



# *The Ottosens* Reaching the Kamea of Papua New Guinea

May 2023

Our last outreach was a true personal milestone. The destinations were familiar, but what made this particular trip so significant was who accompanied our team. For the first time, our eldest daughter hiked the trails with us. Grace has been on recreational hikes before, but this would be the longest distance she had ever gone and was more challenging with greater elevation changes. She had long desired to see where Jason went on his outreaches after hearing his stories. Now Grace was about to take part in it firsthand and make stories of her own.

The plan was to besiege two villages with fervent prayer and straightforward gospel-preaching. Grace left with the group and arrived at our first village six hours later. They stayed at Molas' house that night. They worked through their aches from their hike and sleeping on an uneven wooden floor by walking around market the following morning. Hundreds of people gathered that day and would hear the gospel.

The outreach team usually sings songs to draw the crowd's attention, but on this occasion Grace shared her testimony of salvation in front of the whole crowd using a megaphone. Everyone turned down their radios, stopped their conversations, and peered with unbridled interest in this new visitor. Afterwards, Jason preached the gospel and invited all to put their trust in Christ for salvation from their sins. The team then perused the area starting conversations and further proclaiming the gospel individually.

Unfortunately, Grace became sick and with an arduous hike back home, including a two hour stretch uphill, we decided to cut our outreach short

and go straight back home. Jason reported to have enjoyed that trip more than any other before it, and Grace looks forward to doing it again. A man in the village, John, heard the gospel and has voiced his interest in receiving Christ. He is employed by the Catholic mission and to receive Christ would jeopardize his income and position. Please pray for the many hundreds of people to make the right decision in receiving Jesus Christ by faith.

Pastor Jack has been holding meetings in peoples' homes around Komako. His desire is to see more people saved and join our church. Although people were slow to invite us to visit, now numerous families have asked us to preach at their house and teach them the Bible. Many folks have taken a step further by repeatedly joining us on Sunday mornings.

Jason took a group of fifteen of our Christians to a revival meeting in Wau. They hiked for twelve hours and found a ten-seater vehicle to take them to their destination. We are not sure if the name "ten-seater" is a mere suggestion as all fifteen crammed into the back. Jason enjoyed having fellowship with the thirty-seven churches in attendance along with two veteran missionaries that have over ninety combined years of service in PNG. The opportunity for fellowship with likeminded Christians was an amazing and strengthening time for our people.

Construction materials were purchased to build a new classroom and kitchen on the church's property. Roofing, nails, tools and solar lights are in the process of being delivered by plane. Milling the wood for framing the structures has begun, but will take weeks to complete.

In His Service,

*Jason, Cherith, Grace, Melody, Hannah, and Josiah*

## *Sending Church & Support Address:*

Capitol Baptist Church  
401 Kesselring Avenue  
Dover, DE 19904  
302-734-2410  
Pastor T. H. Moore

## *Contact Information:*

Email: [kameabible@gmail.com](mailto:kameabible@gmail.com)  
Website: [TranslatingForChrist.org](http://TranslatingForChrist.org)





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June 2023

Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. Acts 17:22

My thoughts repeatedly return to this passage as situations arise while ministering in PNG. "Superstitious" is one of the best descriptions for the spiritual disposition and cultural attitude of our people. Many times we have been left perplexed while searching for motivations of observed behaviors. Until the deep-seated superstitious nature of animism is acknowledged, specific choices and cultures at large could wrongly be seen as irrational, if not merely frustrating.

## What Is In A Name?

Our people group does not like to use personal names. Conversation can be difficult to follow when proper nouns are off-limits. With a people group ensnared by fear of witchcraft, avoiding the use of a person's name is a safety measure. An evil spell would not be effective if not directed at a specific person and moreover eliminates grounds for others to accuse you of casting a spell. People will often change their names to keep the evil spirits at bay.

Adults are almost exclusively referred to by their relationship to a spouse, younger sibling or child. While visiting a home and a husband told me his third wife sitting outside their house was ill. Instead of using her name, which would save time, he said, "The mother of that child sitting by the door is sick." The most prohibited case is mentioning the deceased. The fear is that the spirit of that dead person will assault them in some way.

## Mermaid Matters

Our family wanted to take a day trip and visit beautiful waterfalls where two rivers join. While asking if others wanted to accompany us, a response came that forbade us from going there because Jason could kidnap the mermaid. When we addressed the concern logically and invited those opposed to come along, a deeper concern was voiced. They believe Caucasian people can mystically see artifacts hidden from their view. This special vision also extends to knowing where gold and precious gems are buried. We forfeited the trip and went elsewhere less populated by mythical figures of their imagination.

## A Christian's Last Testimony

Mata, an elderly church member and kind grandmother has been sick this week. One morning she was escorted outside of her house as she was too weak to walk by herself. She extended her arm, pointing to an area nearby and said, "There's God the Father." A few steps later she pointed to the sky and said, "There's my God." That moment her body collapsed to the ground as she entered eternity to be with her Lord. In a culture where death is greatly feared, she left an impacting testimony of peace and hope.

For three days, around the clock, we listened to the cries of people at her viewing. The sound is a constant droning chant as people touch and pull on the deceased body. In the wake of their utter hopelessness when faced with death we are stirred to the bone to boldly proclaim the only source of hope in this life and at death, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thank you for praying for us as we reach souls with the Redeemer's love.

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