

Campbell Ramblings

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Equipping translation work in Papua New Guinea



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The Christmas break approaches, and what *had* been primarily a looming deadline for getting work completed has become a much awaited opportunity for refreshment. It has been a tough final quarter of 2020, for us and the rest of our little community in the PNG Highlands. Many people have 'the look'..... a face which shows tiredness and the need for rest. We also have hope for 2021, only because of He who is our hope.



Reinforcements arrive...

Our depleted ranks were bolstered with over 30 families / singles returning since September. This positively impacted almost every facet of our operations – translation work, teaching, administration, medical, aviation, technical services, and not least... having our PNG Branch Director actually in the country!

The UN World Food Programme is providing limited flights to PNG out of Kuala Lumpur, which we have been able to access as a non-profit organisation. All those arriving must go through a quarantine process, and the PNG Government has been terrific at working with us to get everything in place.

The gaps in our staffing are still there, with another 16 households set to return in January, and more as the new year progresses. And of course, at the same time we have some 'battle weary troops' heading to their home countries and families for scheduled leave which has, in some cases, been delayed for many months.

COVID highlighted something we are all too well aware of.... we could do with more people here, and a steady supply of new people entering the system as candidates. We appeal through our partner organisations; we post videos calling for recruits; we pray....hard.... yet we are still preparing for the prospect of multiple vacant roles in 2021. And yet, faced with an even more desperate situation, Jesus had this to say to a small, challenged, often confused ministry team of 12 people...

"The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest."

We can take two encouragements from this often quoted verse. Firstly, Jesus knows what we are experiencing. And secondly, it is "His harvest". There will be a harvest, with whatever team He sends, be it 12, or 300, or 1,000.

There are two challenges in the verse also. Are we praying, and are we responding when the prompt comes to get "labouring"?

Prayer points

As for me, I am poor and needy,
but the Lord takes thought for me.

Psalm 40:17a

Ministry

- Praise God for alternative flights, but the situation is still complex. Until the various sending countries are able to re-establish something close to 'normal' life, it will be difficult to get people here as effectively as we would like to.
- Give thanks for the two staff who have returned to join Keith in Finance administration. Keep praying for two other key roles to be filled next year.
- Praise God that some things still go on.... particularly scripture dedications, recording sessions, training programs, and engaging with local communities. (Refer to the snippets on page 4)
- Join us in our thankfulness for the two-week break for all staff from December 19, that it provides an opportunity to 'recharge the batteries'.

You are my help and my deliverer;
do not delay, O my God!

Psalm 40:17b

Quarantine Queen...

While the COVID situation depleted the number of expatriate staff working in the country over many months, it has also created some new responsibilities. It is the combination of these two points which saw Elspeth volunteer to fill a desperate need, adding to her current jobs list (water safety; clinic receptionist; translation office assistant; Highlands Regional Office assistant) the 'part-time' role of coordinating the quarantine arrangements for incoming staff from around the world. Not only do we have colleagues returning, but also new staff arriving under very different circumstances to those we experienced back in 2014.

Each returning staff family has a support person to ensure the house is prepared for quarantine, with cleaning completed, all services and equipment working, and that our construction staff have appropriate barrier tape in place. The home should be stocked with enough supplies for a 14-day stay, with fresh produce able to be provided twice on our mid-week market days. It was quite a different experience shopping for a family of six, and trying to assess what was needed. Many in our community are also providing frozen meals to allow time for families to settle in after a stressful time travelling under COVID conditions.

All incoming staff families must complete a government health form twice a day, recording their temperature and current health symptoms, which are then assessed every day or as required. Any anomalies are followed up by our medical clinic staff. Only after the local government authorities are satisfied with the medical status of our staff, are they permitted to be released from quarantine and return to regular life, and regular duties.

Keeping on top of all this has been a complicated and involved process, often with emails and phone calls coming in at all hours.

Update...

