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It is not easy to describe to you what has been transpiring over the last few months. I suppose it began with the visit of Angela's parents and has continued to swell in power even to the present moment. Allow me a few paragraphs to explain.

We have been through some serious spiritual opposition since beginning the translation of Mark's gospel in September, 2002, and it has been continuing to build. You will remember some of the more poignant moments from our previous letters, perhaps: the death of a shaman's widow accompanied with all sorts of demon worship, social opposition, dissension in the ranks of the translation team. Yet through it all, progress has continued to be made. Our most serious direct opposition to date happened earlier this month, but more about that later.

God has been working in our hearts for the last few years, drawing us deeper and deeper into prayer and yet, I must confess to you, we have resisted God in many ways. We were willing to cooperate with God—to a point. God has been working in our lives, even through our resistance, to bring healing and maturity in some areas of our lives that have needed serious overhaul for us to make any sort of genuine difference for the Kingdom here.

Jim Cymbala encapsulates our hearts succinctly in his book *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire* in two areas: Speaking of a Sunday night service in which a young man who had been stealing from the offering plate confessed and repented completely, he says, "That evening, when I was at my lowest, confounded by obstacles, bewildered by the darkness that surrounded us, unable even to continue preaching, I discovered an astonishing truth: God is attracted to weakness. He can't resist those who humbly and honestly admit how desperately they need him. Our weakness, in fact, makes room for his power." A few pages later he writes, "**One day I told the Lord that I would rather die than merely tread water throughout my career in the ministry . . . Always preaching about the power of the Word and the Spirit, but never seeing it. I abhorred the thought of just having more church services. I hungered for God to break through in our lives and ministry.**"

Recently I prayed something similar to what Cymbala prayed—and God confirmed my desires a few days later when I picked up Cymbala's little book and read almost exactly what I had prayed. Six years ago we came to minister with the Somau Garia people. We had a vision of God transforming people's hearts and minds and establishing his Kingdom powerfully. To date, from **those within the church** we have seen: demonic ritual and devotion, adultery, rape, attempted murder, theft, greed, selfish ambition, lust for power. This is not surprising as it is found in the wisdom that is from this earth: "But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice." (James 3:14-16, NIV). It seems that jealousy and selfishness is the rule of life among those not knowing God.

The easy part of faith is sitting in the boat, watching Jesus walk on water and having faith that God could make me walk on water—if he really wanted to—and then just sitting in the boat. Six years we have preached the gospel and prayed and seen very limited results. God is calling us, after six years of drawing upon all of our training, intellect, plans, token prayers to humbly confess how much we need him and how powerless we are to change lives—and then to honor him by sliding out of the boat. God is beginning a new phase in our life and in ministry.

This new phase has begun with brokenness. I don't know how else to describe it. We have tried everything that we can think of and nothing has penetrated the thick veil of deception covering the eyes and hearts of the Garia. God has been waiting six years for us to wake up to the fact that trying everything under the sun to change people for God is fruit-

less unless we are abiding in him and trusting that the harvest comes from Him. It is impossible to fight witchcraft that has been practiced for generations by merely appealing to “felt needs”. It is impossible to convince those walking in the dark that they are about to walk into a deep hole, when they say that they don’t see a hole. They need light to show them that there is, indeed, a hole. This new phase ministry begins and ends with casting in our lot with God’s Spirit, throwing ourselves at the feet of Jesus and declaring our utter dependence upon him—regularly.

Garia spirituality is an intensely practical, day-to-day thing. A generation ago a clan saw a demonic miracle and decided that power was what they wanted. They have been searching for it ever since. Standing before Garia people and speaking of God’s power to be able to help them, then not taking the next step to pray exactly for God to do that leaves them without much hope. It’s like telling a person that just cut their fingers off that yes, indeed, I have a car, a driver’s license, fuel, and money to pay for their emergency room fees, but then just standing and watching them bleed, doing nothing with the resources. God is leading us into some uncharted waters, bound in fog—just where he can use us.

By extension, those of you who pray for us are also being taken out a little deeper into the unknown. It’s O.K.. Don’t resist God, just trust and obey.

God is already working through these circumstances and our newfound openness. I was told a few days ago that one of the guys on the translation team wanted something for himself that belonged to the translation committee. One of the leaders of the translation team told him “no”, which led to trouble. The young man—Stanley, who survived the snake bite a few months ago without ill effect—began making threats and began systematically visiting all the other translators, individually, slandering the leaders, threatening the members, and telling them that they were not to come work on translation. See James three (above) for the reasons. The team had a meeting (which Stanley did not attend) and sorted the matter out, but only a few guys have been coming. Most have been paying attention to his slander.

This morning, the guys came to translate and Stanley was among them. First thing, I gathered the team and talked with them gently for about half an hour about God, the responsibility of leadership, sin, and healing from both sickness and sin. God began opening my mind to things which needed to be addressed. Stanley *himself* suggested that we gather in a circle, join hands, and pray. As we prayed, God brought hidden things to mind and I prayed about them before the others. God allowed us to pray specifically for some situations which the men would not speak about. We also prayed that God would heal specific illnesses of the men and their families. There is a terrible flu epidemic burning through the area that has already **killed** several dozen people and there are entire villages where people are just lying in the open, sick, unable to move or get help. Most of the trained medical personnel at the local aid posts are so ill they cannot give any relief to people.

Some of you will be encouraged by what you have read. Some of you will raise your eyebrows and think that we have gone off of the deep end. We have and let me tell you why. For all these years God has been trying to tell us that he is glorified when we go out into the *deep* water, where we cannot touch bottom, cannot wield our strength, cannot push or pull our *make* people do what *we* want. In this environment, when God begins to move, people begin to repent and become new on the inside, they will rightly see that God gave the good gifts. They will rightly seek God who brought them out of their misery. They will rightly magnify God’s name. They will rightly go forth with the name of Jesus and proclaim his Kingdom, rather than going forth to make disciples for the Lutheran Church, or the Nazarenes, or the Foursquare Church, or the Seventh Day Adventists. They will go forth, making disciples of Jesus, not Todd and Angela.

If our job as Bible translators is about anything, it is about empowering people to come directly to the Father for life, providence, healing, truth. It is about setting captives free.

Won’t you join us in setting these people free to come to the Father? The most serious thing that you can be praying about is that God will bring about *cultural transformation*. This is a long term prayer request that will not happen overnight. Cultural transformation happens when the vast majority of people in a culture submit themselves to God and follow him alone. The entire *worldview* of a people changes as they exchange membership in their birth culture for membership in the Kingdom of God. Ask God to raise up five Somau Garia men as evangelists to proclaim the good news to their own people—men full of the Holy Spirit, submitted to God’s desires. Ask God to continue to uphold and strengthen the Somau Garia translators as they encounter opposition both from people in Garia society and the enemy. Ask God to continually “clean house” both with the translation team and in our own hearts. We so much need more of God, his Spirit, his direction, his power in our lives, so that we, too, will not shrink back, but will live victoriously, completing the work which God has called us to.

Serving You for Jesus’ sake,
Todd, Angela, and kids