

January 8, 2018

Dear Brothers and sisters at Harvest Baptist,

We trust that you had a good Christmas celebrating the birth of our Savior, and spending time with family. About 10 days before Christmas four of our grandchildren came to visit us here. They brought their parents with them; our daughter Mandy and her husband David. It was a nice Christmas gift for Bella and I. This was the first time we met our youngest grandson Ethan Valor. That time with them was over all too soon though. Then for us it was a race to get back to the village for Christmas here. We arrived on the 23rd after traveling for two days by plane, car and motorcycle. The night we arrived began three days of meetings and activities. Christmas in the tribe has always been like this for us. We ran games for the young kids with prizes and goodies for everyone. It is our (exhausting) way of doing something nice for the young children here. Recently Bella has been doing this for the ladies as well. It is fun to see the joy not only on the kid's faces but also some of the ladies. I was in the back blowing up balloons and I could hear the whoops of joy as another lady won a prize. It was fun.

We like to listen to Christmas songs leading up to the holidays. We like the song "White Christmas" although our Christmas's here are anything but white. For us typical Christmas weather is heavy rain. Christmas here this year dawned dark with heavy black clouds. Before too long the rain began to fall in sheets. Bella made the comment that it really felt like Christmas. And it did to me too! My mental image of Christmas in the tribe is of piles of muddy sandals outside the doors of the church. Christmas here means lots of meetings and lots of rain.

During this holiday time, Bella has continued to do comprehension checking on the translated scriptures. I am pretty far ahead of her, so I took a break from translation. I have to speak multiple times during the holidays, so I am pretty busy making lessons. I was really encouraged after the New Year meeting when a number of men got up to testify about the message I had just shared. The people here rarely give positive affirmation for anything. So I NEVER hear "good message" from anyone after I speak. So, it was a blessing to me to have these men get up and basically reaffirm what I had just shared with them.

Bella and I have to go back out to town next week. She has to see the doctors twice a year for numerous chronic medical issues. We plan to go up to Malaysia for those checkups and treatments. With the trip in and out, it will take us a week. It makes a couple of hours wait in a doctor's office seem like a breeze. Of course, when we get to Malaysia, we have to wait in the doctor's offices too.

I mentioned in a previous letter that we want to do a project to bring clean water to our village here. The response to that was amazing. I think the money that has been donated will cover the costs. I won't know for sure until we actually figure out where we are bringing the water from. I had planned to begin that as soon as we got back from Malaysia in two weeks. Unfortunately, the money for that project was sent to the wrong country by mistake. It isn't lost, but it is going to take an extra month to get to us here. So, we will begin the project in early March and get as far along as we can before we head home for a short home assignment.

Thank you very much for praying for us here. It is a real challenge to be working by ourselves. One of the things we don't have time for anymore is beginning new outreaches to neighboring villages. We are still hoping and praying that the folks here will take this on. They know how to teach the phase one lessons, but they have to be burdened to reach the Sekadau people living around them. Thanks so much for the \$100 that you sent in December.

In Christ,

Paul and Bella

Prayer requests.

1. Continued good progress in translation. Pray for wisdom as we try to put God's Word into the Sekadau language.
2. That our health will allow us to continue to work here.
3. That the believers here will begin to do outreach.

The pictures are of; Bella and ladies, Our youngest grandson Ethan, Paul speaking at Christmas, The Church at Christmas, and Paul playing modified baseball with the kids.



