



The Ottosens Missionaries to the *Kamea* People of *Papua New Guinea*

While Pastor Jack temporarily left for his home village to care for his ailing mother, an otherwise normal month was punctuated by three **cultural celebrations**.

First is what I have termed our **Vanity Fair**. I became aware of this as a long string of people noisily walked past our house late at night to gather in an adjacent village. The next day I inquired about the activity from droopy-eyed folks after church. The general hesitancy in their responses suggested I needed to delve deeper. Culturally, when a spouse dies, the widower often forsakes certain kinds of food. I was told this event marks the end of that mourning process; with their commitments being fulfilled they could return to a normal diet. Later I discovered people also spit certain chewed food, like eel and marita¹, toward the rising sun to ward off sickness from their deceased relatives. Pastor Jack later informed me this has moved beyond its customary mooring and includes contemporary forms of debauchery. Both men and women dance provocatively and sing to seduce partners while kundu drums² keep tempo. Others huddle around to gamble with playing cards. Vanity Faire is expected to continue until the end of the year.

Another event commenced signifying **nose piercing**. A select group of men volunteer to endure a long process, including piercing their septum, to gain strength. This is one of the most significant customs commemorating the men's status symbol of masculinity. This secretive ceremony will also have continuous, late night dancing and singing as men strum the strings of their bows. This should end in a few weeks.

Lastly, a neighbor also held a **disco** using a boom box; charging everyone an entrance fee to get in the bamboo-lined enclosure. With all three of these occurring simultaneously we have seen a smaller group attend church. Those who attend all-night dances find it difficult to make it to church. Pray for our brethren as they battle the allurements of their culture.

Local News

Recently a young girl died unexpectedly and I was allowed to speak at the burial. It is the **first funeral** I have participated in. Common to animistic belief, death does not normally result simply from physical causes. Everyone is curious of what spiritual involvement led to this happening, giving credence to unfounded suspicions and accusations created by witchdoctors. A history of infidelity by the child's mother has been cited as the probable cause. This adds considerable strain to their tremendous sorrow.

Jenny is Cherith's language helper. While passing by our house she was overcome with severe pain, and we were astonished as she went into labor. Two women from her family constructed a privacy-barrier of branches around Jenny in a matter of minutes. Jenny delivered her premature baby right behind our house. Cherith did a terrific job assisting and caring for her through the ordeal.

Sending Church:

Faith Baptist Church

1515 Wistar Road, Fairless Hills, PA 19030

(215) 946-7550, Pastor David Cashman

Personal Information:

www.ThatTheyMayKnow.com

Jason@ThatTheyMayKnow.com



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Our team of men have continued milling wood for the upcoming church building. A tent was constructed of blue tarps to house the lumber until we have enough for the entire project. Approximately three-fourths of the milling is done and hope to start building in October.

I wanted to share a couple reports regarding Bible distribution. A pastor utilized an allotment of new **Pidgin New Testaments** during "Friend Day" at their church. It went very well with over 100 visitors coming for the first time and 7 responded in faith to the gospel. What better gift could be given a friend visiting church or new believers in Christ? A Christian school assisting as a hub of distribution has seen over 60 boxes of Bibles reach the hands of churches in need of scripture.

Our family started getting sick this last week. It began when Melody developed a fever and stomach pain. Soon it passed to Grace and now Hannah has symptoms. Their fever reached over 103 degrees. We have been blessed with a sufficient supply of medicine but trust in God who works mightily as we intercede for one another. Please keep our entire family covered in your prayers as we exposed to illnesses common to our area.

My schedule includes a future gathering with our **village leaders**. Particularly those leaders responsible for conducting trials for all incidences that occur within our ward: magistrates, peace officers, committee members and chairman. Albert, a magistrate, asked me for input on how to handle their duties. I am preparing for an opportunity to present Christ along with providing helpful Biblical instruction for those at the helm of our community. Please pray that this meeting will be well attended with hearts and minds open to the gospel and God's truth.

Serving the Lord with gladness,

Jason, Cherith, Grace, Melody and Hannah

¹ Marita: known as pandanus fruit, imagine red corn that grows to be three feet long. The pulp is removed from the core, boiled and squeezed by hand to produce a thick red sauce. I have heard it referred to as Melanesian ketchup.

² Kundu drum: a handheld instrument made from hourglass-shaped wood that has been hollowed out; the drumhead is composed of snake or lizard skin covering the opening on one side.

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