



The Ottosens

Reaching the Kamea of Papua New Guinea

January 2020

The year ended with two large church activities. First was our "Church Opening" which was the culmination of a year-long effort from our church family. Enough funds were raised to purchase three pigs, over four hundred pounds of rice, and more than ten boxes of noodles. Our hope was to invite everyone to come, preach the gospel and fill their stomachs before they left. We had an amazing turnout with over 400 people attending. We praise the Lord for the encouragement it was to our church and God began His wonderful work in hearts of many first-time visitors.

Secondly we held a New Years Eve Service which lasted the entire night. It included preaching with interspersed sessions of prayer and games for those still awake during the waning hours. Kreks and his wife Linet were amongst those that received the Lord that night. It was a splendid way to say goodbye to 2019.

The large fight recorded in our last update went to trial and it lasted for three days. The large group was found guilty of inciting the riotous behavior and fined \$1,500. They gathered less than half of that amount, so the resolution was postponed for a few months. Hopefully the group will raise the money or agree to hand over pigs as reimbursement.

Witch Trial

Witchcraft is a pervasive and integral part of society here. Komako is steeped in three common strands of the occult. First, those who heal the sick by removing unseen items from the bodies of the ill.

These objects are usually identified by the witchdoctor as sticks or stones; but one recently boasted to have removed a three and four inch long nail from a sick infant. A second type casts spells varying from helpful manipulation to something explicitly harmful; for example, making one irresistible to a prospective spouse or inflicting an enemy with illness. The third type and most feared is labelled "sanguma" or black magic. While the body of the sorcerer is asleep or at a distant location, their spirit will take the form of an animal, like a snake, rat, bird or bat. They approach unto the victim to cause their death either by giving them something to eat or merely by looking at them.

Elisa is an older woman in our village, and has repeatedly been accused of using black magic, targeting prominent members of the community. A trial was held to determine if she was guilty. Families from earlier incidents attended the trial to ensure she would not deny her responsibility. Elisa said very little which further infuriated the large crowd encircling her. They quickly requested she be released into their hands. Firewood and a container of gasoline were brought to the market place. They were ready to burn her alive! We thank the Lord that order was restored and her life was spared. The next day Elisa was nowhere to be found and her house was burned to the ground.

Sitting beside Elisa during this horrific episode was her older sister Mary. As a neighbor, she has been antagonistic toward us since we first arrived in Komako Village. Many times slanderous rumors, frivolous arguments and personal attacks on our church family have been drawn back directly to Mary and her kin. Surprisingly she attended both of our special church services held in December.

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The preaching hit home. Mary later admitted to using witchcraft to kill a family in another village, and realized the violent consequences that could follow such actions while watching Elisa thronged by angry family members calling for her death. Mary came and said, "What do I have to do to be saved?" She prayed that day, asking Jesus Christ to save her. A few days later she brought Elisa to Pastor Jack's house. She also heard the gospel but has not responded, yet.

February 2020

The efforts in literacy are making a large impact on our church. We have seen spiritual growth unlike anything before. When we first arrived, people who are now students did not know how to spell their own names. Now people are following along during preaching, their understanding and receptivity has skyrocketed. Children in Sunday School are taking notes and answering review questions! People come to me with questions from what they have read in their Bibles. This is huge to see peoples' minds and hearts being changed by God's word.

A second class is composed of those students who graduated from our literacy class. It is focussed on developing their reading skills and comprehension through Bible reading. It functions as an advanced discipleship course. We have studied through smaller books (Ruth and Jonah) addressing the proper way of interpreting and applying scripture. We are composing stories and materials for the next step of literacy in the Kamea language! Pastor Jack is also sitting in the class.

It is joyous to see how Pastor Jack has stepped up in his preaching to counter beliefs that stymie the faith of new Christians. He is boldly leading our church away from false cultural beliefs in witchcraft, communicating with spirits of deceased relatives, and materialism, while striving unabashedly toward the Lord Jesus Christ.

A total of eighteen people stepped forward in faith and commitment to Jesus Christ during the baptismal service held in February. This diverse group included children, teens, mothers, a married couple and an elderly man. It was one of the greatest days in ministry to baptize my eldest daughter and young sister in Christ, Grace! It is a tremendous joy to know and serve our Saviour.

This month we are reemphasizing the gospel ministry outside of church; teaching believers the biblical truth coupled with practical methods to clearly communicate it in public settings. Now that the rainy season is subsiding, we are going to organize outreach teams. Our prayer is that every disciple will participate in reaching lost souls; understanding the responsibility, necessity and reward of preaching Christ.

If any children are interested in becoming a penpal to our younger Christians here, please contact us by email. Hearing how others received the Lord Jesus and learning how they live in a distant place can strengthen our appreciation for the Lord and how He is working around the world.

We count on your prayers for the Kamea people as the word of God grows in PNG.

In His Service,

Jason, Cherith, Grace, Melody, Hannah and Josiah

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