

SEPTEMBER 2011

## SMUCKER'S SNAPSHOTS



### THAT THEY MAY KNOW HIM

The church is just a small metal sided building with large "windows" (open holes) running down both sides of the building. The floor is concrete and a row of 8 small benches line each side of the church. All the males sit on one side and the females on the other. Three people with guitars lead music at the front and the worship leaders sing heartily off key. An old lady sings in the high, piercing tone so common to the village. Five multi-hundred dollar flower arrangements brighten the front, all picked and arranged for free that morning from neighbors' yards. The sweltering heat and extreme humidity make sweat slowly run down faces and all skin has a damp feel. Body odor mixes with occasional puffs of hot breeze that finds its way through the windows. Swallows dance in and out of the building. A throbbing base beat is

heard from a nearby bar where people are still celebrating last night. Then the singing is done and we sit down to listen to the preacher deliver a good, 45 minute sermon. The wooden plank bench quickly becomes uncomfortable and my knees are jammed in the back of the rough wood in front of me. Some people sit on the concrete floor, not because there is no room on the benches, but because it is more comfortable. And then, the 2 hour service is done. As I think about the sweltering heat, bad singing, distractions, and sore backside, I realize that all those things are external, and God hears the sweet refrains of worship joining



with the thousands of similar churches in Papua New Guinea creating a symphony of adoration and praise. I couldn't be in a better place.

We long to see people from every tribe and language in PNG worshipping with us in heaven just as many are already doing. People in over 100 languages in the Sepik and Sandaun regions (where we are now working) have no scripture in a language they understand well. Pray for effective ways to reach these people with the Word.

### LIFE IN WEWAK

After lots of sorting, packing, finishing projects for work, and saying goodbyes, we arrived in Wewak July 19. Part of our cargo came with us, and the rest came when the plane had extra space. The last of the bulky cargo as well as Sam's motorbike have arrived, so it is feeling more like home. Sam hopes to use the bike to visit pastors around the region. There are few roads so he will have to be creative in how he gets in touch with them. Some will be by road and others by plane.

We are settled into our 3 bedroom apartment here. Abigail is excited about having a bunk bed. Living in the mission apartment is cheaper than renting in town, but still significantly more expensive than living at Ukarumpa.

School started on August 1 with 13 students from 6 families. Routine has taken some time to establish, but it is coming. Our kids enjoy being with other kids.

Since Sam has arrived, he has continued working remotely on the aviation computer program. He spent nearly 3 weeks in September at Ukarumpa implementing the new program. When he returns, he can really focus on networking with the churches. We will be helping to organize a conference for the various church denominations in hopes that they will catch the vision of seeing their people use God's Word in their own language. Pray as the conference is shifting a bit in how it is being planned. We don't fully know what it will look like yet. The dates are November 21-25. Deb is helping Sam with some of the church engagement things as well as helping with other logistical things where it is possible.

## VISITORS WELCOMED

In June and July, we welcomed two sets of visitors. Deb's parents spent 2 1/2 weeks with us at the end of the school year and got to take in lots of end of the year school activities with the kids (Nathanael's jazz and concert bands, as well as his graduation). We especially enjoyed showing Dad around as he hadn't been to PNG



before. Then in July, friends from Sam's home church brought their family to experience a bit of our life with us. They experienced some of Ukarumpa as well as a bit of our new journey in Wewak. I'm sure they could tell you a story or two!



## NATHANAEL'S NOTES

I graduated from 6th grade in June, so I am officially in middle school now. We have moved and God is giving me opportunities to use the abilities He has given me. Besides teaching PE, I am helping some students with math. I have started playing on a soccer team with guys from around our neighborhood. I am still playing trombone and have started playing the guitar along with two other kids at my school. I enjoy swimming in the ocean when we get to go. Please pray that I can get adjusted to the heat. It saps me of energy pretty quickly.



## ABIGAIL'S ANTICS



I like living in Wewak, but I do miss my friends at Ukarumpa. There are four boys in my class (1 from Australia, 2 from America, and 1 from Germany). Having Nathanael and Mommy as teachers is fun. Reading has been hard work, but I am practicing lots and I think I will soon really enjoy it. I am learning to play the recorder. My dad found this pineapple at the market. It was huge!

The last few months feel like they have been a whirlwind of super busy schedules, changing from the familiar to the new, finding what the new "normal" is and emotional upheaval as well. We are thankful to be in a place where we can settle for awhile. Thank you for standing with us in these last months of transition. Your prayers have carried us through when it has been hard.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Until all have heard,

*Sam, Deb, Nathanael, and Abigail*

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Any financial gifts should be accompanied by a note indicating that it is for the ministry of Sam and Deb Smucker.

### Prayer Points:

- ◆ Wisdom and energy as we prepare for the upcoming conference in Nov
- ◆ Safety for Sam as he travels in the next months
- ◆ Balance in our work, family and ministry responsibilities
- ◆ Wisdom to know what ministry opportunities to pursue
- ◆ Continued adjustment for everyone to life in Wewak, that we would find our niche
- ◆ PNG churches will catch the vision of being involved in the work of translation

### Praise Points:

- ◆ Sam being able to "roll out" the program for aviation
- ◆ Smooth move to Wewak—good school and friends
- ◆ You who faithfully stand with us through your prayers, encouragement and gifts