



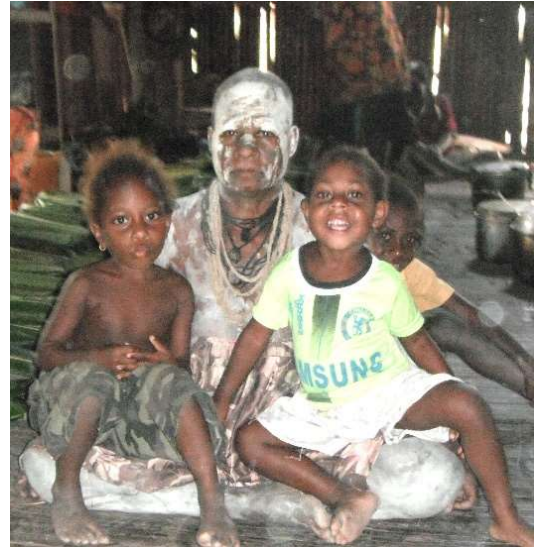
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Dear Friends,

Mourning in silence rarely happens in Sepik villages. When a death occurs people openly express grief with loud wailing that continues for days. Sometimes they cover their bodies with ash or mud as is seen in the picture on the right. After the initial expression of grief, it is cultural for relatives to gather and determine the cause of death. More often than not it the cause is determined to be sorcery. The mindset is this, no one ever dies of natural causes, still interestingly their discussions, speculations and then accusations never seem conclusive. A simple answer with the medical facts does not suffice. The “why” question just keeps on popping up. Certainly, for all people living this side of eternity we do not have an immediate answer revealed for the why. Yet as Christians we can believe God knows and works it out for good for those who love Him.



John Yuar with Charlie Gasa CHW

Foreign aid enabled the PNG government to upgrade medical facilities at Ambunti (seen below) with a complete hospital and all new housing for the hospital staff. The compound has backup power supply, the hospital even includes an operating theater, an Xray department, plus the ability to store refrigerated medical supplies like vaccines. Currently patients are being seen and when fully staffed the hospital will be very helpful to the people the middle Sepik River area. Yet many rural villagers in PNG live days away from the medical treatment at Ambunti or the more distant the urban centers.

To help address the health care situation PIM has a medical program which consists of six village aid posts staffed by eleven Community Health Workers. Decades ago, this work first began by training teachers and some village volunteers who went to their respective villages with a large first aid kit containing





some drugs for basic treatments, bandages, tape, ointment, and malaria medicine. The average person in a village has no medical supplies since their nearest pharmacy is days or hours away. Sending those Village Health volunteers helped with some of the basic medical needs and improvements in health were seen. As time went on eventually the PIM village health volunteers were replaced by Community Health Workers who had been trained to a higher level at a Medical College, and were capable of doing a broader range of medical work.

John Yuar, who supervises the PIM medical program, reports that in the village clinics malaria is the most treated malady, followed by coughs and then skin infections. In 2022 there were 413 pregnancies. The total population of the 6 clinic villages is 10,337 however the count does not include other nearby villages. PIM health workers have had no shortage of work in the past year!

Each year PIM strives to help remote villages in the Sepik River region of Papua New Guinea by ministering to the spiritual, physical, and educational needs. The health care services of PIM fits into this biblical mission purpose. With God's help, remarkable progress has been accomplished in health program through the years.

Thank you for your support

Yours in Christ, Douglas Heidema

