

Hays Horizons

The newsletter of Darrell & Kerttu Hays and Niko, Bible Translators in Papua New Guinea

Dear Friends,

Thank you for praying for us! Our stay in Kalamo village in April went well. All three co-translators, Martin, Terence, and Francis, began translating the Gospel of John with Darrell. Kerttu helped the elementary teachers by producing some school materials and by advising them about the curriculum. It was term break for the schools, so the teachers were able to help her collect more words for the Odoodee dictionary. We are also thankful that Niko had a good time at the students' hostel in Ukarumpa.

A couple of days after we returned to Ukarumpa in early May, Martin and Terence joined us. We made corrections to Matthew (second draft is now complete), continued translating John, and carried on with dictionary work.

Royal Welcome (written by Kerttu)

When the plane had landed on the Wawoi Falls' grassy airstrip, which is just ten minutes away from Kalamo village, Francis was there first and gave us a big hug. Then came the elementary teachers, welcoming us by putting leis around our necks.

From there, we walked along the main road, then turned to a smaller path which leads to our house, where we were met by two dancing women. They led us to a decorated gate. The people began singing a welcoming song. They were standing in two rows, and we walked between them to our home, shaking hands with everyone as we were showered with flower petals!

When we reached the steps of our house, we realized that they were new – our co-worker Martin had built them, replacing the old steps which had been rotten and unsafe before we had left the village two years ago. On the first step there was a red T-shirt, which served as a red carpet. We had to step on it in order to go up into our house. The moment was touching – we were welcomed like royalty.

The first day in our village ended with a feast together. People wanted to give thanks to God since He had answered their prayers and brought us back to them.

Praise & Prayer

- Praise that Kerttu's mammogram and ultrasound were normal—she continues to be cancer free!
- Praise for all of you who support us with your prayers and financial gifts
- Praise that Niko's stay in the children's home went well during our stay in the village
- Praise that our PNG visas were granted in time for our trip to Australia



Rats and Snakes (also written by Kerttu)

Although our house had been swept before we came, the thorough cleaning up and fixing some things took a while. Rats had been eating insulation papers in the ceiling and curtains which we have at the doorways to different rooms. A couple of supporting beams of the floor were like sawdust inside (eaten by bugs), the tap of our rainwater tank was broken, and the floor of our outhouse gave in a bit. Also, the supporting posts of the platform on which we have our solar panels needed replacement. Gradually the house was in sufficient condition, and we didn't see one rat during our entire stay!

On the last morning in the village, I woke up to a banging noise. Darrell had already crawled out from underneath the mosquito net. "Is it a rat you are killing there?" I asked. "No, this is a snake," he answered. Indeed, there was a snake, 54 inches long, curled around the armrest of the couch. Fortunately, it was not a poisonous one.

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Rats and Snakes (continued)

There is also a sad snake story from our village stay. Isewia, a ten-year-old boy, had gone fishing on the river bank. A death adder bit him on his foot. Before the people were able to carry him to the local health center, the poison had already spread, and Isewia died. His father was working at the oil company. Word about his son's death was sent to him, and he was able to come by a company helicopter to the funeral which was held the following day.

Isewia was buried by his home. The pastor gave a comforting message quoting the Bible story about Jesus and children, whose is the kingdom of heaven. Our co-worker Martin read the verses which were already translated into Odoodee, about the hope the Christians have, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Isewia's friends threw small bundles of colorful leaves into the grave and also decorated the gravesite.

Supporting the Odoodee co-translators

When we began working among the Odoodee people 15 years ago, the local church appointed several men to work with us. They have helped us learn their culture and language. And now we are working together with them translating God's Word into their heart language.

From the very beginning, these men did not expect payment for this work. They knew that this was church-related work. After all, even the local pastors did not receive any kind of regular salary. So, over the years, we normally showed appreciation by giving them things that helped with their everyday living (e.g. food, clothing, soap, kerosene, nails, etc.), rather than actual money. This method has worked well up until just recently. During the past few years, an oil company has been working in the area, and quite a few of the Odoodee men are now employed by this company. As a result, the Odoodee society and economy is becoming more and more based on money.

While we were in Kalamo village in April, a couple of the co-translators expressed that they were experiencing hardships related to this. They are dedicated to the translation program, and so they do not have the time to work for the oil company like other men in the community. As a result, they feel that they cannot adequately provide for the needs of their families unless they abandon the translation program in order to work for the oil company. They expressed that they did not even have enough money to buy laundry soap or clothes, let alone pay their children's school fees. (When these men began working with us 15 years ago, they were all newly married without any children. Now each of them have at least six children, so their living expenses have greatly increased.)

Since these men have been working with us from the very beginning, they are uniquely qualified in their roles as co-translators. It would be very difficult, if not impossible, to find others to take their places. As a result, we have decided to pay the co-translators at least a minimum wage for the work they do. These men are happy with this decision, even though they realize they could make much more money if they worked for the oil company.

The wages we will be paying them will come out of the support we normally receive each month from folks like you. However, we had not budgeted for this extra expense. So, if you would like to contribute to help pay these wages, please let us know.

Our prayer is that Christians in the Odoodee language community will eventually follow the biblical principles for giving and support all of their church workers financially.

In God's hands,
Darrell, Kerttu & Niko

Find us on Facebook at:

<http://www.facebook.com/darrell.hays>

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Contributions

Checks should be made out to Wycliffe Bible Translators with a separate note saying "for the ministry of Darrell & Kerttu Hays" and mailed to the Wycliffe office in Orlando.