

December 1987

Dear

Thankyou for your letter(Nov 1). Yes, we got that calculator long ago. I am eating good, also taking vitamins, but I get a cold every time we move. We're back in Ukarumpa now and I can feel a cold coming on. I think I'm allergic to moving.

We have decided to do language work with the Tauade people rather than the Nek people. The biggest reason for this decision is that the Tauade group is much larger(pop. 12,000) and has a much greater need for God's word. The Nek people had already been evangelized by the Lutherans, but the Tauade people have only had Catholic influence and this has not resulted in life-changing experiences.

On September 25th, we flew to Tapini, which is a government center for the Goilala District. We stayed in a government house. During the month that we were there we met with some government, education, and church leaders, presenting the work of Bible translation and our desire to work with the Tauade people. We tried to get as much information as we could about which village would be the best for us to settle in, and how the Catholic church would relate to us. They will not allow other churches to come into their area, but since we are not church planters, they are happy for us to come.

On October 25th we flew to Sopus village. We decided that Sopus would be the best place for us to settle. Sopus village is actually an area composed of many small hamlets, a total population of 370, but each hamlet only has 12-15 houses. Sopus has a grass airstrip, 3 small trade stores, an aid post clinic, and a community school.(This year it has grade 1 and 3.) There is no road access so our need for a 4-wheel drive vehicle is cancelled. PTL. There is no church building and the priest only visits once every year or two. The people practise sorcery and magic. They believe that Jesus Christ was born in their area. There is a skull in a cave nearby, which they believe to be Abel's skull. If a person looks at the skull and nothing is covering it, all is well, but if the skull is partially covered that person will die.

The Sopus people were very happy to have us come. We're not sure how well they understand our purpose for being there, but we do represent Western material goods and money. America is often equated with heaven in these parts. They were eager to have us get started on building our house, especially if we would pay them handsomely for their labor. We started the house, using round timber for the framing, tin for the roof, and pandanus tree bark for the exterior wall covering. We plan to put plywood on the floor and finish out the interior with a thin wood paneling. The only way to get things to Sopus is by air freight from Port Moresby, but this is very expensive, so it may be awhile before the house is finished.

As soon as we got to Sopus we sensed a spiritual battle was in progress. We had only been there a week when we received a telex from Edmonton over the radio, that if we didn't send \$1,000.00 within 3 days our house in Edmonton would be repossessed. Apparently, the renters had been passing bad cheques and our bank account had been depleted. Secondly, because of the high

altitude and cold nights, Verna, Jason, and Jeremy quickly developed severe chest colds. Thirdly, we had to deal with unkept promises by the people themselves, as they promised us one thing and did another; their constant requests for more money; and their trickery as they tried to trick us out of things. Add to this the pressure of a primitive lifestyle and the supervision of the boys' schooling. We also sensed a great deal of depression descend on us for no apparent reason. However, all of this drove us to seek God's face and we spent more time in prayer than ever before. And God miraculously delivered us out of all these trials! Praise His Name.

Please pray that we may be able to finish our house soon, that we will have wisdom in relating to the Catholic church, that we will have success in language learning, and above all that the Holy Spirit will draw the Tauade to Himself and to a life-changing experience with Him. Thankyou for your prayers.

Love,

*Verna for*

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