

The Journey of Hanna Joy

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Hello All

Sorry for the long gap between newsletters! I had intended to get this out in March, but have been busy with furlough. Instead, here is an extended newsletter that covers everything from Christmas to Easter. I hope you enjoy reading it!

For those of you who do not know, I send out a prayer update every month. If you would like to receive that as well as this newsletter, please email me and I shall include you in the future. I also update my blog at least monthly, sometimes weekly, so you can check there for news as well (blessingsandbubbles.blogspot.com.au).

Blessings

♥ Hanna

Furlough

During February and March I was in Australia on furlough. Furlough is a time of catching up with family, friends and supporters. It is not my usual work, but neither is it a holiday. Sharing with people about the work I do is part of my job description. Over the eight weeks I had 18 speaking engagements as well as countless cuppas and catch-ups.



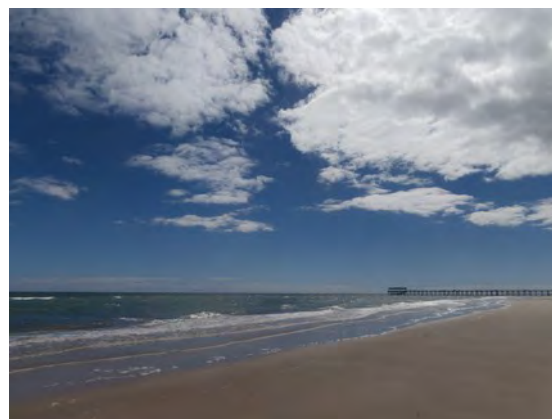
Enjoying being Auntie Hanna

As I visited people in Qld, NSW, Vic and SA I was constantly encouraged by faithful gatherings of people living out their faith in their local context. This is just as much the work of mission as my role. In everyday ways I saw people shining the light of Christ in their networks of family, friends and colleagues.

Spending two months travelling, talking and listening to two years worth of life story over a cuppa or a meal is exhausting. By the grace of God I made it through each day and through the two months. At the end I was healthy and still enjoying sharing about the work of Bible translation in PNG.

Thank you to all of you who made time in your busy schedules to fit me in. An extra thank you to those who accommodated me. Apologies to those I was not able to catch up with this time, I know I missed seeing some people.

Along the way I had many wonderful times with family and friends. I enjoyed being in the bush and on the beach, had a day of sailing, visited many cafes, did some supply shopping, went to the cinema and to a music festival and met the many children born to friends in the last two years. My highlight was being in Melbourne when my newest nephew was born. Being the out-of-country Auntie, but the first to meet the newborn was pretty special.



Things I miss about Australia... the beach.



Back in PNG (Kaintiba airstrip)

Uniskript

Uniskript is an innovative literacy programme developed through the University of the Nations in Hawai'i. The idea behind it is to connect the sound, the shape of the mouth and the symbol on the page, helping to bridge the gap between sound and symbol. I was privileged to be part of a literacy programme in the first PNG language to work with Uniskript, Koriki.

For nearly six weeks I worked with long term Gulf Province translators, the Pettersons, and a new literacy worker, Melanie, to train eight Koriki young adults as uniskript literacy teachers. At the same time we taught over 100 children to read and write in their own language using the uniskript alphabet which is unique to their language.

My class was around 40 kids, aged four to ten, who had never been to school before. This was their first introduction to literacy and they did amazingly well, as did our trainee teachers. Their enthusiasm for learning was shown by the fact that we had over 100 kids turning up to school every day during the summer holidays. I challenge you to find that level of enthusiasm for reading and writing in Australia!

Each morning we would teach the children for an hour and a half, then spend at least another hour training the teachers and preparing for the next day. After a hot and sweaty half hour walk home we would eat lunch and have a siesta before working on literacy materials. The challenge of literacy in PNG is not just access to education, but access to materials to read from. We produced numerous short story books in Koriki and fought the printer until we had printed hundreds of books.

Since our summer school, I have heard that several of our trainee teachers are doing a great job of continuing to teach in their villages while some others are struggling to get their programmes off the ground. Meanwhile, Robbie Pettersen is working on materials to help the children with learning English, as this is the official language of education in PNG.

It is an exciting programme and it will be interesting to see where it leads in the longer term.



