

# Campbell Ramblings

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**Equipping translation work in Papua New Guinea**

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PNG is unpredictable at the best of times. The past three months spent under the threat of COVID have been a significant strain on our mission organisation. As an international body of people, we all seem to have one eye on “home” and one eye on our international partners, all while trying to keep ahead of developments locally. The one comfort is that we are in the hands of a God who knows “the end from the beginning” (Isaiah 46:10).



## Mater artium necessitas...

The saying “necessity is the mother of invention” comes from the above 500 year-old Latin phrase, yet it was a mid 20<sup>th</sup> century psychologist, Kenneth Kaye, who added, “conflict is its father.”

This certainly rings true in a COVID-impacted PNG. With half of the staff absent from Finance Office after March 23 due to the isolation standards applied on our mission base, those left on duty had to pick up the essential tasks, from providing for the cash needs of the community, to paying the bills on time.

This difficulty also provided an opportunity for some much needed internal review, as senior staff had to take on other routine tasks. Many of our national staff are quite accepting of whatever systems are in place for them to work with. It takes a worn out, over-stretched Aussie to “do his block” at the convoluted processes and unnecessary duplication. The outcome has been some streamlined procedures, more effective cash handling processes, and (*my favourite – Keith*) a completely paperless system of paying most of our supplier invoices.

Change does not always come easily here, but the returning national staff have embraced the new systems, and participated in ironing out the ‘bugs’. This is giving them a greater sense of ownership over their tasks and responsibilities. The future looks bright for Finance Office as it emerges from the cloud of COVID.



## Prayer points

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thess 5:16-18

[ Yes... *the verse above is recycled from last newsletter, but it just fits so perfectly to our present situation.* ]

### Ministry

- Praise God for the blessings that He so often brings out of our perceived hardships. You have to wonder why we are continually surprised by this!
- Pray for many in our community who are anxiously waiting for news of possible flights to their home countries. Friends who selflessly chose to stay and continue working have lost family members, missed weddings and births of grandchildren.
- Praise God that PNG has been spared any COVID fatalities. The potential for this to have reflected badly on foreigners in PNG was a concern.
- As translation teams seek to reconnect with village co-workers, pray for protection and a speedy return to normality.

## Ukarumpa, but not as we know it ...

Under COVID, a number of regular Ukarumpa things took on slightly different characteristics.

With the reduction in staff at our airstrip outside the immediate community, it was considered wise to bring the helicopters into one of our sports fields. This also provided the means of an emergency medical evacuation if required. Praise God, no emergency ensued and they are now back in their regular accommodation.



We are accustomed to people leaving on furlough, but not usually by the truckload.

From the air, the place looks the same, but we are a smaller community now that those who came under the high-risk category were encouraged to leave PNG.



Life goes on, however, even under isolation protocols.

Volunteers kept community services going (driving the rubbish tractor was actually a popular job), and the produce market continued, although reduced in size and only once a week. The locals were so thankful for those who stayed and continued to support the community that they presented a gift (Luke 1:1-4). This was both humbling and a great encouragement.



The park across the road from our home provided a location for some crazy Aussies to gather in the rain maintaining social distance.



Thankfully the sun came out a few weeks later for Dudley and Lana King – our replacements at Lae Regional Centre – to meet up with some of the translation and literacy staff they will be working with and supporting.



## Ukarumpa, but not as we knew it (cont)...

The community found ways to occupy ourselves while meeting the social distancing requirements.



Frisbee golf surged in popularity, as did the ever-faithful isolation pastime of jigsaw puzzles.



## Prayer points

### Personal

- Praise God for the stability that comes with having a place to call ours.
- Pray that our home will be yet another means for us to serve the Kingdom through hospitality. There never seems to be a shortage of people needing a good chat over a cuppa.



Gardening is both safe... and productive. We pruned and transplanted a black raspberry bush.



The local motorcycle, trike and quad enthusiasts held a motorcade to entertain the community.

Then there are perhaps some other indicators that some things may be less than "normal"....



One creative local family brought a smile to many by giving their caterpillar hedge a COVID makeover.



Keith received his replacement glasses from Australia. He thinks they make him look 'brainy'.

[ *Twins separated at birth?- Elspeth* ]



## Staying connected...

Having church online has been an unexpected blessing for us during COVID restrictions. As in many countries, PNG has limited public gatherings. Meeting with our Willows family - even if engaging is by chat message and emoticons – has been a lifeline. We are very thankful that this effort was made.

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## The long, long goodbye ...

Nine months after we formally 'retired' from managing the Lae Centre, and after Elspeth filling in for another three months in the interim, we finally got the opportunity to spend some time there with Dudley and Lana King to orient them to the work, and the Lae community.... including a few of the cafes and restaurants! :D

It was much less time than we intended, and far from an ideal orientation. Only two out of seven current staff were present due to the COVID closure, and Lae City is still operating under isolation protocols.

We found ourselves saying, "You'll work it out" in response to many issues, which we know to be true from our experience. Managing the Centre is a Kingdom task, and God will equip them and guide them as He sees fit.

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Keeping our distance while waiting for service at the bank

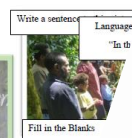
## Fun games for literacy ...

Elspeth was called on to use her classroom experience to review a literacy tool aimed at developing English comprehension in primary school students in PNG. The PNG Government has mandated that the use of English in the classroom alongside other effective languages.

The literacy consultant, Isolde Kappus, is a German speaker, and was keen to have her English checked by an English-as-a-first-language speaker.

Isolde hopes that this book will help to make the learning experience more enjoyable for both students and teachers. Not only children like fun and games. The resource has potential to be used in future adult literacy programs.

### WORD BUILDING WRITING GAMES & ACTIVITIES



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