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February 2021

Dear Friends:

Wheels turn and propellers churn, as PIM teachers move out to their respective teaching locations the first week of February. Transported on 40 -50 feet long dugout canoes the teachers load their first term school supplies along with other goods for personal needs. Most return to the same village to "cultivate" their former students, and some begin with a new group of first year students. Communities often depend on PIM teachers for more than just the school; the local church may call on them to preach, teach Sunday School classes, or countless other community related services.

Teachers and their families live hours by river from the nearest health clinic or stores; often they far out of the range of cell phone towers, or large amounts of electricity to power devices or appliances. Any fresh produce comes from gardens which pests, drought, or flood sometimes diminish. Fishing provides the protein in the diet with an occasional hunted pig, cassowary or bird. Lest we forget, insects, the numerous mosquitoes who day and night seek fresh blood from warm mammals, can also transmit diseases including malaria. Frequently finding food in these remote areas requires the whole work of the day, and as their day is spent teaching, they must depend on the generosity of the community to be fed. Few from the Western developed countries could survive a long-term "wilderness camping experience" in the remote villages of PNG.

Jim Wopki has taught for years on a small winding tributary up the Wogumush river which becomes impassable during the "dry" season. God has acted in special ways for his family multiple times: He reported, "one year whenever it was time for us to leave Arapi or to return to the village to teach again, the night before we had to leave, it would rain heavily, filling the river with flood water, and we would have little difficulty getting in or out." In September, Morin (his wife) got seriously sick with malaria. "I paddled her down from downriver, saw the nurse at the clinic, overnights with Jeremiah in another village, paddled back again the next day in a full sun and came to shore at Arapi at 7:00 pm. Our eyes were on the Lord, and he made it happen!" Just a scant month later Jim got sick. "When I was very sick for two to three weeks in October and finally came down to the clinic in Yapatawi, I was able to use the wireless radio to put the prayer request in to the office at Ambunti, and the sickness left me. I praise the Lord for this. I remember Psalm 23:1-6 and Psalm 121:1-8."

Life circumstances can easily hurl people into a chasm of panic. As Christians, we have the promises in the Bible and prayer to help draw us up to the plateau of peace and rest, "a peace that passes all understanding."

Isaiah 63:7—I will tell of the kindnesses of the LORD, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the LORD has done for us—yes, the many good things he has done for the house of Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses.

In His Grace,

Douglas Heidema



Teacher Chis Wakuri collates printout

