaun, Deryk, Charissa)
1985-1995	Jerry & Sue Pettus
1987-1997	Don & Julie Flower Literacy and physical aspects of the ministry.
1988-1991	Dave Wood
1991-1993	Brad & Leslie Hilton
1992-1993	Dan & Jan McNutt (short-term help)
1996-2002	James & Penny Camacho
1996-2007	Dave & Hope Bradley
1999-2010	Jamie & Char Hunt (Gordie & Nancy's son)
2001-ongoing	Jeff & Stacy Hunt (Gordie & Nancy's son)

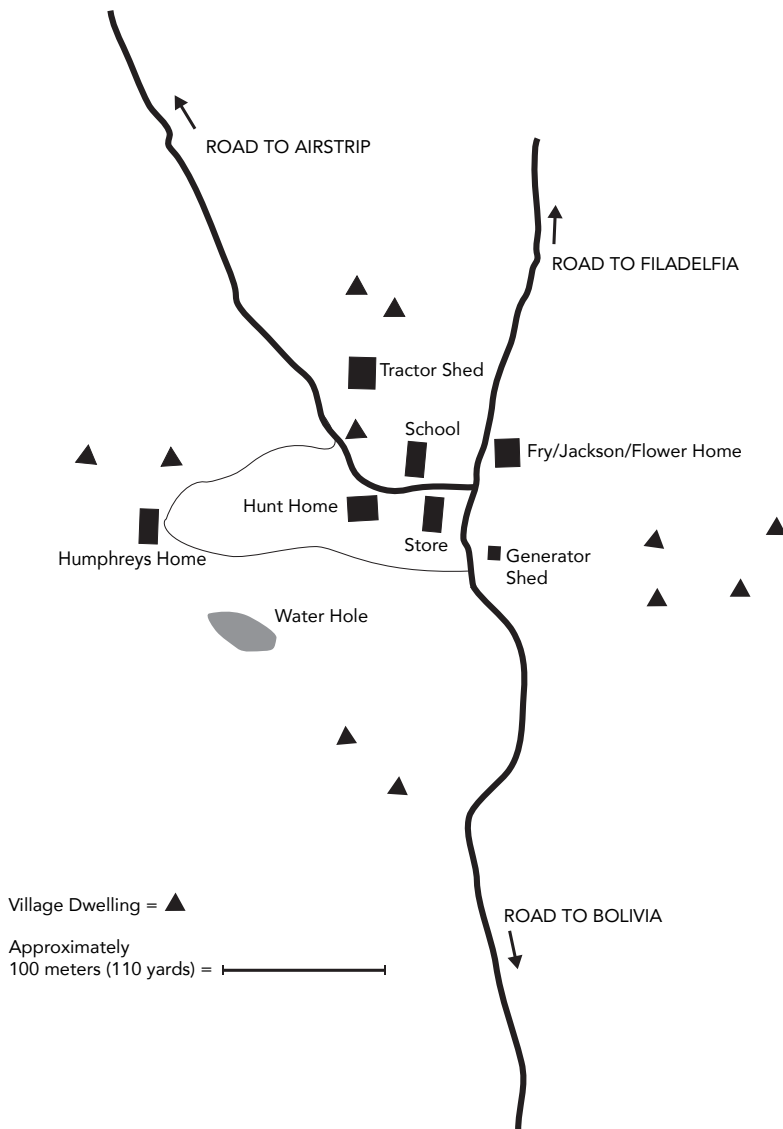
OTHER

Laywot (LIE-wote)—Pete's Manjúi nickname, literally "radio man."

Neshen-hewot (Nee-SHEN-hee-wote)—Name of Satan.

Zinat (Shee-NAHT)—Name of God (literally, our father).

MAP OF SANTA ROSA



foreword

If I handed you a piece of wild honeycomb, you'd notice its dark, sticky surface matted with dust, crawling with buzzing bees, and wiggling with larvae. Sure it's intriguing to look at, but how reluctant would you be if I dared you to take a bite?

As you read **in-ká-hai** you'll notice all sorts of foreign matter—thorny jungles, odd cultures, strange languages, dangerous animals, even demonic encounters. Like wild honey, you might see it as an intriguing story, but one you'd be hesitant to try yourself.

This book is the telling of a true jungle adventure. It records how committed men and women helped the Manjúi people come to believe what the psalmist wrote:

*How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey
to my mouth!*

Psalm 119:103 NIV

But how did it happen? What obstacles were overcome? And how did the Manjúi people respond?

