



Nystrom Field Notes

Ukarumpa, Papua New Guinea

March, 1999

Amazing mixture

Mix together one wife on the Executive Committee, one husband traveling to the US twice since July and busy helping to develop a translation software development plan for Wycliffe. Add one building project and two national translators and their families visiting Ukarumpa. Mix in a mountain of tsunami-related correspondence and everyday responsibilities. Stir in a mystery fatigue illness and what do you get? You get this letter coming to you months later than I intended.

Visiting the new Arop village

Recently I was able to make a brief visit to Arop. Thank you for praying! The Lord truly answered, especially concerning my health. I did not feel exhausted every afternoon and evening as I have recently in Ukarumpa.

To get to Arop, I had to go by plane to the airstrip in Aitape town and hire a 4WD double-cab pickup truck for the 90 minute trip to the village.

Walking through Arop village you see immediately that it is much more spread out than old Arop. Small hamlets of a dozen or fewer houses are strung out along the new road.

The sea breeze and the sound of the crashing surf have been replaced by the humidity of the jungle and the sound of its birds and bugs.

Update on some friends

It was so great to see so many old friends, now getting their lives back together. Fortunately, I had little time to think about all the ones who were not there.

Our village mayor's son **Abram** was there, hopping around on the one leg he has left. He's very agile, with or without his new prosthesis.

Robert Sule lost his wife and 5 of his 7 children to the tsunami. I saw him being trained with other men to operate a new portable saw mill someone donated to Arop.

Emil and Pious are putting their lives back together. I visited them in their newly-finished homes. Pious and Veronica have adopted another boy, and Emil and Alexia have adopted another girl. Both were orphaned by the tsunami. Both families seem to be doing well in the new location.

Peter is kept busy with his church work and building his two houses. The new Arop is divided into two villages: Arop 1 and Arop 2. Peter needs two houses because he will be living primarily in Arop 1, but holding church services in both villages on alternate Sundays.

Linus Wairapu is being trained to operate and maintain a chain saw. He works hard, but his side still aches where a log hit him during the tsunami. He's getting by, but life is hard for a new widower with five children.

Who's got the socks?

Walking around Arop these days, you're bound to see stuff that used to belong to the Nystroms. A Tupperware canister here, an ammo box there, even our kitchen sink (a little dented). We have told people they are welcome to keep anything of ours they find in the ruins of our house, which lies in a jumble in the mangrove swamp. (No, I was not able to get there).

Arop is such a humid place that my video camera refused to operate on my first morning there. I prayed, *Lord, I need a tight container to put this camera in, and something to dry the air inside* (a desiccant). I soon realized I had a bucket with a lid that would work. Later that morning, someone came up to me and said, "Is this yours?" He was holding one of our old socks, still filled with desiccant.

Yes! Land for Rebuilding

Emil's clan has enthusiastically invited us to build our new house and translation office on their land. They will let us use the land until the translation project is finished, and then we will give them the house. This land is centrally located in the new village, and very close to everyone on the translation team. *In the next Arop Lagoon Tribune: How the Lord prepared this land for us.*

This plot is also big enough that we can build a separate translation office if funds allow. Emil's clan leaders,

Gerald and Raimon have agreed that if we can build a separate translation office/literacy building, they will allow it to remain a community building, even after our project is finished.

* Pray that there will be no challenges to the ownership of this land.

Anyone have lumber to sell?

After a few days, I left Arop to visit Aitape town to check on availability of building materials. What I found out is there are many uncertainties, and estimating actual costs will be very difficult.

So many details, so many uncertainties! This may be the hardest thing we've done so far in PNG.

* Pray that the **sawmill in town will be renovated** and working in time to supply the lumber we need. The alternatives are expensive!

* Pray that we will have **wisdom as we plan** our building project.

* Please also pray that we'll be able to do **both buildings**.

Is it worth it?

Amid all the uncertainty and hassles of rebuilding, it's easy to ask, is all this really worth it? The answer for me came again from **Colonel John Sanawe**, an Arop friend who is retired from the PNG Defense Force. To Col. Sanawe, the cause and effect sequence is obvious. He said, "John, we need adult literacy too. Most of us adults don't read well, so we don't read, so we don't read the Bible, so we don't understand, so we don't really follow Jesus." Col. Sanawe has articulated what our Literacy specialists have been saying for years: **Translation gives the Book, Literacy opens it.**

Yes it is worth it. We need to be able to live in Arop. We and the translators need a translation office. And we

would very much like to have a translation and literacy building that can remain in use even after we leave, so the book can continue to be opened for many years to come.

Thank you again for being part of the Arop Translation Team. We look forward to completing this project together with you.

Yours in Christ,

John

(For Bonnie, Brianna, and Eric too)

Our schedule (tentative)

- ➡ March 12-21: John in Florida
- ➡ March 22-27: John in Dallas for Wycliffe Language Software Board (LSB) meeting
- ➡ March 27-April 16: Family Vacation in New Zealand. Combining frequent flyer miles with an anonymous gift designated for 'vacation.' Life's tough, isn't it?
- ➡ April 27-May 6: Bonnie in Ex. Cmte. meetings
- ➡ May something: John short visit to Arop.
- ➡ Last week in May: Bonnie in FL.
- ➡ June 1-12: Bonnie at Wycliffe Int'l Conf. in N.C.
- ➡ June 18: Brianna graduates from 6th grade (primary school)
- ➡ July 14-28: John to Dallas for another LSB meeting.
- ➡ Aug. 15-Sept 30: HOUSE BUILDING in Arop
- ➡ Aug. 24-Sept. 8: Bonnie's E.C. meetings at Ukarumpa.
- ➡ Sept 10 Bonnie and kids to Arop, finally. Help, someone has to cook for all these workers from the U.S.!
- ➡ October 6: Back to Ukarumpa
- ➡ November 10-23: John to N.C. for LSB meeting.
- ➡ November 29-Dec 9: Bonnie in E.C. meeting
- ➡ Dec. 10: either collapse at Ukarumpa or head back out to Arop to enjoy Y-2-chaos in a low-tech setting.

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