The heart can not taste what the eyes have not seen. – *Brazilian proverb*



Missions Report

November/December 2007

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ABWE



Bill Smith



Pat Melson (L)



Marcia Ernst



Rich Ernst



Steve Aholt

Land of the Unexpected

Frankly, I didn't know what to expect, though I'd researched Papua New Guinea, it's people, and ABWE's missionary activities there.

PNG is, among other things: Razor-ridged mountains, fertile flat valleys, water-laced lowland rainforests, and tropical islands; Geologically unstable; Your choice of climates from temperate to sultry to nearly parched; A few cities, some rustic towns, and numerous villages; Predominantly warm, out-going, generous, and hospitable people, but enough lawless, vindictive, even dangerous people to give PNG one of it's nicknames: "The wild West of the Pacific."
The timid need not visit PNG.

Half a world away and across both the dateline and the equator, Papua New Guinea is a frontier. Over 820 indigenous ethnic groups and languages make the country one of the most diverse in the world. It is a land of incredible and largely untapped natural resources. It is also a country sliding toward the status of many African nations according to some residents.

Opportunities and needs are great. Much of the PNG infrastructure, largely created by the Australians, is crumbling. Corruption and lawlessness are epidemic. While writing this I received an e-mail notice that missionaries Bill & Lori Smith had been robbed at gun point again – their 5th time, I believe. Drug abuse, mostly in the form of betel nut (buai [boo-i] in pidgin), a mild narcotic, is pervasive. AIDS/HIV infection is rapidly approaching rates of the worst African nations and is projected to be a major health and economic issue within a decade.

The status of women is generally low. There appear to be token representatives in some prominent positions, but generally a woman's value seems greatest when her bride price is being established and paid. Otherwise her worth seems to be primarily for sex, child bearing and rearing, household chores and labor. Rape is common and usually not prosecuted. Even as I wrote this I learned by email of the mutilation and attempted rape of a young woman on Bible college property.

Though blacks and whites live side-by-side, eat in the same restaurants, drink at the same water fountains, and ride in the same seats, prejudice and racism abound … between colors and maybe even more so between indigenous ethnic groups.

And though over 95% of PNG nationals claim membership in a "Christian" church, many individuals and even some denominations incorporate sorcery, ancestor worship, or other elements of traditional religions such as animism or cargo cults.

While in PNG, Tom (the other photographer) and I made many new friends, gained an awe for frontline missionaries, and produced thousands of images of the people, country, and ABWE ministries – photos both the missionaries and the agency can use to inform, appeal, and even recruit.



Lori Smith

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For newsletters, please tell me whether you prefer: a)To be taken off the mailing list, b) Snail mail, c) Text-only email, or d) Email with a large (~300K) pdf attachment.

Will You Join With Me?

I am still significantly under-funded for the PNG trip but it is only the first of many international missions photo expeditions I hope to make for ABWE and possibly other missions organizations.

Will you join me in prayer and possibly financially to support this world-wide missions ministry? Your gifts are tax-deductible. You can contribute to my account (Jay York, account # 078543) ...

- By check (paper or via online banking) – Checks should be made out to ABWE with my name and account number (see above) in the memo field and mailed to ABWE at Association of Baptists for World Evangelism; P.O. Box 8585; Harrisburg, PA 17105.
- On the internet (www.abwe.org) – Click the "Give" tab at the top of the ABWE home page and use MasterCard, PayPal, or Visa.
- By phone – Call ABWE's headquarters at 717.774.7000 and use MasterCard or Visa. ABWE sends donors a receipt for tax purposes.



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Dave Smith









PNG Trip Overview

Far too much happened in Papua New Guinea for me to relate in this short document. I'll list a few highlights here, but you'll need to visit my PNG web site to get anything more than a few teasers: words or pictures.

Port Moresby, Central Province – Spent a delightful but confining few days at the Mapang Missionary Guest House resting, and acclimating to the weather and time change after traveling over 36 hours (including layovers). Met numerous wonderful missionaries from several mission agencies active in PNG. Saturday, my last full day in Moresby, I made an involuntary contribution to the local economy when my bodyguards and I were accosted by five young men, at least one of them with a gun, and I was relieved of all of the camera equipment and most of the PNG money I had with me. Sunday prior to departing the city, I used my backup camera and lens to photograph services at two different churches where graduates of ABWE's Goroka Baptist Bible College serve. In the afternoon I met Tom Kilpatrick, the other ABWE photographer, at the airport and we flew to Goroka in the highlands to begin our official coverage.

Goroka, Eastern Highlands Province – This town, a major commercial center in the highlands, was to be the hub for the duration of my time in PNG. The streets and market are little safer than Port Moresby – we had a guy sizing us up in the Christian bookstore! GBBC, the Bible college, is in a rural setting out of town and considerably safer, but see the "Land…" article on the other side for a distressing update. While there I photographed GBBC facilities, classes, activities, and personnel.

Kundiawa & Kerowagi, Simbu Province – Only a few days after arriving, Tom and I split up to cover different ABWE ministries. "Air ABWE," a Cessna 206, dropped me off at Kundiawa, then flew Tom to the remote dirt strip at Simbai. Rich Ernst met me at the Kundiawa airport and after some provisioning and photography, we drove nearly an hour over paved, but horrible roads to Kerowagi. For nearly a week I enjoyed the hospitality and fellowship of Rich and Marcia as I photographed their many ministries in and near this small town. The Ernst's are retiring soon and ABWE currently has no one to fill their slot here.

Goroka, again – Tom and I re-converged on Goroka. This time I photographed the GBBC graduation; the annual pastor's conference; a wedding; and celebrated Thanksgiving with the Goroka-based ABWE missionaries. Tom returned to the US after Thanksgiving and I remained several more days for additional photo coverage.

Madang, Madang Province, & Wewak, Maprik, & Wamsok, East Sepik Province – Overhearing Bill and Dave Smith's plans for a trip into northern PNG, I changed my schedule and accompanied them into "the bush." We flew Air ABWE from Goroka to Madang where we stayed with the third Smith brother, Ken, and his family before flying Air Niugini to Wewak where we overnighted at the New Tribes guest house. The next day we rode a truck with 30+ others to Maprik. With night falling, we hired a police Land Cruiser to drive us up a road that dwindled to a trail over the next hour before arriving at the tiny village of Wamsok. For the next 4 days I felt as if I'd returned to the first century and was accompanying Paul and Silas as I photographed Bill and Dave preaching, counseling, teaching, and surveying in the tiny village and its environs. When we departed Sunday, they left behind over 120 new believers to be discipled by the 2 GBBC graduate pastors there. Retracing our route, Air ABWE dropped me off at Ukarumpa.

Ukarumpa, Eastern Highlands Province – This is home base for about 600 SIL/Wycliffe missionaries from all over the world. Here I reconnected with (Dr.) Jeff and (RN) Linda Stout from Grass Valley and spent the next few days documenting their activities in the medical clinic and a nearby village. I was driven back to Goroka on my last full day in PNG to start my homeward journey the next day.

For stories and photos see:
http://www.catalystcommunications.net/newsletters/2007-12nl/2007-12nl.htm

