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Dear Friends,

Christmas traditions in rural villages of PNG do not have centuries of development. Businesses in towns do try to decorate a bit hoping to promote the holiday season as a time to buy and give gifts. Yet for the average village trade store selling mostly food staples, no blatant marketing push or feverish shopping rush ever happens. They may hang-up some colorful tinsel or other imported Christmas things and these remain displayed for the entire year. Of course, houses do not have chimneys or Christmas trees, so that folklore is little known.

Some folks working in towns do get their annual leave and if able travel to their home village. When they arrive, a gathering may be held to remember a person who has recently deceased or perhaps a bride price gets paid. This involves a gift exchange between families based on cultural traditions. A feast at these events will include the local garden produce like: corn, pumpkin, greens, sweet potato, yams, and taro with fish and, if available, pig or cassowary. Sometimes the large amount of food gets wrapped in banana leaves and cooked together in pit by heated stones.

Churches during Christmas week often hold special worship services or some will even have conventions with several days of evangelistic meetings. The Savior came as a babe wrapped in cloths, and through Him all who believe have life eternal. Christmas led to the cross. John 1: 14 "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Difficulties in this world abound, yet for those anchored in Christ our destination is sure and He will hold us fast.

PIM praises the Lord for work accomplished despite the restrictions of year in all countries. We are so thankful for your continued support.

In His Grace,
Douglas Heidema
Have a Blessed New Year

Photos

top: A home in Oum

middle: Older students in a village classroom

bottom: Pulping a sago palm log for edible starch.