We received word on December 17 that the UN World Food Programme flights (mentioned on page 1) will be discontinued after the scheduled January 20 arrival. This may prove to be a set-back to all of those planning to come to PNG, and looking forward to personal leave in their home country, until such time as international air travel is restored to previous levels of service.

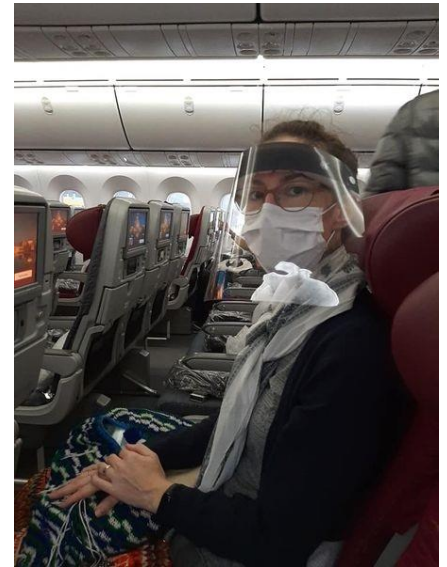
Other options do exist, but with so many stories of delays, cancellations, and fares at much higher rates than in the past, the alternatives carry a degree of uncertainty and added stress.

Speaking with just two of those who have recently returned from the United States fills in some of the details. One family boarded a domestic connecting flight only to be delayed on the tarmac due to maintenance issues. While waiting, they received a message from another family also travelling on the same international flight to Kuala Lumpur that the boarding call had been issued – they would not make it. After alerting the domestic air crew, they were not allowed to disembark the plane, but had to endure a pointless connecting flight knowing they would have to return home upon landing.

Another couple endured five attempts at departing the country – packing up or giving away items; finalising temporary accommodation; saying farewells – only to miss out due to COVID related travel issues. The process of medical clearances and travel plans then starts all over again.

Please pray...

- for hopeful travelers to connect with officials and airline staff who will smooth the way for them to come
- for these saints to be trusting God at all times, and honouring Him in how they deal with the stress



In case you were feeling that mission life in PNG is all challenges and stresses, here are some snippets to show that life still goes on, and kingdom work along with it.

Over the past four months, dozens of submissions have been received from translation teams moving on through the process of putting God's word into PNG hands.

The 96 year-old woman below, unable to read or write, is listening to God's word in her heart language on a dedicated audible player, while these children will grow up hearing and reading Scripture in the language of their people.



↓ In October the Ukarumpa community celebrated the marriage of Josh and Jenny (PNG / USA). The event had been delayed multiple times due to COVID restrictions, and then the passing of the officiating pastor just days prior to an earlier scheduled ceremony.



Josh serves in aviation maintenance, and Jenny is part of our Scripture Engagement team, working with communities to apply the translated Scripture to their daily lives.

Region: _____ NT Translation Progress Chart _____ Allocation Date: _____

Language Name: _____ Family: _____ Translator: _____

Date TSD Requirements Fulfilled

1. **Preparation Stage** Nov
 Get Started Workshop 5-6 Scoring Report 5-6 Trial Orthography _____
 Social Org. Paper 5-6 Approved Programme Plan _____

2. **Trial Stage:** 20 chapters may be checked & published in 100 copies or 5% of population.
 Gram Ess/Notebook BTW 5-6 NTC 1 _____ NTC 2 _____ NTC 3 _____

3. **Beginning Stage:** up to 15% of NT and 8% of OT may be checked & published.
 Dialect Survey 5-6 Phonology Essentials _____ Orthography Paper _____
 World View Paper 5-6 Approved Orthography Jan

4. **Intermediate Stage:** Checking up to 50% of NT and 100 ch. or 12.5% of OT
 Grammar Sketch _____ Dictionary Checked _____
 Publication from 15% to 35% of NT and up to 100 ch. or 12.5% of OT _____ Established Orthography _____

5. **Advanced Stage:** Checking beyond 50% of NT — Publication up to 50% of NT
 Dictionary Review _____ Consistency Check _____

