

O Lord God power and might are in Your hands and no one can withstand You...

We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.

2 Chronicles 20:6,12

Extra update this month!!

This is some background info for those interested in some of the challenges of life here at the moment.

I am so thankful to God for His faithfulness, His control over all things, His complete trustworthiness. So I am not worried – but see these events are for our learning and growing. We look forward and up to see what God is going to do. But honestly we are in a mess! And our resource is to do as Jehoshaphat did and lift our eyes up to God.

Pray that will be the response of the hospital staff and workers and the church leaders and community as we face the challenges ahead.



It's been good to hear some giving thanks for the difficulties and encouraging people to repent and turn to the Lord.

So what's happening?

Dry season has struck – and is predicted to last for the next 8 months. It is already having impact through the country as gardens in the Highlands are drying up – as well as being hit by frost!! (Yes it's been quite cold for PNG – with temperatures even at Rumginae dropping below 20 at night! Some here are even using blankets!)

Rain may not sound so important to you with town water and supplies. But life here depends on rain! Rain fills our tanks and provides all our water. So we are currently recycling water from washing, being careful about flushing the toilet etc. It makes for a good community spirit as we go for our daily swim and see the staff, patients all at the river washing their bodies, clothes and pots. The happy noise of children splashing and playing in the river resounds through the air – in all the school breaks. We are pumping water from the river to the hospital and adding bleach to make it usable.

River levels are down. That means the Fly River to Kiunga cannot bring food and fuel supplies. Kiunga (30km away is where all the food and diesel supplies come to on the river). Boats are stuck further down the river. So those that can afford are stock piling food and fuel. Diesel is restricted now so no drums can be bought. Praise God we just got in time to stock up diesel for the next few months for the generator – but will need to cut down the hours again – another hour going shortly to 9 hours a day – which is likely to create problems for frozen food.



Thankfully some rain is also detected on the horizons on the weather maps. That will DV fill our tanks. We hope it will fill the river enough to let the waiting boats in and out. But our river went down very quickly again after the last rain showing how unusually dry the whole ground is.

Fire is a significant issue as people start grass fires! So that is why on Friday Sharon and I were out behind our houses with buckets trying to stop the fire from ripping across and burning the water pipe – and then from coming up to our gardens and houses. Rather hard to throw away our precious water on a fire - started no doubt for fun!



The flames were up to the top of the trees as we saw from our house and therefore went to investigate! Hard to get anyone interested to help – as fire here is used to burn back the extra grass and because of our usual rainfall usually causes no problems! It was surprising to see how fast the fire was moving when it all looks so green on top!

As the rain comes down from heaven and does not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is My word that goes out from My mouth it will not return to Me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. Isaiah 55: 10,11

Pray for spiritual rain! That God will use this dry time to turn people's hearts and lives to Him. We need that much more than physical rain!

Probably more significant and impactful than the dry season will be **the pausing of the Tabubil mine** at least for the next 8 months. Last year the talk was to develop Tabubil into a university town – now it is a skeleton town! Truly we can make our plans but God has the last word! Proverbs 16:1.

Almost all the employees of the Ok Tedi mine have been asked to leave. The other companies have also closed down and left as they live in company houses. All but landowners are asked to leave. Only a skeleton staff at the hospital and some of the key mine workers are left. In the 1997 drought the mine kept working – so other factors (like copper prices and government take-over of the mine) are the main reasons for this closure.

This will have a major impact on many communities who have been supported in various ways by the mine – many by employment, or help with transporting vegetables for sale, or regular compensation payments

For Rumginae we are not sure how much this will impact us – but significantly. Already we are seeing outpatients that usually go to Tabubil. We usually refer our surgery patients and other difficult patients to Tabubil, send blood samples to Australia.... (2 ½ hours drive up the gravel road – likely now no road maintenance either)

There will also be no help when our generator breaks down or we need help with the solar water pump or.....

So what about our 'district hospital' in Kiunga? Hmmm. Often they refer their patients to us anyways! And their doctors are funded by the mine through a support programme! And drought is already causing them to talk about reducing bed numbers and cutting back. Supplies of patient food and water will be a significant pressure for them and us.

Our problems in the North Fly are compounded by our Governor and Member both being entangled in **court cases about money, power and position**. My heart is grieved by these and the previous Governor as they use God's name frequently and have proclaimed that they follow Jesus. Yet their greed and desire for position is spoiling God's name and also spoiling education and health. The Kiunga High School has been closed this term for grades 9 and 11s because all the money is locked up until the Governors resolve their issues. For months now its been so hard to get any help from the Governor's office.

My prayer is that all these things will cause us all to **stop trusting in man, money, development... and learn to TRUST IN GOD**. May God be the one we all look to in times of trouble – but also in good times too. Because He is the One who rules and reigns – O that the people here would live as if we believe that!

If my people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I WILL hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.
2 Chronicles 7:14

At Rumginae we are thankful that this time of constraints is showing out things that have been hidden – **dishonesty and debt**. Please pray for wisdom and grace as we too have to lay off some of our casual staff and reduce spending in every way we can. Pray that this will cause us all to unite and pull together and that the staff will be understanding.

Pray for any other hidden things to show out and for people to be convicted and put things right where necessary.

Sharon needs much wisdom. We are so thankful for Geoff Banner (short term maintenance worker) who has been such a practical help recently with the generator and power issues and now the dry time. He is going back to Australia for September – so we pray the generator keeps going!

O God you are my God earnestly I seek you. My soul thirsts for You in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
Psalm 63:1

Trust in God at all times
O people pour out your hearts to Him for God is our refuge. Psalm 62:8

Thanks so much for your prayers, interest and practical support.