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Dear Friends,

Steamy, sweltering, stifling, and sticky; these are all words that could be used to describe the heat and humidity of this tropical climate. During the day temperatures climb above 94 and with a relative humidity floating over 80% it's a bit uncomfortable. Of necessity we have an airconditioned office which helps keep our paper dry and crisp for use in the photocopiers and printers; thankfully it also



makes office work more tolerable. The mist which rises from green mountains near and far gets recycled by the frequent rains, helping to promote the growth of tangled vines and lush trees which are home to the world-renowned colorful birds unique to PNG, the Birds of Paradise. In the variety and abundant beauty of creation we see the fingerprint of God. However, from the Word, we know that after Eden's fall there was always to be trouble even in a "paradise".

"Every contact leaves a trace" was a principle formulated in forensic science by Edmond Locard (1877-1966). Following this principle, diligent investigators have solved crimes. They painstakingly search a crime scene for any evidence left behind; be it fibers, hair, blood, genetic material, shoe or tire prints, paint chips, scratches from a tool, or even fingerprints. "With contacts between two items there will be an exchange." (Wikipedia) I ponder today, do our contacts leave a positive or negative trace?

It was a dimly lit and unventilated section of a hardware store in Wewak. The electrical cables required were not in stock and I was pondering which of the hardware shops would be the next stop. A young man in his twenties approaches and quietly asks, "Do you have a pistol? I recognize him as being with some others who asked me (as often occurs) how tall I was. I told them, and then guessed correctly which village they were from, surprising them and myself. The village has some young men who have used guns to stop and rob vehicles on the highway. I wonder to myself why he would ask such a question and with some hesitation, knowing that I am traveling the highway through the village the next day, answer, "No, I don't own a pistol". I didn't quite get an answer as to why he was asking. I made a purchase, and saw that the group he was with were still looking at tools behind the counter. Thinking about the trace I was to leave behind as a missionary, they received a gospel message which is best delivered without a gun. For we know, "The Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword." The next day we loaded the vehicle with 20 boxes of Bibles and other supplies and set off for a, thankfully, uneventful trip through their village to the river.



In His Grace, Douglas Heidema



He's actually 3 inches taller, he and his father were visiting another missionary from Germany. So for two weeks I'm not the tallest man in the East Sepik Province