Instead of leaving the answers to these questions at the edge of the Chaco jungle, you're invited to consider the lessons learned in the midst of struggles, and how they might apply in your community—with those God might enable you to reach with the Bible's message.

So read on—I dare you! You may find that what's offered here is sweeter than you think.

~Scott W. Humphreys

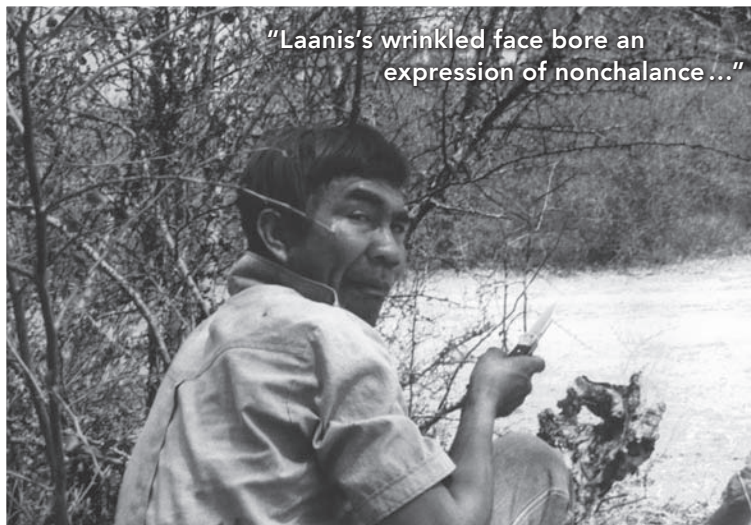
Nephew of Pete Humphreys

prologue

The hot north wind kicked up sand and fine grey dust. The grit stuck to Laanis's brown skin like an oily film. The sun was just setting, but that did not bring relief from the scorching heat that held the land under its grip. Laanis squinted and scanned the horizon. The only things in sight were the gnarly *quebracho* trees and long-barbed cacti etched like skeletal snakes against a dull, colourless sky.

Laanis's wrinkled face bore an expression of nonchalance with just a hint of irritation, for he had weathered many long, dry seasons before. His eyes were bloodshot from a tiring day of hunting. Streaks of dry sweat caked the sides of his face and the nape of his bony neck. His greying hair and scraggly beard were smothered in dirt.

His fiber-woven game bag only grew heavier and the hunger pangs, like blows to his stomach, grew stronger as he trudged back wearily



"Laanis's wrinkled face bore an expression of nonchalance ..."

to the water hole near which his family was camped. Laanis realized that this was his third day without a bite to eat. No wonder. The scrub jungle was *neshi-wata*—barren and foodless—and the dry season had only begun!

He couldn't bring himself to go back to camp and tell them that he'd had another empty-handed day of hunting. Oh, the agony of having his whole family spend another night in hunger! He knew his wife would not be in a good mood, especially since she had been taking care of a hungry, crying baby all day. He found himself kicking over twigs and leaves to try to find even one lizard or mouse he could kill for food.

But as darkness descended upon the scrub jungle and stars began populating the night sky, Laanis quickened his steps. Although he knew the jungle well, he was also aware that the worst mistake a Manjúi man could make was to stay out in the dark on his own. Evil spirits lurked behind every tree and could snatch his soul at any time. They were conniving and malicious, doing harmful things to unsuspecting mortals who dared cross their way. Laanis shuddered. Even though he was revered as a powerful shaman, he knew better than to leave himself vulnerable to the demons.

Laanis breathed a sigh of relief as a small fire came into sight. He counted the dark figures in the shadows: his wife, son and six daughters, including the newborn. Good—they were all safe. The presence of another fire farther back in the brush indicated that more relatives had joined his family during the day.

Stepping closer, he could see his wife, Wiwita, huddled by the fire next to their oldest daughters, Limina and Nina. They were talking in low voices. Even though the night was oppressively hot, the women stayed close to the fire where they would be safer from the spirits.

Upon his return, Nina's almond-shaped eyes glanced up hopefully beneath the long, unkempt hair shadowing her naïve face. Laanis's dejected expression told her that he had come home empty handed. Her eyes dropped instantly and her brows knit tightly together. Young as she was, Nina was familiar with the feeling of hunger.