Koriki uniskript literacy teachers



Writing practice



Walking to work

Christmas



Our International Christmas with citizens of New Zealand, USA, Canada, UK, Australia, PNG, Germany and Hong Kong at dinner.

While working on the literacy programme at Ara'ava in Gulf Province, I was living at the nearby Kapuna hospital. This is run by Gulf Christian Services and provides medical care to a vast area of the province. There are no roads nearby and patients come by foot, canoe or occasionally helicopter, when the nearby oil search company send them.

The hospital compound was such a blessing to us in our work as it provided established accommodation, electricity, rain water tanks and internet. It also provided the family with which I spent Christmas. Around the table was a mix of long term and short term hospital volunteers and staff as well as our literacy team. We had not intended a big feast, but when everyone has put something small aside for Christmas, the combined effect is quite a party.

Partnership and Allocation

For a long time I have said that I would prefer not to work along in a village setting, not if I am going to work here long term. Among the many single women who work as linguists in PNG many work in partnerships with other single women. Some work on their own, and I greatly admire their stamina and their strength, but I know that for myself that working in a team is a better idea.

At first I thought I was going to form a work partnership with my friend Sharna, who was still studying in Australia. Along the way though, I worked with my friend Catherine and we realised just how well we worked together. After much discussion, prayer and seeking advice from others Catherine and I have decided to proceed towards partnership.

This is an exciting decision as it brings us a significant step closer to settling into one language area long term. Our next challenge is to work out which language area, or allocation, we will go to. This is a decision which we once again will undertake with much prayer, discussion, research and advice. Your prayers for wisdom as we go through this discernment process are appreciated.

Meanwhile, Sharna has completed her studies and is currently building connections with Wycliffe Spain in the hope of working in a Spanish speaking area. This was a door she had thought was closed, so it is exciting that our changed plans have enabled her to find her way into this work after all.

I'll let Catherine introduce herself below. You can also check out her blog: catherinepng.blogspot.com



Catherine and I holidaying in Cairns after our furloughs in different places.

Hi! My name is Catherine Rivard, and I'm delighted to meet some of Hanna's partners! I grew up on a small farm in southern Minnesota, USA, and when I was in high school I first began praying about becoming involved in Bible translation. God confirmed that calling in many ways throughout my time at university, and I was blessed to arrive in PNG in August 2011 to serve as a linguist/translator with Wycliffe. I am passionate about working alongside Papua New Guineans in order that they might be transformed by hearing God's Word in their own language. In addition to linguistics, I also serve as a staff writer for the communications department and as the lay vet and horseback riding instructor for the local pony club. I love hiking mountains, eating capsicum, creating art, climbing trees, making up silly stories, and imitating accents!

Meanwhile...

While Catherine and I are researching and praying about allocation options, I am still involved with other aspects of Bible translation. In the coming weeks and months I intend to:

- Work with my colleague Barbara on the grammar paper for Ngaing, where she has worked for many years. This was something we talked about doing last year, but which never happened.
- Assist with teaching English to Papua New Guinean mother tongue translators who are coming to attend courses at the training centre. This will help them to access further training and resources.
- See what other opportunities arise!



One of our uniscript teachers teaching the children in his village. He is using a picture dictionary that I spent many hours compiling. It is always encouraging to see books embraced like this!



Rainbow across the Finisterre Ranges

'In him was **life**, and the
life was the **light** of
humanity. The light shines
in the darkness, and the
darkness has not overcome

it' John 1:4-5

I love the beginning of the Gospel according to John. It paints a word picture of Jesus, the Word, as light and life. This Easter as you contemplate the darkness of the cross and of death, remember that the darkness could not overcome the light, that it is the Word which breaks through the darkness. May you then remember and live in this truth through the remainder of the year.



The youngest (and cutest!) student in my uniskript class.



Students enjoying the books we made, then gave them as a Christmas gift.

Decorated with thank you gifts from the parents of our students.



Prayer Points

Praise: that Catherine and I have reached a decision to partner together

Wisdom: as we seek to discern which language area to allocate to long term

Plans: as we start narrowing down the list of language options we will be planning to visit places. Please pray for all the communication and details this requires.

Praise: for safe travel during furlough and back to PNG

Thanks: for all the people who make it possible for me to work in PNG through their financial and prayerful support.

Easter: that people may hold to the truth that the Light has overcome the darkness.

Your word is
a lamp to my
feet and a
light to my
path.

Ps 119:105



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