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## December 2003

Dear Partners in Ministry:

Here we are, the last month of the year, pensive, reflecting on what has come and gone, planning for what is ahead. This year has been melancholy in many ways, but the future holds such bright hope. Always we sit on the edge of the present, hopefully gazing into that which is to come, a gleam in our eyes and a quiet confidence in what God is about in the world.

What hope comes to the fore in 2004? Our hope is that 2004 will see us safely again in Papua New Guinea, finishing up the Gospel of Mark, and publishing mid-to-late 2005. Our hope is that 2004 will see the purchase of a newer four-wheel-drive to replace our aging and ever-less trustworthy vehicle. Our hope is that 2004 will bring dozens of new prayer partners to our ministry, to assist us in tearing down the walls of deception and to build up the body of Christ among the Somau Garia people. Our hope is that our lives and activities this year will be a source of encouragement and growth for each of you.

While all of these hopes are borne by a desire to please and honor God, we realize that many of the promises held out to the Patriarchs were not received by them, but by their descendants. We realize that so many of our plans quite often, for one reason or another, are diverted in directions that perhaps we would prefer they not be. We realize that, ultimately, God's greatest desire for our personal lives is not that all of our hopes are realized, but that, according to God's word (Romans 8:29), we will be made in the likeness of his Son Jesus Christ. Our hope stands not in the things we desire or anticipate, but in the person of Jesus Christ, the source of all hope.

That said, let us take our hope, our desire, our petitions to the throne room:

- Ask the Father to provide financially for the purchase of a newer, more reliable four-wheel drive to replace our aging and decrepit one.
- Ask the Father to continually stir the Somau Garia people toward a renunciation of their local "deities" and toward repentance and acceptance of his gift of grace.
- Ask God to continually encourage and uphold the Somau Garia translation team, as they make a rough, first draft of the Gospel of Luke in our absence.
- Ask God to continue to bless our family with wisdom, renewal, and strength as we serve Him during our home assignment months and as we anticipate returning to Papua New Guinea toward the end of summer, 2004.
- Ask God to give us to continually open our hearts to him, so that Christ's name might be honored.
- Praise the Lord that recent evictions from squatter settlements in and around the city of Madang (where PBT-PNG has its headquarters) were relatively peaceful.
- Praise the Lord that Angela remains healthy in this pregnancy and has not had the high blood pressure which has characterized past pregnancies.

We wish to thank each of you for your unique contribution to the ministry of Bible translation to the Somau Garia people. Without you, your prayers, your financial support, the chances of the Somau Garia people having the chance to have intimacy with God through having his word in their own language would be virtually non-existent. Each of you are a valuable part of the team.

May the Lord bless you and keep you,

Todd for Angela and kids