

Dear Brothers and Sisters at Harvest Baptist,

One more year is past. At Christmas time we celebrate the Lord's first coming. He came in accordance with God's plan to pay for our sins. I can't think of anything more worth celebrating. One more year means we are one year closer to the Lord's return. If the first coming of Christ is cause for celebration, his second coming will be amazing.

This year Bella and I plan to go back to the States for 3 weeks. We plan to spend Christmas with three of our children and three of our grandchildren. Mandy and her family will still be in Nepal, and we will miss them. We will all be meeting at Cori's house in Missouri. We plan to begin the trip out by leaving the village here in two days. We are hearing that the road is in the worst shape it has ever been in. Even the ones who ride this road every day are falling on the slippery, muddy roads that go up and down the hills. I have to drive my motorcycle over that. The men in here are concerned that I will fall. That is a concern that I share.

The translation work continues as we head to our last check to finish what we plan to translate into Sekadau. Right now Bella is meeting with some language helpers. They are reading through some of the Old Testament passages we have translated. This is the last step before she gives it back to me to translate back into English. We have to translate it back into English so our American translation checker can help us check it.

On Sunday we had our day of games and prizes for the children here. The ones too young to play were given stuffed animals. The children really look forward to this each year. I actually heard one kids saying "yes, yes, yes!" when he looked at the things he had won. The six year old kids seem to be picking up some English (but not from us). We love to see the kids so happy.

Last month we had a church wedding. The girl is from our village and has been in our children's program her whole life. The wedding itself was very nice. But the celebration afterwards showed us the conflict that even our believing friends have to deal with. Apparently, the head of local culture here told the family that they "had" to make rice wine for the party. That is absolutely not true. I was unaware of the pressure being put on this family. If I had known, I would have stood with them against this. So the party wasn't what we would have wished. I did talk together with the men from the church afterwards and told them we need be supporting our folks against this kind of pressure.

Thank you for your prayers for us and for the Sekadau people. For those of you who remember Akim, the church he arranged to be built in here is planning a big blowout dedication for the building on Christmas day. Akim has been very clear that the reason for this church is to destroy our church because we wouldn't ordain him. Apparently one of the big draws is that this church will not talk about sin with their members. We just lost one family because he said he was tired of hearing that drunkenness is a sin. Please pray that the believers in here will remain strong and be clear minded. Thank you very much for the \$100 that you sent to us in October and November.

Yours in Christ,

Paul and Bella

Please pray:

1. That the Sekadau believers will hold firmly to what they know is true
2. For our trip out to town and then on to the States. Please pray that we will be a blessing and help to our family.
3. For our continuing work on the translation, that it will be accurate and clear in this language.
4. That the church here and its leaders will be supportive of each other.

The pictures are of:

the couple who were married.

The children who decorated the church Christmas tree (we didn't introduce this custom)

Some of the children playing to win toys and clothes.



