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Dear Ministry Partners,

We wrote you last month regarding some conflicts which exist between some of the program worker's clans. We wish that we could tell you this month that the conflict is over, but it remains. We held a meeting on 10 March in order to begin the process of reconciliation, but it was to no avail. Conflict resolution in most Papua New Guinean cultures is very indirect and it can take months—even years—to resolve. **Pray for the conflict to be resolved in a godly way.** It is very difficult to get people to work together when such conflict exists.

We received news yesterday that a nineteen-year-old local boy was murdered at the highway below our house. He and some bad characters were attempting to rob a public motor vehicle (a Toyota van which carries passengers between major urban centers). The criminals only had one bullet for their gun and when the bus passengers figured that out, they disembarked and used their machetes and whatever large stones they could find to beat and hack this boy to death. Many of the younger generation of men in our language area think that it is futile to work hard, so they lie in wait for victims to attack and steal from—they think that this is an easier way to live. This young man, named Benjamin, paid for this attitude with his life. Many folks here are deeply grieved by this tragedy. **Ask God to give us wisdom and opportunity to use this tragedy to minister to those around us, while encouraging them to repent and to seek God.**

The church situation is somewhat better, yet still intermittent. We have taken opportunities after church to discuss deeper issues with some folks, even some so-called church leaders. Many folks here consider faith to be going through confirmation, getting sprinkled, then living like the devil if you feel like it. It is a very ritual oriented society—you can maintain church attendance, liturgy, the sacraments, while just about anything else goes. The basic world-view is one of appeasement, not relationship. **Pray that God will open the people's eyes so that they can respond to him appropriately. Pray that the Holy Spirit will convict those who need it and draw the Somau Garia people to the Father.**

We have been celebrating Taro Feast (taro is a tuber which is the local dietary staple) with various families over the last few weeks (see the picture page with this). Each spring when the new gardens are ready clans harvest their taro then designate a time when they will all eat together—kind of like Thanksgiving. We've been encouraging folks to thank Jehovah Jireh (God the Provider) for the bounty rather than local bush gods. **Ask God to direct people's thankfulness and affection to himself.**

We are in the cold and flu season here and it has rained almost incessantly for the last month. Our road as well as the national highway are deteriorating and are becoming impassable in many places (except by 4 x 4, not always by those). Our kids have had numerous colds and asthma since we last wrote. Todd has had to adjust his thyroid medication further as he became symptomatic again. Angela has been under the weather. The stress of the aforementioned and other situations, coupled with culture stress is beginning to get to us. We are scheduled for a few weeks out of the village in April and it couldn't come at a better time.

Despite all, language learning and home schooling continue to progress. We are able to find outlets for our stress when we are not able to simply get away for a few weeks. Todd has been working on making a school desk and shelves for Angela and the kids to use for school which has been a good distraction for him. Angela has had fun doing some organizing of our laundry room and verandah. We have put up shelves, cleared away construction materials, and put up a gate to keep the dog (with all his hair) off and to keep Hannah up.

All for now. Thank you for your continued love, support, and prayers.

Todd, Angela, Andrew, Samuel, Abigail, and Hannah Owen