6. **Full Production Stage:** Date of Publication of Final NT _____

Book	%	Date(s)	Consultant's Name	Date App'd for Pub.	% Checked	% Published
Matthew	13.5	Sept	Jan 98 / April 98	?	13.5	
Mark	8.5	Nov			8.5	
Luke	14.4	Oct				
John	11.0	Dec				
Acts	12.7	May				
Romans	5.4	Aug				21.2
1 Corinthians	5.5	Nov				
2 Corinthians	3.2	Nov				52.79
Galatians	1.9	Nov				
Ephesians	2.0					
Philippians	1.3					
Colossians	1.2	Aug				
1 Thessalonians	1.1	May				22.3
2 Thessalonians	0.6	May				22.9
1 Timothy	1.4	Mar				
2 Timothy	1.4	Mar				
Titus	0.6	May				23.5
Philemon	0.3	Mar				
Hebrews	3.8					
James	1.4	Mar				
1 Peter	1.3	Sept				1.3
2 Peter	0.8					
1 John	1.3	Mar				
2 John	0.2	Mar				
3 John	0.2	Mar				29.34
Jude	0.3					
Revelation	5.1	Dec				34.47
Ruth		June				



↑ Our weekly Bible study group has been looking at the series, *Is Genesis History?*, discovering the scientific and academic foundations behind the biblical truths regarding our Creator God. The downloaded series features subtitles - which was hilarious when a British academic was interviewed. Some of our American friends struggled to understand clearly what was being said.

On the recovery road...

The ongoing saga of Keith's health has experienced some improvement over recent weeks. The latest medication prescribed by our mission Clinic doctor has seen the daily aches subside, and it remains now to see if going off the 'meds' later in the new year will see the pain return. For the moment, relief has enabled a return to a full working week and to some renovation projects on the weekends.

We hired a team of local labourers in early December to tackle a major concreting job under Keith's supervision, providing a solid foundation for an additional water tank to drought-proof our home, (there was a 9-month drought in 2015 which saw the community running short of potable water) and a pathway to hopefully give us mud-free access to the house when the expected peak rainy season hits in January –February.



and an uncertain road ...

Even near neighbours such as Australia and PNG are not immune from the influence of COVID on air travel. Whether or not this could potentially impact aspects of our travel plans for March 2021 is unclear, but at present, the airfares from Port Moresby to either Cairns or Brisbane are priced at 300% to 400% more than what we have come to expect.

While the inflated pricing situation appears to ease from April 1, the future is far from certain. Online flight booking tools can be a little haphazard here, with virtually every flight from now into next year declaring "nine seats left", whatever that may indicate. Added to this are the quarantine requirements on re-entry to Queensland. It would be helpful to avoid an expensive 2-week hotel stay, but then, perhaps God is providing the ultimate period for rest and recuperation after the intensity of these past 18 months.

But all this I laid to heart, examining it all, how the righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God. Ecclesiastes 9:1

There are hundreds of verses that speak into this situation – affirming that God's sovereign authority is at work for our good; that we should fear nothing that the future may bring; that whatever comes, we can be content to rest in Christ. Pray that these truths be firm in our minds and hearts, drowning out all feelings of uncertainty.

Prayer points

Personal

- Praise God for some progress with Keith's painful joints, and a return to previous levels of energy. We still need to pursue some answers back in Australia with medical checks, and will be seeking prayer for this when the time comes.
- Keep praying for our furlough plans. There is so much that simply cannot be arranged given the uncertainty of travel.
- Pray specifically for clarity in terms of our re-entering Australia and the quarantine requirements. God holds this in His hands, and we need to trust Him.
- Pray that someone could rent our little home in Ukarumpa while we are away. It would be a blessing in terms of deferring the monthly costs, and providing the security of not having an empty house for up to 12 months. We have great PNG neighbours who will no doubt keep an eye on things, for which we are very thankful.
- pray that we both be content with the current state of our work responsibilities as we wrap things up ahead of a scheduled March departure.