

Dear Brothers and Sisters at Harvest Baptist,

Another holiday season is behind us. We have been here on the field for almost 40 years now. One of the things that we were unprepared for when we arrived, was that holidays would not be like they were when we grew up. Our first Christmas here there was no Christmas music in the malls. There were no malls. There was overwhelming heat, no Christmas tree, no money, no presents, no special food, and most of all, no other family. That was a hard Christmas. We soon learned that whatever traditions we were going to have, we would have to develop on our own. So, we did. Our kids never knew about Santa Claus. We did eventually get a small tree and gave presents to each other. We made our own ornaments. We learned to associate hard rain and mud with Christmas time. We ate our own special foods that we can make here. And we learned to really enjoy our own small family time together. And, by the way, it was NEVER on December 25th. That day, we had several meetings with our church family here.

Once our children left home, things changed again for us. Bella still puts up the tree. The folks in our village like getting their picture taken in front of it. Most of what we do involves church activities. Christmas is the big event of the year in the church here. We have LOTS of meetings (9 in one week). Different men in the church (and me) speak from the Word. There is special music and testimonies. We sing lots of Christmas music, or at least the same Christmas songs over and over again. (I really need to translate some new ones!) The folks have a volleyball tournament and a tug of war tournament. Bella and I buy small gifts and treats, and then run games for the children and the women, to give away the prizes. It isn't what we were used to growing up, but it is good. This year we actually had two of our children, Jamie and Cori, with us. And a couple of weeks before Christmas we met with Mandy, David and her five children. That was all very special. Of course it is hard to see them all leave again.

Now that the new year is here, the next big thing in front of us is the next translation check. The translation checker plans to come mid March to check Luke and possibly 1 & 2 Timothy. I have been busy translating the book of Luke back into English so the checker can read it and send me a list of notes and questions to go through before the check. We seem to still be on track to do about 15-20% of the New Testament done each year. After this check, I think we will have about 70% finished and checked. When we are finished with the New Testament we do plan to spend about a year translating more of the Old Testament.

Bella and I are going out to town with Cori to see her off. We plan to leave on Tuesday morning. After we see Cori off, we plan to go up to Malaysia for medical work.

Thank you for your prayers for us. And thank you for the \$100 that you sent to us in November and for the \$300 in December.

In Christ,

Paul and Bella

Prayer requests;

1. Our health. Bella and I both have chronic pain in our backs and joints. So far it hasn't affected or ability to do what we need to.
2. The translation. There is quite a bit to get done for the check in March. And please pray that the good native language checkers will be available to help.
3. Pray that the Lord would continue His work in the hearts of the people here.
4. We are hoping to see some of the men in here ordained for ministry in April. I no longer have the authority to do this. We need help from some of the church leaders from other areas. Please pray that they will be willing to help.

The pictures are of the church here, Jamie speaking in church with me translating, a little girl with one of her prizes from the games and Bella working with the kids in the children's program.

