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Dear Partners in Ministry:

After reflecting on September, October, November, and December, I can genuinely say that I am thankful that I don't have any spooky, interesting stories to share with you this month. Whew! In November we shared with you about the death of a long-time friend whose husband had been reputed to be powerful sorcerer in life and her fear of the demon monster Kenese. In December we shared with you about our co-worker, Stanley, being bitten by a snake a few dozen yards from our front door—and surviving with no ill effects after prayer and anointing. This month has been pretty low-key, so after giving you a few highlights, I'll ask you to join us in praying over some of our plans for 2003.

January has found us in Madang, where PBT-PNG's headquarters are, getting some much needed rest, *trying*, anyway, to get our "town" work done, and making preparations for and participating in our Annual General Meeting (our yearly meeting to decide policy and evaluate the past year, also referred to as AGM). During the weeks leading up to AGM, the hard disk drive on our computer crashed and we spent a few weeks ordering a new one and trying to get everything sorted out. The tropical environment is not really very compatible with computer hardware, it seems. Also, about the same time, our e-mail/internet capability became non-existent to sporadic, when a lightning strike fried the equipment at the phone company. It has been weeks and there are still no replacement parts. During AGM week, while the adults were meeting to decide policy, etc., our kids met for Vacation Bible School and we wrapped up both meetings by throwing a party with the theme of "Noahland", after Noah's story in Genesis 10. Our tech services guys made a mini-golf course and we had a "flood of soup" with "flotsam of sandwiches". We really enjoyed it. It was a costume party. Abigail and Hannah were giraffes. Andrew was a bear and, yes, you guessed it, Samuel was a monkey.

What is on the horizon for 2003? I thought you'd never ask! You can be praying with us on a number of items. We are looking forward to the real possibility that Mark's Gospel will be fully drafted by early March and that we will be spending much of the rest of our year putting the drafts through exegetical checks, back translation, village checks (for comprehension), peer checks, and consultant checks. I don't know what we'll be able to finish before the year is out—that is mostly in the hands of my Somau Garia co-workers—but if they continue the pace we have been running at, it is *not* inconceivable that we *may* be able to print and distribute Mark in the Somau Garia language in the first half of 2004. **Let's hold these people and the Word of God in the Somau Garia language continually before the throne of God!**

As you pray, also remember our family as we live in the midst of a very stirring and difficult spiritual environment. The kinds of situations we often find ourselves in create a lot of stress in life. The normal stresses of missionary life are enough to deal with—culture stress, living in a fishbowl 24 hours a day during our village stays, etc. The additional stresses, that is to say, the kinds of things you often read about in the monthly letter, are the kinds of things that can make living here exceedingly difficult. Ask God to give us the peace that passes all understanding, wisdom, opportunity, and strategies to constructively deal with our stress. Pray that God will give us times of refreshing that we can minister out of the overflow of God's Spirit in our lives—that we will experience more of Him and less of the dryness that creeps in around the edges of life.

Finally, remember our children in your prayers. Pray that God will continue to develop in them the kinds of hearts that love and passionately pursue Him. Pray that the differences they feel culturally and socially, the variance of values that they feel, will enable them to have sensitive and compassionate hearts. Ask God to shape them through these unique experiences to be vessels of the Holy Spirit that He can use for his Kingdom.

Thank you for your support and your prayers. Blessings to you as you walk in faith (not by sight), as you hope in Him (knowing that your hope will not go unfulfilled), and as you love Him and those around you.

Serving you for Jesus' sake,

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