His son, six-year-old Sesa, was trying to yank something out of a stray dog's mouth. Laanis was just about to yell at Sesa for wandering too far from the fire but found himself too weary to put out the extra effort. It wouldn't be any use flying into a temper now, anyhow. Sesa was probably restless from not having eaten anything substantial for the last few days. Laanis's three younger daughters were sprawled out in the dirt, in that state between sleep and wake. The baby, Lisa, who was barely six months old, lay naked and asleep on Wiwita's lap.

Tiny Lisa uttered a muffled cry as she stirred in her sleep, evidently haunted by a nightmare. Her puff of black hair, tangled and tousled, stuck out in all directions. Her little brown face was smeared with clay, just like the rest of her body, from rolling around on the bare ground all day. She opened her mouth and yawned, then let out another short cry, this time louder.

"Nothing today," Laanis said as he sat down next to the fire. His wife sighed sullenly and arranged herself and Lisa in a sleeping position.

He glanced over his shoulder at a muddy puddle—what was left of the water hole they had found three weeks ago. Even at its best, it had only been a few paces across. Now the water was all but gone. This meant they had to search for another source. If they didn't find one, they would be very thirsty by nightfall tomorrow.

We'll leave this place in the morning, he thought, or else we'll die here.

He knew Wiwita was still weak from childbirth and did not do well on the long hikes through the jungle. But Laanis was glad that she

was alive and could walk. He remembered that only a few months ago she was so thin and emaciated he could fit her whole body in his woven string bag. He had carried her and their newborn daughter in the bag when they travelled through the jungle.

After Wiwita had given birth, Laanis had forbidden her from eating any milk, meat or eggs, in accordance with tribal food taboos. Her own sister had almost died from a wracking cough the year before for not following the ancestors' instructions regarding food. Hadn't the shamans chanted long hours to the spirits to save her?

Yet the only foods Wiwita had been allowed to eat—cactus hearts and squash—were scarce during the drought season. Laanis had watched his wife dwindle into a pile of skin and bones.

Laanis knew that the baby, too, had been a weakling from the moment she was born. He should have known better than to let her live.

"She'll never survive!" Laanis had said after taking one look at Lisa. "We should bury her."

"No, no, no!" Wiwita had cried, her lips quivering. She held the baby to her tightly and turned her back to him. For the next few hours, she wept uncontrollably and wouldn't as much as talk to him.

Reluctantly, he had agreed to let her keep Lisa. Too weak to breastfeed, Wiwita had given her honey water. The baby had sucked it up voraciously, but she didn't seem to grow much.

Now the girl was hot and sticky and obviously irritated by her empty stomach. Laanis lay down by the smoky fire and tried to ignore Lisa's finicky whimpers. As he drifted off to sleep, his thoughts wandered to the inevitable question: *Are we going to survive tomorrow?*



A single, piercing cry woke Laanis from his slumber.

It was still night. Laanis sat up and looked over at Lisa, cradled in Wiwita's arms. Her red face was scrunched up in a tight knot and her eyes, nose and mouth were encrusted with white and yellow pus. Wiwita was trying to make her hush and go back to sleep, but Laanis knew something was wrong.

"Sesa, wake up!" he hissed. "Go get your uncles and cousins." Sesa's footsteps pattered into the distance.

Laanis scooped the baby up. The tiny body, trembling and shaking, felt almost weightless in his arms. Lisa had been restless for the last few days, but this was not one of those normal times of fussiness caused by hunger, thirst or heat. An evil spirit must have snatched her soul when they were asleep! That was making her sick. Laanis uttered a curse. He must act quickly.

Laanis's ancestors had taught him about the feared demon chief *Neshen-hewot*—"the flesh person," as all the Manjúi called him—who sent out his lackeys to snatch people's souls. *Neshen-hewot's* servant demons were very sly, very powerful. They could strike when a person least expected it. If Lisa's soul was stolen and not retrieved, she would die and *Neshen-hewot* would eat the flesh off her bones.

Laanis had healed his daughter several times in the past, always succeeding in retrieving her soul, but he had a feeling that tonight would be different. It must have been a powerful demon who acted this time—he was sure of it. He needed all the reinforcement he could get. He hoped his male relatives together would be powerful enough to save her.

His two brothers and three nephews arrived. Forming a tight circle around Lisa, they began chanting. A low, monotonic rumbling sound arose simultaneously from the throats of the men, led by Laanis.

