

September/October 2022 UPDATE

Dear Friends and Family,

We wanted to update you all on some changes in our fall plans. Some of you perhaps have followed our posts on Facebook, and others may not even be aware of the events we have recently experienced here in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

On the morning of September 11, a 7.6 magnitude earthquake hit PNG. The epicenter was located approximately 30 miles from our organization's center. PNG is located on the Pacific Ring of Fire, and we have experienced many, many earthquakes during our years living here, but this was by far the most violent and long lasting. Kim was out in Malasiga village on the coast, where he also experienced the biggest quake he'd ever felt. But it was not nearly as drastic as what we had here in the mountains where I (Annie) was. The quake lasted at least 45-60 seconds, which is a VERY long time! I have had a difficult time beginning to recover from the trauma of this event. Here is a part of my account of those 45 seconds that may help you understand my experience: "It started very powerfully from the beginning, so within 3-4 seconds I was trying to make my way to the door to get out of the house. It was difficult to put the key into the deadbolt and get the door open. I ran outside but the shaking threw me to the ground almost immediately and I was unable to get back up. I lay in the driveway, crying out to the Lord to save us. The earth was shaking violently like you can't imagine. The noise was horrendous, both the ground itself and the sound of my house shaking. I feared it would fall down." Thankfully, it did not, nor did I sustain any physical injuries. I think part of the trauma for me was experiencing it alone. We are so grateful that our aviation department was able to bring Kim back to Ukarumpa only 3 days after the quake. It has been such a relief to have him back here! We decided to postpone our scheduled return this week to the village. We both feel quite exhausted from the cleanup, as well as the emotional strain.

As you can see, the kitchen especially was a disaster. Nearly every cupboard was shaken open, and the contents thrown out onto the countertop or floor by the violent shaking. Most of the other rooms were also a mess but had very little breakage, thankfully.

Here are some damage specifics and prayer needs:

Each house here at Ukarumpa depends on the rain to gather drinking water from the roof into large water tanks. Many of those tanks were damaged or destroyed. This is especially difficult since we have been experiencing drought like conditions for the past 4 months or so, and every drop of water is precious! We thank God that our tank did not suffer any damage. However, all of us collectively on the center have a separate water system that draws water from the local river which we use for shower, toilet, and washing clothes – this water is NOT safe to drink. A smaller tank holds this water on our roof. The earthquake broke that tank and allowed the river water to flow into our drinking water for 4 days before we discovered the leak. We are currently waiting for a new tank and have treated our rain water per the clinic's instructions. Annie had been unknowingly drinking the contaminated water during those 4 days... 😞 so please pray no gastrointestinal issues will crop up.

The fiber optic cable that ran from PNG under the ocean all the way to Sydney, Australia, was damaged by the earthquake somewhere between here and there. We are hearing it will be months, or longer, until they can find the break and repair it. This has had a major impact on our internet capabilities now, of course.

Because of the earthquake, our house has moved on its foundation approximately 2 inches to the east and almost 1 inch to the south so that both the front porch and the side porch are now separated by those amounts of space from the house. And one of the posts under the kitchen, which is over the ‘workshop’, seems to be in a bit of a tenuous state. We are on a waiting list to have the construction department come to evaluate. There are lots of houses in more critical condition than ours, so we are currently not very near the top of the “triage” list. But we’re thankful, in fact, that we are NOT very high on that particular list. ☺

Please be lifting up the entire Ukarumpa community during this time! There is much damage and

trauma recovery needed! And pray for our PNG friends and neighbors who also experienced much loss.

I recently came across this quote from a speech the well-known mid-1800's missionary to Africa, Dr. David Livingstone, gave at Cambridge University:

"For my own part, I have never ceased to rejoice that God has appointed me to such an office. People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blest reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter? Away with the word in such a view, and with such a thought! It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering, or danger, now and then, with a foregoing of the common conveniences and charities of this life, may make us pause, and cause the spirit to waver, and the soul to sink; but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall be revealed in and for us. *I never made a sacrifice*" (Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, 1981, 259).

We certainly wouldn't dare to compare ourselves to Livingstone! However, we also sincerely do believe it is a wonderful privilege to have been appointed by God to do this amazing work of Bible translation here in PNG. This current "soul sinking", "spirit wavering" event in our lives is "only for a moment".

Please pray with us for healing and recovery, in God's time and God's ways.

We're so thankful for your partnership with us! We press on together, for His Glory!
Many Blessings,

Kim & Annie Colich