

Greetings -

Ken writes:

I see the last newsletter was in August which seems like a year ago. That was when we thought that we might get an honest government in the Solomons and we were expecting to be in NZ by now for the heart operation. As it is, neither has happened. I am still here and the first of the government Cabinet Ministers is waiting for sentencing in the High Court. Another member died the night of their celebration party, and a member of the opposition died from sickness recently, so our political situation continues to be very unstable.

We have also reversed back to our earlier decision to stay up here for the Christmas season and are now looking for a great time with Philip and Katherine who are coming out from Canada. We have booked for a time down on Santa Ana between Christmas and New Year - Unity who works with Shirley in the printshop comes from there so she will make it special for us. A very quiet place with not a shopping mall in sight but with the best crayfish in the world.

Then we are scheduled to head west to a our friend's resort in the Marovo Lagoon, where there is world class experience in diving. I have never been there or done any diving, so looking forward to the trip up there and having Phil and Katherine with us will make this a very memorable Christmas.

Shirley writes:

I have taken over from Ken who left for Malaita – he, along with all the senior leaders in the church, went across to the first One Pusu Bible College graduation in sixteen years. I took him down to the ship on Tuesday morning and went back to work. Rushing out of the office about mid-morning I lost my footing and fell flat down on my face in the gravel – the lengths we go to, to provide entertainment for all the people sitting under the trees along the fenceline!!

The same day, the High Court was due to sentence Jimmy [Rasta] Lusibea, a very popular Malaitan Eagle force leader and now MP, for things done during the tension. He had pleaded guilty, but when he was given 2 yrs and 9 mths, groups of youths started running through town throwing stones and causing panic. Most people seem to think it was actually opportunistic rather than his supporters, but people in town panicked. Most of the vendors [and



*One Pusu graduation, first in 16 years*

customers] in the market fled, a lot of them into SSEC compound. All shops were shut, road blocks with riot police just outside the church office - no one could work, so we closed up early along with everyone else and went home. The mob, which was never very big, broke into one store in China town and just started looting when the police stopped them and started arresting them and the whole thing was over before it properly started. As we have said before, life here is never dull!!! Our good friends, Colin and Joy Dyer, flew out in the afternoon, but with all the excitement in town, we never got to the airport. We will miss them though.

The printshop has continued ticking over – we have kept busy for most of the year although regular power cuts during the last month have slowed us down somewhat. I always enjoy doing the end of year certificates for the schools, it is very satisfying.

In October I had a quick trip down to Brisbane to visit Deborah and Ian and children, who had recently moved there after finishing their time in Toronto. It was a very refreshing break. Wee Emma and Fyn are great little kids and it is a joy to have them so much closer. Then in November, Ken had a week in New Zealand, along with the Su'u School Principal, courtesy of Bethlehem College in Tauranga. He came back very impressed with their setup.

The most exciting thing that has happened all year is that about a month ago, we suddenly got water again!!!! With no warning, all of a sudden, our taps were in full flow for the first time all year. We had just finished putting up our large reserve tank and had it full of rain water, so now we have enough water to shower as often as want, and flush the toilets with clean water.

Shirley2 is back from boarding school, and Lilly has been over from Auki several times accompanying sick patients to the National Referral hospital, so it is great to have the house full again. Lilly and Brian have been engaged for about 15 months, and finally, last month, Brian's parents arrived in town to plan the wedding day {the groom's family's prerogative, I have now found out.}. Naba wanted us to be involved, and, I heard, they didn't know what food to give us, so they asked if they could have the pow-wow at our house. I said to Ken, "I hope that doesn't mean I have to cook for them all," and he said, "Of course not, just give them a cup of tea." So I got busy and baked two cakes ready, but then that morning, Naba called in to give us a contribution towards the chicken, so I realised they did expect a proper meal!!! Shirley and I went to market and together, chose the freshest looking snapper we could find, took it home and wrapped it in foil with butter and herbs and baked it slowly in the oven. Just as the guests were arriving, we took it out to check it was done, and found it had no texture at all, it was like the meat had been in a blender. It tasted horrible. So Shirley grabbed another fish out of the freezer, hacked it up and fried it while I greeted the guests.



*A light moment with Fyn in Brisbane*

Rolland told me next day that he has seen fish like that before, and it means they have been dynamited – the shock breaks down the flesh. This one must have been right in the middle of the blast. Anyway, it really upset me to think that is how the fisherman are catching their fish, destroying both the fish stocks and their reefs at the same time. I will be even more careful choosing fish in the future.

The evening turned out to be really nice, planning the wedding without either bride or groom. It is planned for the last weekend in January to give his parents time to get the bride price together. Brian's parents seemed to enjoy the 'white man' experience, although every time I spoke, his mother turned to Lilly's mother and said in language, "What is she talking about?".

Our family is still growing - in October Jessica had little Caleb whom we have yet to meet, and now Mike and Pamela are looking forward to their first baby in February.

We share the sorrow of New Zealand in the deaths of the 29 miners, and the stress on the families as they wait to retrieve the bodies. What a horrible thing to go through.



The office closed last week, and most of the other staff will take off for home. We plan to do some house maintenance, it is looking quite shabby and the roof leaks. We trust that you all have a safe and happy Christmas, remembering Him who gave up so much to give us so much.

May God Bless you all,  
Ken and Shirley.

*Saora Bible College – first ever graduation*