Wiwita and her daughters sat close to the fire, a stone's throw away from the group of shamans, waiting in suspense. Sesa inched closer to the group and cocked his head as he listened intently. Even though he was young, he knew that one day he too would be expected to do the things that shamans did, like his father. *What does all of this mean?* he thought with curiosity.

The eerie rumbling grew louder and louder until it became a steady, rhythmic hum. One by one, the men fell into a trance. Some stared emptily into space while others' eyes rolled back into their sockets. Sharp, rapid yells now accompanied the humming. Laanis called out to the spirit world.

"Oh, my *spirit helper*—retriever of stolen souls—hear my voice and come to me!" he cried. "Clothe yourself with my body! Empower me to find my daughter's soul and return it to her!" As his *spirit helper* entered him, Laanis began convulsing. Other men followed suit, summoning their *spirit helpers*. Controlled by them, they too began to convulse.

The invisible battle began. The possessed men grappled and wrestled with *Neshen-hewot's* demons in a desperate effort to retrieve the baby's soul. Shouts and grunts, cries and groans filled the night air.

"I see her soul! There it is; there it is!" one of Laanis's brothers declared. He lurched forward, only to fall headfirst into the dirt. "There it goes! Go after it!"

"Watch out! Wait, I think I have it!" Laanis shouted. Just as he was about to grab hold of it, he grunted and staggered backward as if he had been stabbed in the stomach.

The battle went on for hours. As the crackling fire died into glowing embers, the shouts and cries diminished into mere whispers. One by one, the men slumped down onto the ground, exhausted.

Wiwita pulled Lisa to her, crying softly in the darkness. Sesa and the girls had fallen asleep on the dirt floor. After what seemed like an eternity, the men awoke from their trance. Dawn was just about to break. Laanis was the first to speak.

“We have fought the demons courageously, and we have lost,” he said matter-of-factly. “Lisa’s soul is irretrievable. She is gone.” Although the baby was still breathing laboriously between whimpers and wheezes, the shaman had proclaimed her fate. Her soul was *it-nan*—extinct. She was as good as dead.

At this, Wiwita broke into a loud wail. Sitting cross-legged on the ground, she held Lisa tightly to her body and threw her head back, howling desperately. Limina and Nina wrapped their arms around their mother, squeezing her and Lisa.

Laanis’s older brother came forward. “Let go of her,” he said. “She’s dead.” The other men had already begun digging a small hole in the ground to bury the baby.

“Noooooooo . . . nooooooooo . . .” Wiwita wailed. Giving up the body would mean it was over. They would never see the baby again.

Laanis felt a heavy pang of loss and sadness, for he too had hoped that Lisa would live, but his heart was numb from the teachings of his ancestors. They had told him that whenever a person’s soul was lost to the demons, he or she would surely die. Laanis had chanted over too many people to be mistaken. This was clearly fate. What else was there to do but bury her?

By this time, the whole family clan had gathered. They formed a circle and quietly watched the drama unfold. They were used to this. Not all Manjúi babies were expected to survive anyway.

A tug-of-war broke out between the women and Laanis's brother. He grabbed Lisa's ankle and tried to pry her body out of the women's grip. Limina, who was on the other side, fended him off, yelling at him to stop and clawed at his hands. Another brother stepped forward and tried to grab Lisa from the other side. The relatives stood watching from the sidelines. Sesa looked on in despair as his baby sister's body was tugged at and twisted.

"It's time," someone said.

Two more men stepped forward to join in the struggle. The women, still huddled close together, wailed and howled as they were being attacked from all sides. They were tenacious, but eventually broke down from sorrow and exhaustion. The men won. Dangling Lisa by the arm, one of them carried her limp body a distance from the camp and dropped it into a shallow depression in the ground.

Covering the body with dirt, the men built a fire on top of her grave and burned the few things ever associated with the little girl: the woven blanket that Wiwita had wrapped her in and the gourd she had been fed from. They did not want her soul to come back and haunt them, so they were going to erase every trace of Lisa.

Wiwita fell facedown into the dirt and remained there, wailing uncontrollably. The wails were hollow and piercing.

Laanis slumped onto the goatskin next to his wife. Hopelessness was thick in the air. Soon, they would be packing up and travelling to another area of the jungle—without Lisa, for she was *it-nan*, extinct.

Dark and despairing thoughts, together with Wiwita's heart-wrenching wails, would permeate the jungle for many days to come. And the memory of his daughter's death would plague Laanis's mind for decades.