

In The Gap

A Monthly Prayer Guide

Praying for the Needs of the Somau Garia People of Papua New Guinea
and the Owen Family who Minister Among Them

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Uria Village

Home. Quiet. Work. Frustration. A Miracle. Renewed vision.

If there are words or brief phrases that reflect the experience of our first few weeks back in Uria, these would suffice. For month upon month we have been eagerly desiring to be back at the work of Bible translation, back in our home in Uria village, back into the thick of things.

In unpacking this week, we've made many discoveries, some pleasant, some otherwise. The deep freeze we bought a few years ago (it runs on LP gas) stopped working this week. Early in the week our refrigerator, hot water heater, 4100 watt Makita generator and mission two-way radio were not working. Through prayer and a little bush engineering, the radio, hot water heater, and fridge are working, though our deep freeze is still out of commission (hopefully it can be fixed with a new part) as is our generator. We're going to have to replace the antenna to our mission radio at a cost of nearly \$500.

One pleasant discovery will thrill those of you given to intercession. You will remember that we asked you to pray for Angela's friend, Korenime Lim during her recent pregnancy. Angela was talking with her yesterday and got the story of the baby's delivery. Her time to deliver was near, so she left the village and went down to the Yagaum Hospital, outside of Madang, to await the baby. When she was in labor, little Milkey's foot came out first. The doctor turned the child and got the leg back inside, but he was not delivered immediately. In fact, she actually went back to the village and delivered the child underneath her house (as is the local custom)—three days later! He was born head-down and is the fattest Garia baby we've ever seen! He is a beautiful child—seemingly healthy and happy.

Your prayers for our translators are also bearing fruit. We have often asked you to pray for our translators—for maturity, protection, skill, stalwart hearts, etc. One of our faithful translators, Kenny Maiya, had a change of heart during our absence that is notable. Kenny has often been a faithful *church member*, but I think has struggled over the years with putting away old things and embracing the things of God. Before we left I had purchased a devotional book written in the trade language, which translated is titled, *The Water of Life*. It sat on the translation office shelf untouched. I encouraged the guys to look through it but they seemed completely disinterested. A few days ago one of our friends related to me that Kenny began looking through that book one day. He was so gripped by it that he took it home and read it non-stop for two weeks. At some point during that two weeks, Kenny had a complete change of heart and gave himself wholly both to God and the work of translation. Now when he attends church, he consistently stands and exhorts the young people to put away foolishness and pursue God with all their hearts! **Continue to pray for Kenny's faith, commitment, and desire to serve God.**

Mostly these last few weeks have been quiet. We had two days of heavy rain after two months without rain. The tanks are full, the grass is getting a bit green again, and people's gardens are again soft enough to resume planting (during extended periods without rain, the ground hardens enough that it is difficult to plant). We are grateful for the quiet as we have needed time to unpack, organize, and prepare for kicking off with both our school year and translation efforts.

A few days ago I (Todd) met with the translation/literacy teams. I was impressed with the change of attitude of some of the men (like Kenny) and heartened by some very compelling words from the men. For example, “[Translation] is God’s work—we cannot not take it or leave it as we wish. No matter what people say, we must carry on . . .” “People seeking money work only for money. We work for better rewards than money . . .” Now this may not seem so remarkable to you in the American church, but this is a profound change of heart with some of these guys. The text book on Cargo Cult was literally written about the Somau Garia people (You can find it on Amazon: *Road Belong Cargo*, Peter Lawrence, 1971, reissued in 1989 by Waveland Press, Prospect Heights, IL). What made these words so compelling was the fact that I said little more than, “Hello” and simply listened to their thoughts and agenda. God is at work in the hearts of these people—keep praying!!!

Finally, many of you are aware that my (Todd’s) mother, Ellen Owen, returned to Papua New Guinea with us for a visit. She found life in Madang somewhat restrictive—because of the crime we live behind fences and cannot go many places without using the buddy system. The shopping, I think, was enlightening as well—no “one-stop-shopping” here. There is not much to begin with and what there is must be mined out of a dozen stores, each of which takes significantly longer to check out of than say, Wal-Mart or your local grocery store. Our stay in the village has been a more pleasant experience. We have taken several hikes. It is cool here this time of year—between dry and rainy seasons. The mountains are inspiring, the hospitality warm. Pray for her as she returns to America—alone—October 2 and 3.

Ask God:

- To protect our health. Samuel has had high fevers several days in a row. Josie has been reacting to the mold and has been taking breathing treatments.
- To continually open the hearts of the Garia, and to raise up five Garia men as evangelists.
- To bring wisdom, clarity, insight, and understanding to Todd and his Garia co-workers as they take up, again, the work of both checking previously drafted work and new rough drafting (particularly of Luke and Acts).
- For the remainder of the funds needed to replace our vehicle.
- To enable us to fix or replace the equipment that is currently non-functioning.

Thank God:

- That we are (mostly) settled into our bush house again and are renewing our village friendships and getting moving on work again.
- That He has been at work here in our absence—blessing the work of our hands.
- That we’ve been able to get as many things fixed as we have without a major outlay of capital.
- That, even when we feel so very helpless, He is sufficient to work through our weakness.

We wish to extend to each of you our earnest and heartfelt thanks for your labor of love in prayer and your generosity in financial gifts. Your faithfulness as part of this ministry is indeed bearing fruit, one person at a time, and is enabling Angela and I to be here staying at the work of lifestyle evangelism, preaching, teaching, Bible translation, medical assistance . . . And the list goes on. We thank you for the vital service you each render the Lord towards seeing the Somau Garia people gathered around the throne and in front of the Lamb.

May the Lord bless you and keep you, may the Lord shine his face upon you and give you peace.

Your servants in Christ,

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