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March 2024

Dear Friends,

As recently observed in Tongajam village, PIM schools have students daily reciting the 23rd Psalm in English. "The Lord is my Shepherd I will lack nothing." Then they follow with other memorized verses and finish with the Lord's Prayer. "Give us this day our daily bread". In the future these young people may be prosperous or not, continue to live at their village or find work in a town, yet God's promises continue to remain true. For we know that God alone is our gracious provider granting us gifts for the body, soul, and spirit.



We no longer live in the pristine garden of Eden. People worldwide face the common challenge of getting adequate food, shelter and other needs met. It always "costs" something (sweat of the brow), whether in the big city or remote village. Add mixed variables of unpredictable natural disasters, conflicts, and climate can also make life more difficult or less than livable in certain locations or situations.

As in many countries people in PNG gravitate toward urban centers. It's not just the ice cream that people dream about. Towns attract many with a broad range of opportunities for higher income, better education for children, access to advanced health care, well supplied stores, the chance of a more comfortable life. Thus, Port Moresby, the capital has grown to become the richest and largest city in PNG with an estimated population of a half a million.



The clear downsides of the big city life include: crime, sporadic riots (the latest being during January of this year when the police had a no-show day following a payroll system glitch), power blackouts, fuel shortages, congested traffic, noise, air pollution from the thousands of vehicles without smog control, then there are the inflated rents/ housing expenses plus other factors which contribute to a much higher cost of living than being back in the village. But still people come to the cities.



Having recently visited Port Moresby, it seems that one fifth of the vehicles are taxis or privately owned busses which carry 25 passengers. Thus, a taxi can be hailed in less than a few minutes on any of the main roads or at a shopping center. Most of the taxi drivers originate from the Mt. Hagen area of the highlands and they say that driving a taxi in the city is their "garden". Some like the city, others express the advantages of the life back in the cool highlands, where their own gardens produce an abundance of free food.

Port Moresby has a variety of churches, some with seating for over a thousand and many more which are smaller. We met people worshipping at these churches who grew up in Ambunti or come from villages of the Sepik River area in which PIM works. A former PIM employee of 40 years ago, Timothy has been recently asked by his church to become involved as missionary for the church denomination. God is at work in people's lives. Some of the seed falls on good soil, be it taxi drivers, former mission employees or students.



Thank you for your support. Yours faithfully, Douglas Heidema

March 24, 2024 at 6:20 AM A 6.9 magnitude earthquake centered 25 miles from Ambunti caused the collapse of estimated 1000 homes in the country and three deaths. Alongside the Sepik River some of the bush material houses which collapsed were also surrounded by high floods from the heavy rains of the last month. Requests for PIM's assistance have started.