

The Nipa Trip

by Kenny McKee.

This is the story of an audio evangelism trip in Papua New Guinea by Kenny and his wife Joan, from Language Recordings UK. Their colleague is Nickson Soal, a newly trained recordist. The area they are visiting is Nickson's home region.

We left in our vehicle at 5.45 am on Sunday 13th April and travelled down to Mendi where we stayed overnight with a local pastor. The roads down to there were about 75% good. From Mendi to Nipa the roads were 100% bad and we could not have travelled there but for this great vehicle The Lord has provided.

We had to use 4-wheel drive the whole way. We drove high into the mountains and over rushing rivers - a few of the bridges were just wooden logs - real missionary stuff: great. When we got to Nickson's area, we left the vehicle under the supervision of a whole village and started to walk and climb up the mountain.

It was very hard going for us, although the villagers had come to meet us and carry all our kit. They just skipped up the track while we needed to stop and rest regularly. When we got near the top we were above the clouds, like on an airplane.



It was lovely to see all the villagers for the first time. Nickson said this was making history, as no white people or missionaries had been to his place before. While we sat to rest, the villagers sat and stared at us. Nickson stood aside and just wept. He later told me he just couldn't believe that we were there, and he saw how difficult the climb had been for us and especially Joan.

They made speeches and gave us a lovely little bush house to sleep in; it was great. The temperatures there are cold at night so we slept in our clothes. Later, when we were speaking in the church with the same clothes on, I laughed to myself this would never happen at home, i.e. preaching in the same clothes I'd slept in for several days. Anyway, no one noticed! ha ha.

We started recording next day and got the "Good News" and LLL1 recorded ... and also some local Praise and Worship songs. The Language Helper had been given the scripts a few weeks earlier. He had worked with SIL previously and it was a joy to record with him... he was so good.

There are no public services of health provision, electric, water or other things we take for granted and the people have a real hard life. Cooking and fetching water to even make a cup of tea takes hard work and effort. The many villages there are very remote and so forgotten and neglected. Sadly there are thousands of villages like this in PNG. Sometimes we in the West tend to think that there are loads of missionaries in all these villages, doing all kinds of wonderful ministry. That is not true. No one else is doing it.



We had taken with us many simple things for the villagers and kids to enjoy. We took a guitar for the new church, a volley ball and basketball, marbles, sweets and some food of rice and tinned fish and meat. They made Joan and me a lovely place to shower and every morning there were 2 buckets of warm water for us. We don't know where they got the water from as they have to carry it in.



During our time there they had many services - usually 2 every day. People from the neighbouring villages walked for hours to come and hear and to see these strange white skins. Nickson and I preached and shared time about Jesus and over 57 people responded to the Gospel messages. We Praise The Lord for this. We used the flip-charts a lot in our sharing and preaching. The text which came to me was, "*The harvest is ripe*".

We were also able to play them the recordings we had made earlier in their language. These were the first recordings that Nickson had worked on himself and now we were actually playing them to the people on our hand wind tape players. This really blessed Joan, me and Nickson. The people loved the messages and pictures. They killed a pig for us and we had a great feast before leaving. This was a special time. On the Thursday before Good Friday we left the village and headed down the mountain again. We could still hear the people cry about us leaving a long way off. Many came down the mountain with us to where we had left the car. The vehicle was safe and well.

We travelled to another area where we stayed with a local pastor. As soon as we arrived he was waiting to take us to his church where about 400 people were waiting to greet us and they sang and marched for us. We felt like royalty. We shared about the work and sang them a few songs. They all especially loved Joan's tambourine and many had never seen white people sing, play guitar or dance before. We also shared at their church the next day. It was a lovely time. We then did more recordings of church singing groups.



On Easter Day we moved again to a stay at another place where 29 churches had gathered. They didn't know about us coming, but gave us the opportunity to preach and share about the work and sing songs for them. We shook hundreds of people's hands and it was a real special time. Again the people gave us of their best everywhere we went and they loved us taking their photos. Everyone wanted into the picture.

On our last evening we spoke at another church and by this time both Nickson and I were hoarse. The response was just great and I firmly believe it is not what we say, but that we turn up and just bless the people by our presence... The Lord does the rest.

Next morning we left our new friends at 5 am and headed home. We travelled all day and had no trouble at all. We could see The Lord's Hand on everything we did on this trip, due to so many people praying for us.