

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good. Psalm 107:1



Dear friends and family,

Well we write this first update from Papua New Guinea with much joy and excitement. Having been in PNG now 10 weeks we, at last, feel like all the busyness and stress of getting ready to come have paid off, and this gives us great joy. The excitement however is the built in factor of being in the centre of Gods will and each step is just part of the adventure. Dependency on Him is always stretched to a whole new level on the mission field and there is no place we would rather be!

We want to thank you all, right at the start of this letter, for holding the ropes for us in prayer. Coming back here has reminded us so clearly of how prayer is needed and felt. The thing is, you may be praying in general for us as a family but we guarantee that those prayers are being answered in very specific ways.

Praise God with us for:

- Great transitions into our new home and surroundings.
- The safe arrival of our container and crates.
- A good steady start to language study.
- Continuing health and strength.
- A dentist in country! Isaac has some dental issues which need attention and there is a dentist with another mission organisation who can see him this month.
- The Lord supplying all our needs, especially where living expenses are so high.

Kid's corner

Isaac and Ellie have just blown us away with how they have adapted to life here. So many times I say to Stephen "They amaze me". We sometimes find ourselves in places or situations which are not so inviting. People look different, national houses are bamboo huts, language is different, the list goes on. Yet in all this we praise God for how He has carried them along and in situations where we think they should be 'freaked out', they are taking it in their stride. We are very blessed to have several PNG families living on our centre and they have children Isaac and Ellie's ages. Right from the first few days they all played together, and if you only heard Isaac speak Pidgin, its such a beautiful thing and for us as parents, we are just praising God for it all. In PNG culture your



and they love to get out into the jungle and shoot stuff!

Isaac and I both are enjoying home school. To be honest there are days where we are bumping heads and not feeling too much like 'doing school' but we just keep going. He will be tested at our mission school in December to see how he is progressing. This testing is standardised for every NTM child, schooled or home schooled.

Both Isaac and Ellie are enjoying all the bugs, big and small and Isaac is now Mummy's protector! So he calls himself.

Update on language study

We recently had our first evaluation. Evaluations are not tests but are times when our language consultants meet with us and our language helpers and we are given different tasks to do which will show our knowledge of the language so far. These evaluations normally last about 2 hours and at the end we will be placed on a chart which shows us where we are and what we have to aim for next. We were both encouraged with our evaluations. We would both want to be clear though that the Lord is the One due all the glory for anything we are enabled to do. It is Him working in us and through us.

The next few weeks

We have just 2 weeks until Santa comes, opps sorry Dad comes. Dad (Helen's) will stay with us for 3 months and we are looking forward to the blessing he will be. We are aiming to have another evaluation by then so please be praying that we will really apply ourselves and continue to make progress.

On the 10th January we will all be leaving the highlands and making our way to the Islands region. This is primarily to do bush orientation. Bush orientation is a 6-8 week period where we will live in a tribal location with a missionary family and an already existing church. It is purely for language extension. We will be using our pidgin knowledge and adding to it in a more extensive way. We will be able to learn terminologies regarding taboo's and animism and many aspects of culture which are difficult to get in more populated areas. For those of you who are familiar with the PNG field, we are going to be in Akolet.

After bush orientation we will live on our Hoskins support centre. We will have more language evaluations until we reach the level needed to move on to a tribe. It is after this that we begin the task of finding co-workers and a location to work in. We would really value your prayers for guidance in this area of our lives as a family. We will keep you updated as things transpire. Remember you may be at home but you are still partners in this great work of reaching the un-reached with Gods Word!

Focus on culture

A huge part of language learning is taken up with culture learning. We cannot properly communicate the message of the Gospel if we don't know what makes the people 'tick'.

Just this past week, we visited with a family who had just lost their 3 month old baby after she pulled a pot of boiling water over herself. While we visited, we were asked by several people about the very large cut/scar on Isaac's forehead!! We explained that he was playing with a toy car and zooming it along the ground, (as boys do) the car stopped suddenly on a stone and Isaac flew over the top and crashed to the ground, thus the cut on his head. Interestingly, they say that we, as his parents, are liable. To be culturally correct we should make an apology to our 'wantoks' (all friends and family) for not properly caring for Isaac. And, of course, this involves food!! We should kill a pig!! So to all our 'wantoks' reading this letter right now, we owe you the killing, cooking and eating of a pig!! Maybe on our first home assignment we can demonstrate how that is done, PNG style.

Can we just take a moment to thank those of you who are standing with us financially. It has humbled us greatly to see how God challenges people to give. Our expenses over the past few months have been huge due to shipping our belongings but the Lord has proven faithful. Please continue to pray for this matter as our support would need to rise quite a bit more before we locate into full time ministry in a tribe.

If you would like to receive our updates in digital form via e-mail please contact Peter Gibson at gibson.p91@hotmail.co.uk. Or if you would like to be in contact with us personally that would be great. You can use the details below.

All for Jesus

Until every tribe is reached

Stephen, Helen, Isaac and Ellie Martin

You can reach us at: helyandstev@hotmail.com or Stephen_martin@ntm.org.uk