



Ford Family in PNG

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Alotau News

By Craig

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In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. (John 1:1-5 NIV)

Greetings from Alotau, Papua New Guinea!

November and December brought a lot of interesting and unique experiences.

On the personal front, I almost burned down our neighborhood in an effort to burn some old files. You can read the full [story here](#).

On the personal and ministry front, we hosted a farewell dinner for Leslie and Loopie Williams who permanently moved away from Alotau in mid-November.

On the ministry front Jeri, taught both a singing and a cooking class this month. As part of the small business program some ladies are doing baking. Jeri taught them how to make banana muffins and cinnamon rolls. At a men's meeting the men asked if we could have a class on understanding the notes and symbols in the song book. Since I was unqualified, Jeri did the lessons.

On the personal front, Jeri and I had a night away by ourselves for the first time in a couple of years.

On the ministry front, we hosted the church Christmas party this month. The tradition is to sing carols and hand out gifts at the hospital before heading to our house for a Christmas movie with popcorn. We managed to cram 60 people into our living room for the Christmas celebration.

On the personal front, we had a wonderful Christmas. We ate ham (they only have ham for sale in the stores once a year). We got all but two of our Christmas packages before Christmas. Of course, we loved watching the kids soak in the sights and sounds of the Christmas season.

On the ministry front, Marcus and Diane did a two day marriage seminar over the holidays. There is such a need for marriage guidance, so I'm thankful for their great work with the seminar.

2010 Year in Review

By Craig

It seems strange to say goodbye to a year I just welcomed a few months ago (it definitely didn't feel like a year)!

My first temptation was to share a bunch of stats. I was blessed to baptize ten people, we had over forty baptisms in and around town, we average 60 people at the town church, and I had over 150 Bible studies this year (repeat studies - not just unique). All of those stats are good to report, but the year cannot be summarized by numbers.

Ministry continues to be an amazing adventure full of ups and downs. This year provided me with a lot of opportunity for personal and professional growth. While ministry is sometimes difficult, I'm thankful that God continues to allow our family to serve him here in Alotau.

4 Successful Programs from 2010

1. In 2010, we started conducting one **men's training day** each month. Looking forward in 2011, those training days will be replaced by a two year training program that Marcus will be coordinating to start early in 2011.
2. The BIG event of 2010 was the **national kibung** we hosted here in September. The rain did its best to try and ruin the weekend (we had to move twice because our venues flooded). We still had a wonderful church gathering.
3. Late in 2010, we initiated a **small business program**. Through the program individuals are taught about small business and offered an opportunity to get a loan to help them start their business. To date, we have approved just shy of \$3,000 worth of loans for 16 individuals.
4. Another new activity in 2010 was my regular attendance every other Sunday at the **church in Popova**. The church consists of one family unit, and despite being quite small, has good potential.

Looking forward to 2011

In 2011, John Kirarata, the part time evangelist at the town church, will be going back to Bible college to finish his last year. This will obviously open some doors for others to be involved in the church work. In 2011, I plan to be actively involved in conducting Bible studies in and around town as well as working closely with the town church.

Below: (left) Small group of Christians singing at a Christmas party, (center and right) people gather at our house for the Williams' going away party.



Family Perspective

By Jeri

These last two months have had huge blessings. We were blessed to celebrate Thanksgiving with some American friends in town. It was fun eating pumpkin pie together and reminiscing about past Thanksgivings we've had. Gathering with our American friends here in Alotau for Thanksgiving is starting to feel very normal now. We invited Craig - even though he's Canadian. ☺

It was fun watching the kids get ready for Christmas. They're getting old enough to actually remember what we did last year for the holidays. Of course, they wanted us to carry on some traditions, such as making a fort in the living room for them to sleep in on Christmas Eve. We were blessed with some nice packages from friends and family too.

We've been staying busy doing home school. I never realized just how much time that would take out of my day. But it is a blessing to participate in that part of Hannah's development. We took a one week holiday at Christmas time to enjoy some time off before we hit the books again. Our goal is to finish kindergarten before we leave for furlough in May, so we don't have much wiggle room.

I guess life brings joy and pain. Unfortunately, Elizabeth has dealt with some physical pain these last two months. She had a big boil last month which took almost 2 weeks to heal. As I write this, she has a cluster of boils resulting from a staph infection. She literally hasn't been able to sit down for 3 days. It's hard to see her in so much pain. Please pray that she will heal soon and that the staph infection won't keep returning.

May God bless you with a wonderful new year. We are excited to see many of you in 2011!



***The kids were all smiles
because they knew
Christmas was on its
way.***

*I pray that out of his
glorious riches he may
strengthen you with power
through his Spirit in your
inner being, so that Christ
may dwell in your hearts
through faith. And I pray
that you, being rooted and
established in love, may
have power, together with
all the saints, to grasp
how wide and long and
high and deep is the love
of Christ, and to know this
love that surpasses
knowledge—that you may
be filled to the measure of
all the fullness of God.
(Ephesians 3:16-19 NIV)*



Cooking for Williams farewell



Our gingerbread house



Caleb in his Christmas dress up clothes

Devotional

By Craig

Return to Me

Go, proclaim this message toward the north: “ ‘Return, faithless Israel,’ declares the Lord, ‘I will frown on you no longer, for I am merciful,’ declares the Lord, ‘I will not be angry forever. (Jeremiah 3:12 NIV)

Earlier this year, we studied the book of Jeremiah in our adult Bible class. What amazes me about the book was how severely God could criticize the people for their misconduct and then offer an opportunity for repentance.

I know that if someone had such a long list of grievances they had committed against me, I'm not sure the door would be open for repentance.

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9 NIV)

Peter reminds us that the door is still open. The opportunity and invitation to return will be present until the end.



*Above: Jeri with her cooking class
Below: Jeri teaching people how to read music*

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