



PO Box 1765, Grass Valley, CA 95945
530-272-8170
www.piministries.info piministries@ncws.com

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Dear Co-worker:

One of the blessings we've received over the many years is the ease we've had writing newsletters. Seldom was there a time when we didn't have material to write about. Often Martha provided substance for the letter or there was a particular incident we could tell you about. We're most grateful to the Lord for providing the information that made it easy to put words together to inform you of PIM's activities. What follows are bits and pieces we have picked up from recent Ambunti emails.

Six months ago: Penny says that when Mukuchuwa's (moo koo CHOO wah) large family heard of Leah's passing they all came down to the PIM compound on the river to mourn and planned for languishing far into the night. Reuben suggested another place and arranged it so others could come too. Aging Mukuchuwa is Buria's surviving wife; Buria was my language helper and "Man Friday" who was instrumental in establishing PIM in the Sepik region. The Waskuk tribe has its own extended rules on grieving for important people, and they wanted to do it for Leah. Mukuchuwa is a matriarch in the group and well respected; Martha and I first met her and Buria nearly 55 years ago in the mosquito infested village of Madiwai, our residence for five years before moving to Ambunti. Doug provides copious comments in his recent email:



February 4: *Once when a visitor from Holland came to Ambunti and saw me he called me "a tall tree," though I'm sure the Dutch phrase was much more expressive. Continuing with the label, when I arrived in Ambunti there were "lots of tree huggers, both men and women, watering the tree trunk with tears." All generated by the people's deep love for Leah. Nothing was said for a long time before moving on to quarters.*

February 5: *Since it was payday, I spent the morning checking over the payroll. In the afternoon I put in a new plug and cord on a three phase motor and made some other repairs. But it would have been smart if we had swept the floor of the sawdust first so that if any nuts or screws fell we would have been able to find them.*

Later I found some more photos of Leah to make an extended version of the memorial video shown in the States. I had to keep showing it over and over as new people came in to watch. Some looked at it five times. In the second half I added photos and a song sung by daughter Michelle.

February 6: *At 5:30 am it's dark as I hike up the Ambunti mountain. The local cell phone tower is not working and the other nearest one is at Pagwi down river. The path is steep with chest high wet grass and shrub, but the long pants and long sleeved shirt protects from cuts and scratches. In spite of the swarms of mosquitoes I manage to get off some short messages to the US.*

The day is nice at 86 degrees with a welcomed breeze. With the gutter now cleaned on the house the overflowing water won't keep me awake during the heavy night rains. I cannot fix the gas stove until we can find a non-leaking regulator. Had to fix a drain pipe and since it's Saturday afternoon and the help has the day off, I had to do my own washing. That done, I should work on the message they expect tomorrow in church.

February 7: *The sermon about hope and handling the problems of life started with Psalm 27 and ended with Philippians 1:21-26. The trials we carry are not in vain. The perseverance required in our tribulations is required in the sanctification process. The evening message was from 1 Peter 1:1-*

16.

February 8 and 9: in the evenings the teachers came with friends to watch more showings of the video and afterwards I told some personal stories.

February 10: With the room full of teachers this morning I tried to encourage them for the tough jobs they will face in the remote villages. Tomorrow they will be going to their separate community allocations. The government is making changes in the educational system. That will eventually require costly training for our teachers and actually force the more senior ones out of the field. The more isolated communities will suffer, since the urban trained teachers will not go out to the villages where there are no amenities, no stores, running water, phones, and electricity.

This year our computers seem to be relatively free of viruses, so it saves me a lot of work. Though I can review all the field finances when in Reno, it is good to look directly at the situation on site. With that going well I can vary the office matters with outside jobs.

February 11: Started work on the Volkswagen engine for the sawmill; ad to fix the battery charger. Also had the crew work on some plumbing jobs and secure a better fit for the lid on one of the tanks to prevent foreign objects getting into the drinking water. Fortunately, during one of the jobs a 10 foot long four inch PVC pipe fell and narrowly missed my heel when I was climbing a stairs and my back was turned. Also learned to check the electric hot water pot before boiling; there might be some strange creatures or insects inside to affect the taste.

February 12: The fellows said the planer in the joinery wasn't working properly. We took it apart and in the afternoon we re-threaded a shaft and made a new part out of some salvaged material. After some welding on it, it should be good to go on Monday.

February 13: Decided to go barefoot. The rains these nights keep the grass soft and the ground soggy. [Also eradicates athlete's foot.] When the ground dries up I'll go back to sandals

again. Tomorrow I'm looking forward to seeing old friends in Malu (down river ten minutes). The rising flood waters haven't covered the church floor, so the preaching invitation is on.

Local pastor Gideon just came in to see me. He had a stroke several years ago and now walks with great difficulty. It took him an hour to walk to the office. It was a ten minute handshake and tears shed by us both. He gave me the following verse:

Those who sow in tears shall reap with cries of delight. He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy bringing his sheaves with him! (Psalm 126:5-6)

Photos by Doug, formatting by Michelle

In His grace, mercy, and love,



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