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Hi Brothers & Sisters

A belated Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! I hope you had a wonderful time, despite Covid-related restrictions, and that 2021 will be a better year all around. We continue to hold you in prayer for good health, safety and perseverance through the coming months.

Christmas and New Year's in P.N.G. are linked to broiling hot weather and lethargy! I didn't even put the decorations up this year. The drawback to assembling and decorating the (artificial) Christmas tree, when sweating, is getting coated with fake snow and glitter and then having to shower to get it all off. There is absolutely no static cling here. Despite the less-than-Christmas feeling, we still enjoyed it. The highlight was doing all the preparation for Christmas dinner and then not having the promised chickens to roast! (We had a really good laugh over that). We enjoyed ham sandwiches and fruit pies instead on Christmas day, and then I went and bought chicken at the grocery the next week for a late celebration. With temperatures in the mid-90s (34.6C as I write this), cooking and eating are just not that enjoyable anyway. 😊

The past couple of months have been slow. In normal times, things tend to wind down at the end of the school year (late November/early December). In 2020 it happened much earlier. Miring and I have both recovered from our game of Malaria-volleyball which I mentioned in the last report (thank you for your prayers), but soon after – when doing my repeat blood-slide – I found out that I had mild Typhoid. A couple of weeks of antibiotics sorted that out and I am well now.

Due to the heat, I haven't been spending as much time in the library. The building has no shade and ventilation is poor (despite 4 ceiling fans and a floor fan). It is significantly hotter than my house. I've spent quite a bit of time, instead, working on Bible lessons (in simple English and Tok Pisin) that I hope to make available to our students for their personal study or in ladies' classes in the villages. Tok Pisin resources available in Christian bookshops here tend to follow denominational teachings, so aren't always that useful. Another goal is to have more pamphlets/brochures available as a resource. Over the past couple of years, we have been printing 3 or 4 different

brochures for an evangelist working in Lae. He distributes them to different hospitals and health centres, as well as in the prison ministry, along with *The Voice of Truth International* magazine when we have it. I would like to have a greater selection available to anyone visiting the library. Do you have any pamphlets that you have found useful, that can be reproduced and possibly translated? Please contact me if you have anything to share (or any questions) by either replying to this email, or at ruth.zimmeran@aol.com.

M.B.C. Plans

We are looking forward, Lord willing, to the start of the Melanesian Bible College school year. As the number of cases of Covid-19 continues to rise we know that it is very much one-day-at-a-time and greatly appreciate your prayers. As of this year, the new starting time will be early March (instead of late January/early February). The schedule change is to allow more time for the students to register their older children in school in the villages and travel to Lae before the start of school (later-arrivers have been a growing problem over the years). Another benefit will be that overseas visitors arriving in June/early July will have a chance to visit with the students. (We don't anticipate any overseas visitors any time soon, but thinking ahead... 😊). Classes this year will be a repeat of last year since we ended half-way through, with new students coming for block one (March 8-April 15), and then being joined by 2nd and 3rd year students for blocks two (April 19-May 27) and three (June 3-July 15). Literacy classes will resume on March 8th.

Covid-19 Update

My heart and prayers have been with many over the past months as, increasingly, word has come of friends and fellow Christians struggling with Covid-19, especially in Canada and the U.S., and others struggling with loss of work or the extreme lock-down measures being taken. May God's healing and protective hand be with all of us. In P.N.G., case numbers have now climbed to 799 with 9 deaths. There have been positive cases in 16 provinces now, and West New Britain is currently in lock-down. Testing remains low, with only 39,761 tests having been done since March. Lae remains highly unaffected. At any given time, there will be a handful of us wearing masks in public, but life (behaviour) is pretty much the same now as it was before March 2020.

Photos Taken Near the House:



Bougainvillea growing on the front fence



Orchid



Orchid



My friend Siggie. Someone recently referred to her as "turkey". I think it may have been wishful thinking



A mushroom which suddenly made its appearance behind the house.

Prayer Points:

1. The Mesa family, currently visiting Tami Island for a break and time of Bible classes.
2. Taylor & Robyn David. Both have recovered from the Malaria, which brought them to us in November. Taylor returned to their village soon afterwards, and Robyn has continued to stay with us as she battles school assignments for the completion of her diploma. Taylor continues to struggle with seizures and it has been suggested that another C.T. scan is needed, but in order to get a scan they will have to travel either to Kundiawa (10+ hours over a really rough road) or fly to Port Moresby. Neither Kundiawa nor Port Moresby are an option financially right now. The doctors still haven't decided whether his condition is the result of a brain tumour or Tuberculosis (which they treated him for). The fact that he hasn't progressed past seizures is being seen as a good sign. Please continue to pray for him as your prayers are truly helping. Taylor hopes to join the literacy class at M.B.C. this year and is really excited about it.
3. Migi (also called Hezron) Jimi, a young Christian from Indagen, currently in hospital here in Lae with cranial Tuberculosis. His mother, Ziring, was one of my literature students a few years ago. Update: we visited Migi a couple of days ago and he is much improved. He is slowly getting back the use of his legs and is sitting up and talking clearly. We expect that he will soon be released. He has been in hospital for more than 6 months.
4. Ruby Ford – P.N.G. missionary and dear friend – currently undergoing treatment for cancer.
5. The Covid-19 situation worldwide, as well as here in P.N.G. and the government's handling of it.
6. My own plans to travel home, and for God's timing.

Thank you for all of your support – in prayer, finance, or correspondence - over the past year. Please know that you are greatly appreciated. May God continue to guide and bless you despite whatever hardships and challenges you face in this new year, and may His peace and comfort be ever present in your life.

With love in Him,

Ruth

Sponsors:

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