

Sent: Thursday, 17 March 2022 10:08 AM

Hello all,

Thank you for your prayers over recent weeks as I have been grieving the death of my sister Clare. It has been a hard time, but it has been helped by being surrounded by the love, prayers, and practical care of family and friends. Her funeral on Feb 21 went well, honouring a life well lived, as well as her ability to truly see and love people. Giving her eulogy, alongside Clare's husband and my younger sister, is one of the hardest things I have ever done. As the funeral ended, we had another tragedy, as my brother-in-law's mother collapsed. While the various medical personnel attending the funeral were able to revive her, she died at the hospital later that day. Grief upon grief.

I spent the following weeks in Perth, grieving Clare alongside many others feeling the same loss. As one of my closest friends since primary school, the hole she leaves in my life is enormous, with tendrils in every part of who I am. Sorry to the many Perth friends I did not see during this time, but I had little energy for contacting anyone outside a very limited circle. Grief is an exhausting process, and it will take me some time to get back to a normal way of life.

A week ago (Mar 10) I returned to Victoria, for a little more time with family here, and I am booked to return to PNG on Monday, Mar 21. This date was chosen as an opportunity to fly with friends who are also travelling from Melbourne to PNG. After all the chaos of this year, travelling with friends seemed like a good idea. Leaving family behind is always hard, but this time will be harder, so it will be good not to be alone as I depart. These friends are still waiting on their visa for PNG, so pray that it arrives in time for our flights! On Monday we intend to fly Melbourne – Sydney – Port Moresby, overnight in Port Moresby, and then continue to Ukarumpa on Tuesday Mar 22. I am looking forward to being back in my own house, with my own cat, among my own community. Between a long village trip and an extended stay in Australia, I have spent six nights in my Ukarumpa bed since late August last year. It will be good to be home.

The following day (Mar 23) is the start of the biennial conference of SIL PNG. As a member of the Executive Committee (EC) of SIL PNG, I should have been part of the planning and preparations for this Conference, but have been excused due to recent events. Pray for me as I get straight back into the big picture of SIL PNG, and that I would quickly catch up on the documents that I have glanced at but not yet digested. Pray for us all as an organisation as we meet to encourage each other, as well as to make some significant decisions regarding the future direction of our work. Also pray that I will be able to pace myself well. Conference and all its associated events is always a very people-full time, which I easily find exhausting. As I already am living with a baseline of grief-tiredness, discerning when to participate and when to step aside, is likely to be challenging.

In my last update I mentioned the recording of Luke in Kope. It was completed in time for the recording team to return to the Highlands, but only just. Once I am back in PNG I will catch up on the full story, as well as what stage in post-production the media team is at. Our next steps for Luke are to choose illustrations, and get the typesetting done. Pray for all those details. The Kope team has been doing some work on drafting Acts and Genesis. Pray for them as they do this work, that they would meet regularly, work together well, and have insight into the best way to express unfamiliar concepts. Pray for good relationships among the team members.

Last year we ran a Vernacular Creative Phonics (VCP) training course for local literacy teachers. These teachers should now be starting their new school year, so pray for them to use their training well, have good community support, and for children to learn well.

For some time now I have been getting increasingly further behind on the paperwork for funding for the Oral Bible Storying (OBS) cluster project that we are working towards starting this year. While everyone has been very understanding as to why I am behind, this is an exciting project that I would like to see go ahead, and paperwork I want to complete well, and as soon as I am able. Pray for me to prioritise it among all the other things demanding attention, and to complete it in a thorough and compelling manner. There will be many demands on my attention as I return to PNG, such as finalising the budget for the dorm project, so pray for wisdom in managing them all.

The much asked question is "How are you?" and I am still uncertain how to answer. I am okay. Not brilliant, but okay. I am putting one foot in front of the other, finding beauty in each day, and looking forward to being back in PNG. I am also carrying an aching sadness, am tired, and am not looking forward to leaving Australia. I am carried by the prayers and kindness of many. Thank you for being among those who carry me at this time.

To finish on a thankful note, this month is my ten year anniversary of arriving in PNG! I arrived at the end of March 2012, and am thankful for all the good things that God has done in me and through me during this decade.

Blessings,
Hanna

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