

# *D'Jernes Journal*

Entry Number 89 • June 2008

And now we've crossed that imaginary line of demarcation and are back here in PNG.

In the dark hours of Saturday morning while streaking across the Pacific ocean at 600 miles per hour we crossed an invisible line 35,000 feet below us that follows the 180th meridian.

## FLYING FROM EAST TO WEST

Our first step will be to assess the current situation among the Arop-Lokep people. Have the literacy and education efforts continued in our absence? Will we need to invest more time and effort into teacher training and materials development? Is the translation team ready to tackle the remaining 33% of the NT translation that needs extensive revision? What are the needs of the local church leaders: more HIV and AIDS awareness; translation of their liturgies; booklets addressing social and community problems? Did our village house survive the severe earthquakes while we were away? Has the grass on the airstrip been cut recently? Is there any drinking water in the tank? We'll be making contact as this comes to you to try and determine these things.

180 MERIDIAN

Immediately, in recognition of the international date line, we jumped ahead by 24 hours to Sunday morning and continued on our way to Papua New Guinea. The crossing was imperceptible, yet profound. Our furlough has ended and a new field term has begun.

What a great furlough it was! We treasure the time we were able to spend with our families and friends. We're so proud of our children and their spouses – all with such tender hearts and calloused hands. Welcoming our grandson, Max, into the world was the highlight. And being there long enough to see him take his first steps and then flash a proud, 4-tooth smile was an incredible bonus. Thanks family, you filled our emotional tanks with premium grade love.



We traveled from AL to NY to make presentations in 22 different churches and 2 Christian academies. We were warmly received by all. Many expressed their support for us and our ministry to the Arop-Lokep people of PNG. Some wanted to know how they can be even more involved. Thanks team, you have given us courage to continue.

We had fun times: a large family reunion at the Outer Banks of NC; a beach weekend with family and friends at Pawley's Island; camping with Ben; sewing projects; working on the vintage truck; planting fruit trees, and so many more. We had work times: months spent writing curriculum for vernacular language prep-schools on Long Island; several weeks spent refurbishing the interior of Sissie's mother's house; traveling to and speaking in churches most weekends; responding to the needs of the translation team on Long Island, and more. All pleasant memories we'll carry with us.

We may have done an adequate job in reporting on our work while in the States, but we didn't do very well at articulating our needs for this field term. Our statements of "We can't do it without you" and "It takes a team" are true, but were much too general to be of much help. We really didn't give you much specific to act upon. Our apologies. Let me be specific. We have two needs.

1) Three families graciously stepped up and gave us substantial, one-time gifts during our last 2 months in the States. Their generosity enabled us to return to PNG on schedule; however, it will not sustain us at the level the organization has determined for us while here. That coupled with the rising costs of commodities and the decline of the U.S. dollar relative to foreign exchange leaves us \$500–600 per month shy of the optimum operating level.

2) Sea transportation will continue to be crucial to our ministry around the 4 islands inhabited by the Arop-Lokep people. Our boat's hull is in good repair, but the outboard motor needs to be replaced. When we took our last trip around Long Island in 2007 to conduct AIDS awareness, we had to bind the power head to the clamping system with fishing line to hold it together. That problem is being properly repaired, but it's time to get a more reliable outboard. With the sale of the old motor factored in we'll need \$2,500 to complete the project.

We begin this new field term with grateful hearts for all those who made our time of home assignment a success, and we are thankful for our partners in ministry, both old and new, who go with us into the Land of the Unexpected. God's best to you all.

Unto Him,



Jeff and Sissie D'Jernes

## Items of interest:

- Ben (our son) and Christy have very full lives with work, sports and church activities. Ben's arthroscopic ACL and meniscus repairs appear to be completely successful. We had a chance to meet Christy's nephews and niece triplets in CA on the way back. Cute x 3.
- Megan (our daughter) and Jeff are doing great as new parents. They're making good progress on their fixer-upper house. They are looking for clarity in the direction God would have them go in ministry.
- Please note our contact information below.
- This letter comes to you from the generosity of Dick and Kathy Troyer who volunteered to distribute the D'Jernes Journal for us. Thanks!
- We hope to describe our initial impressions of life back in PNG in our next Journal entry. Stay tuned.

