

Repentance Story

An NTM missionary, Pete Humphreys, was teaching the gospel to a small semi-nomadic tribal group in the Chaco desert of Paraguay, South America. The tribe is called “Manjui” (pronounced mahn-HOO-wee). The Manjui tribes people had no previous Bible background, nor did they have any concept of a supreme spirit being. God was totally foreign to them. It was necessary to present the Bible using a careful chronological approach.

As the teaching progressed, Pete realized there was huge potential for syncretism (the mixing of Biblical truth with their own tribal beliefs). To avoid this serious problem, he took a proactive step. Taking a letter-size sheet of paper, he turned it sideways, and drew a line down the middle creating two columns. On the left side of the line, he made a list of several traditional beliefs held by the tribal people relating to the subject of spirit beings. Then, on the right hand side, he wrote out what the Bible teaches about each belief. Several of the tribal people had learned to read and write by this time, or had a relative that knew how, so the sheet of paper was handed out at the next teaching session. Pete emphasized the point that what their ancestors had taught, and what the Bible teaches were completely opposite. The question was, “Which side of the line teaches the truth?” They couldn’t believe both; the two sides were mutually exclusive.

Several weeks went by. Then, late one night, a middle-aged Manjui man named Kawanya (kuh-WAHN-yuh) came to Pete and asked if they could talk. He was accompanied by his wife, three sons and one daughter-in-law. After the usual chit chat, Kawanya pulled out his sheet of paper. It was limp, and well worn. In fact, the words were faded in places. Kawanya then proceeded to tell Pete why he had come. He related how he had taken his list, and read it over and over. He pointed his weathered finger to all the things written on the left side of the line about the Manjui’s traditionally held beliefs, and confirmed that they were exactly as his father had taught

him. Kawanya had never questioned these beliefs before. Then he pointed to the right side of the line, and stated emphatically that what the Bible said was completely opposite from what he had always held to be true. Kawanya went on to share how he had “gathered his sight together over and over again.” (Manjui translation for thinking about something). The seriously worn paper bore testimony to this fact.

Finally he said, “Pete, I’ve made up my mind!” He took the paper, folded it in half along the line, and clasped it between both hands out in front of him. As he held up the side with the tribal beliefs on it, he said, “All my life I thought these things were true. Now I have heard what God’s Words say.”

Still clasping the paper between both hands, and with deliberate precision, he turned the paper over and brought the Bible’s list face up. He then stated with conviction, “I am turning my back on what I previously believed to be true and I am now facing Jesus. The old ways are deceptions of Satan. I now believe God’s words are true.”

This story illustrates the concept of “repentance”—having a change of mind about what one believes to be true.

The above story took place at the time of Kawanya’s salvation. He brought his family with him because they too had decided to put their faith in the Saviour. I sat with them in my shop while each one of them gave clear testimonies of their understanding of the message and faith in Christ.

**WHAT THE
MANJUI**

BELIEVE ABOUT LIFE

**WHAT THE
BIBLE**

TEACHES ABOUT LIFE