

FORD FAMILY IN PNG

The Last Chapter

We knew that 2012 would bring an entirely new focus to our work here in Alotau.

It would be time to shift gears.

Over the last few months we've been spending our time making the necessary preparations for our move to the States.

Servant Leadership Team

One of my primary ministry goals has been to help appoint a leadership team to serve the congregation after we leave. In February, the Alotau church appointed three men – John Kirarata, Joel Siropodi, and Chris Doga – to serve as a servant leadership team.

In addition, we will be appointing some church members to serve as Mature Christians Servants. Their function will be to help provide wise advice and support to the Servant Leadership Team.

Logistics of Moving

Within a few days of 'putting it on the market' (translation: telling people the house was for sale), we had two very interested buyers.

We do have a buyer for the house, but we are all holding our breath to see if the transaction will be completed before we leave on April 8th, 2012. Likely, the final house transaction will not be completed until after we leave. I may need to return to finalize everything with the house sale.

Important Address Changes

Effective immediately, we have closed our PO box in PNG.

New Mailing Address:
6846 Bison Run Loop
Cheyenne, WY 82009

Email address:

As of April 1st we will only be able to receive email at pngfords@gmail.com (not pngfords@kuliamail.net)

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Joel, Chris, and John (left to right) appointed as the Servant Leadership Team.

The Final Chapter Continued

Last Visits to Area Churches

Another element of this final chapter has been saying goodbyes.

In January, the whole family joined me as we traveled to Lavora (a village along the coast) to say good-bye to the Christians there.

The kids did really well, but decided that they are glad they live at home, not in the village. I was thankful to have the company as I often leave Jeri and the kids at home when I go.

The Christians gave us a big

food basket as a thank you for our service in the province.

When we first got there, I developed a boil on my back. Since I wasn't able to treat it, it got infected, and I spent almost the next week after we got back in bed. It's amazing the number of movements that are impacted by your back!

(Don't worry - I won't attach any pictures of that!)

During January and February, several of the area churches have been inviting me to speak and spend a last Sunday with them.



Marcus and Diane's daughter, Hadassah, was baptized this month. Molly and Flora were also baptized since the last newsletter update.



Celebrating the church opening at Taulihamaliana



Jeri teaching children's class at Lavora.



Family Perspective By Jeri

We are becoming pros at getting rid of stuff. Even the kids periodically walk out of their rooms saying, "I think I'm ready to give this away." We've been slowly purging ourselves of most of our belongings in an effort to limit what we take back to the States. We plan to take just a few suitcases back with us when we go. I enjoyed watching Hannah as she went through some of her books yesterday. She was thrilled to pick out particular books to donate to the children's ward at the hospital and others to give to a local school.

The school year here starts at the end of January. I began teaching the religious instruction class at the international school again once a week. I have enjoyed taking Hannah along and doing that as part of our school day on Tuesdays.

The kids seem to be handling the upcoming move well. Hannah is excited and asks lots of questions about life in America. Caleb thinks it always snows there. Elizabeth is pretty oblivious to what it means to move away, but we've noticed that she's needed a little extra TLC lately. Even she is noticing that our house is becoming more and more bare. But she is excited to go on the airplane. 😊

It's a weird feeling to know that our time here in PNG is almost up. We're ready, but part of our hearts will always love and miss this place. I'm trying to savor the warm weather, the ocean and mountain views, the beautiful songs of the birds in the mornings, and our church family here. Bittersweet is the perfect word. Thanks to you for your prayers for our family during this big transition.

Current Prayer Needs

1. Church land. For many years, the church has been looking at land options. Pray that God will open up some property according to his will and timing.
2. Servant Leadership Team. Pray that the men who were appointed to serve the congregation will have wisdom and servant hearts.
3. Mature Christians Servants. Ask the Master to prepare willing hearts who agree to accept this responsibility of service.
4. John Kirarata who is serving the church as a full-time evangelist.
5. Evangelism. Pray that we can be open to sharing our faith with those around us.
6. Transition. We only have about five weeks left in Alotau. After six years of living here, that will involve some hard goodbyes.

How are you doing?

Friends and family have been asking us how we're doing with the transition.

This has been a time with a lot of mixed emotions.

On the one hand, we are excited about the transition and looking forward to what God has in store for us.

On the other hand, we know there are many things we will miss about life and ministry in PNG.

Most of all, we feel ready. Life feels like it is on pause right now. Waiting. Waiting for days to pass. Waiting for events to come. Waiting for the next chapter in life.

We don't want to wish away any of these moments, and yet it's hard being in a place where one foot is here and one foot is already there.

We would appreciate your prayers as we make the adjustment.

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