

This trip to town has been very unique...

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October 2014 News from Pryor's in PNG

Dear Friends,

This week has been typically busy with all the normal in-town shopping and running around to do. Taxes must be paid, mail checked, banking done, all the shopping for the next three months to be purchased and packed, visiting with friends we only see a few times a year, trips to the beach to help us feel like this is a break and not just a different sort of work. This trip to town has been very unique. A few new opportunities have presented themselves and have encouraged us and with that, we hope to encourage you. You will read in our next newsletter about blessings from fellow missionaries here in PNG. There is a kind group who let us use a house free of charge saving us literally thousands of PNG Kina. We also received the gift of an oven, one that will bake without having to have a person hold in the ignition. We also received the gift of guinea pigs for Judah's birthday!

These things have been wonderful surprises, but God doesn't just use his missionaries to bless others in PNG. Jesse received a very interesting proposal here

in town. The Local Level Government was looking to donate about K70,000 to the local primary school for construction of a new classroom. Usually these funds would be given to local contractors who seldom begin, let alone complete the work. They offered the contract to OIPNG. This would mean a departure from our plans, tackling a new project we didn't foresee this coming year. But the opportunity to assist the community in this way with no additional expense for OIPNG is just too good to pass up. Jesse submitted a proposal to accept the contract and we are waiting to see if it will happen. This was odd and new for us but what was to follow was more intriguing still.

I have been trying to get one of my most dedicated teachers into a program called FODE (Flexible Open Distance Education). The government started this correspondence school long ago to offer rural students a chance to complete their studies beyond grade 6. This is because PNG has a shortage of secondary schools. My teacher has completed grade 8, but his aptitude is that of a grade 10 or higher; he is self-taught. Teachers will not be approved by the government for teacher training college unless they have completed grade 12 or grade 10 with a special exemption form for rural schools. I was going to the FODE office to try to talk the coordinator into allowing me to fly him to Samban to administer the pretest for FODE courses. It is far too expensive for me to send every potential teacher, nurse, preacher, or worker to town to enroll in these courses. Last year Rebecca Linsenbigler and I taught an adult continuing education class with the hopes of preparing students to take the FODE courses. Essentially, this would be like starting a night school for the GED.

The coordinator was baffled at my request so I began the typical pleading, "Please will you help them? We will fly you there and back, house and feed you. . . ." The placement tests only cost K30 and the courses are only K25 (Kina) each. The cost of going to town for each student would be well over K200 if you include housing and food and transport. The savings would be huge. He thought a moment then said, "Angoram district has been neglected. How would you like to be the supervisor for FODE in the district, then you can administer the tests yourself?" I was confused. Usually these positions are only for PNG nationals. I told him I was willing to take the position. I had to go through and fill out a form and register our literacy center as the new Angoram District FODE Correspondence Study Center. I typed up a proposal for a two-year pilot program in Samban with the hope of becoming a registered center at the end of the two years. Registering the center would be creating a government-accredited and licensed school. This school would be given the power to hire teachers, collect the tuition fee that the government pays for each student, which would then enable us to equip the literacy center with desks, chairs, computer, books, resources, etc.

A day later we ran into another education officer, Caleb Warike who is a national education trainer. He was instrumental in getting our first three teachers into the training college in Port Moresby. He came over for coffee with his wife, saw my proposal on the table and asked about it. We told him the position that had been offered. He just smiled and said the coordinator for FODE was his teacher when he was young and he was so excited that he took a copy of the proposal to support the idea in the Provincial Education Department. A side note, he offered me a guest lecturer opportunity at the local teacher's college, teaching phonics for vernacular material production. So in short, I have with me now enrollment forms and tests for the first class of the Angoram District FODE Correspondence Study Center.

This is really exciting for us and scary because Becca who had really pushed the adult classes is now serving in Kosovo. So while I am sharing this with you I am also praying God will whisper in your ear and that someone will know that there is a job waiting for them here in PNG. This is a job that you can work your way out of. Our goal is to find PNG people with the guts and determination and heart for Christ to take over the center and continue to extend opportunities to others. This school format is totally open. There are no restrictions here for using the Bible in class, praying, singing or any other form of worship. The center is for students who have completed a minimum of grade 7, on the record. Off the record, I want to accept all adults who have missed the chance for school or who have dropped out early. We have been given permission to work with them until they can pass the grade 6 test, and then enter the program at the grade 7 level. If you have a heart for this work I urge you, CONTACT ME! I have my three kids to teach, a clinic to run, and an elementary school that needs oversight as well Sunday school teachers begging for help, etc. If this doesn't interest you but managing a clinic does or training Sunday school teachers and church leaders does, God knows our needs and we know he will provide the right person to meet them. This is an exciting time; 2014 marks 10 years in PNG for Outreach International and I still feel as though God has so much more planned here. Let us know if you have the desire to serve in PNG.

Jesse, Karie, and Family

Picture above is Jesse and others digging a creek bed.

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