

Mattocks Missionary Mosaic

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A New Season for Ministry and Leader Care

“Joyce, this new ECFA [Evangelical Christian Financial Accountability] rule on leader care is going to require a location change and how we do ministry.” Recently, Ramona was completing our TBT annual ECFA reporting when she sent me (Rich) a message: “The ECFA website is asking what our leader care plan is for 2027.” I emailed her to write the following: “Tyndale Bible Translators is moving our director from the field, where he also serves language programs, back to the USA at the end of January, 2027 because the new leader care requirements are not possible in Papua New Guinea (PNG).” Beginning in 2027, ECFA will require board-approved leader care plans that include provisions for vacation time, physical checkups, and other forms of rest and renewal for ministry leaders. As I reflected on those requirements, I realized just how different our reality in PNG has been. Over the past year and a half, Joyce and I have had only one vacation day and two sick days. This ECFA requirement has become another confirmation of how the Lord has already been leading. As TBT has grown to include 27 missionaries and more than 60 Papua New Guinean team members, the administrative responsibilities of directing the ministry have increased significantly. At the same time, Joyce’s health, at age 69, requires more attention, and we also feel the need, and are being asked by family, to assist aging family members. Although we will be relocating to the United States, Lord willing, our ministry will continue. Much of the support that comes to TBT for the Mattocks helps support our national coworkers and language teams. I will continue to need missionary support to serve as TBT’s director. We hope to make trips back to PNG, and make frequent WhatsApp calls from America. Starlink has made calls much clearer since the April 30 PNG Government approval of Starlink.

El Niño, Drought, and Math Problems

The current El Niño is expected to continue through January 2027 and may become as severe as the devastating droughts of 1997 and 2015 in PNG. During the 1997 drought, many of our PNG friends and coworkers, who are subsistence farmers, lost significant amounts of body weight because of food shortages. When the rains disappear, people can no longer rely on the streams and rivers that normally provide abundant water. Instead, they often turn to muddy, stagnant sources that increase the risk of waterborne illnesses. Fifteen years ago, we supplied water filters to all of our Kamano-Kafe translation team members and saw dramatic improvements in family health. Several years ago, God provided the funds needed to purchase 700 water filters and ship them to PNG in a container. I hoped we could begin distributing the filters immediately, but instead, we stacked them over nine feet high in a narrow storage shed. One team member, Timothy, steadily distributed filters in a group of villages where the

water is always making people sick. Month after month, whenever I asked other team members about distributing them, I usually heard the same reply: “When dry season comes, people will be willing to buy a bucket to install the filter.” As I looked at that stack of filters each time I retrieved more Bibles from the shed, I prayed to God to use the filters. With the worsening drought conditions over the past two months, that time has arrived.

Nero’s Buckets

Nero had never previously distributed a water filter. Then one day she approached me with unexpected enthusiasm. “Rich, my sister is a teacher, and she says everyone wants one. I need a box of 50.” Having lived in PNG for years, I asked, “Nero, is this one of those situations where you bring filters, install ten, and then haul forty back next week? Why don’t you call your sister and count the buckets that are actually ready?” The next day she told me, “I called my sister. There are 64 buckets waiting in her elementary school classroom.” My response was: “Wow, that’s organized!” I suggested she count what was needed, plus extras for families who might arrive late. Nero headed out with 69 filters. When she returned after the weekend, she had a big smile on her face, and three bandages on blistered fingers from drilling holes and

installing filters all day long. She told us how she trained each family to use their filter and shared with them about spiritual life as she worked. She explained that just as the filter cleans water and helps prevent sickness, God’s Word cleanses our hearts and brings spiritual life and health. How were they doing spiritually and were they connected to a church? Nero’s ministry currently involves duplicating different languages for TBT onto MegaVoice solar Scripture players and micro SD cards. She is reviewing over 24,000 words used in the Fore New Testament. Today that number has been reduced to 7,800 yet to check. Then we will bring the Fore team here to make final decisions on a few spelling choices. Then the manuscript will be printed out in multiple copies for team members to read through. The same week Nero returned from her trip, another Fore team

member arrived after selling ten MegaVoice players with the Fore language New Testament recording to people with poor reading skills. To my surprise, he requested 40 more players for an upcoming church camp. With food costs continuing to rise, I am praying that families will still be able to afford these resources. Meanwhile, Jayson had also been distributing water filters. I asked, “How many filters from that box of fifty filters did you install?” He replied, “I did a quarter of the box.” Thinking in fractions, I estimated, “So that’s about fifteen.” “No,” Jayson answered, “More like 30-35.” I replied, “That is over half the box. Super work Jayson.” Moments like that remind me that communication can be interesting, especially with inadequate education, but they also remind me how much ministry is happening as we and our national coworkers serve. Whether installing water filters, sharing the gospel, checking Bible translations, or distributing audio Scriptures, lives are being touched every day. Thank you for praying, giving, and standing with us as we continue serving the people of Papua New Guinea.



📖 Praise the Lord for the 8 TBT missionaries now serving in Papua New Guinea. Pray for God's favor and swift processing of work permits and visas for three additional missionaries who are waiting to join the team. Pray especially for **Lemuel and Bethanny Davy** as they raise their remaining support and prepare for future ministry in PNG, helping coordinate our language translation projects.

📖 Pray that the Lord will raise up and send **additional translation advisers to serve** alongside Joyce, Elly, and James. Ask God to provide qualified workers to help language groups waiting for Scripture checking and publication.

📖 Please pray for the drought in PNG and for enough rain to water the vegetable gardens.

📖 Praise God for providing Lucy Devlin, an experienced and capable PNG national, who arrived in Ukarumpa with her children July 15. Joyce is training Lucy to take over TBT-PNG finances. Pray that the Lord will provide the funds needed for her nearby family house (\$400 monthly). We are thankful for a special large gift to cover school fees this year for her 4th grade triplets at UIS. Instead of wages, we are paying housing and school fees. Lucy is now on the the TBT website for those who want to give towards her ministry expenses. For online giving, select the category "Project", then select from the list "PNG Admin".

📖 Praise God that the newly-recorded Kanite sorcery reconciliation movie has been shown in nine remote villages. We just received a report while writing this prayer letter that the discussions, tears, and responses led to some genuine reconciliation, healing, forgiveness, and spiritual growth. The people who burned down the house of the lead translator of the movie publicly apologized to him.

📖 PTL-the sorcery movie in the Gadsup language has already been shown in two Gadsup villages under local leadership. Pray for the planned presentations in three additional villages and for lasting impact in the communities.

📖 PTL-The Binumarien language group finished translating and checking their complete Old Testament in July. James will continue to advisor check for the team as they revise their New Testament.



Diane Lord, Joyce and Lucy Devlin working on finances to pay for building materials and flights into the remote Guhu-Samane airstrip. **Right:** Rich training the Fore team how to install water filters.

"The drywall looks really good."

PTL-Drywall is finished in our Deer Park pole barn unfinished upstairs. Painting and flooring are next.

Please pray for all the logistics involved in preparing to leave PNG after 33 years of ministry. We have been going through loads of supplies-sorting, scanning, throwing and burning (files); giving away items, and leaving supplies and equipment for both national and expatriate team members to use for ministry. Pray that they will remember what we taught and where supplies are located when we leave. We live in a remote place with very slow and expensive shipping. Rich orders coffee bags a year in advance now because of fewer sea freight containers (the coffee project is now in its 13th year). We felt totally spoiled during our 2024 furlough with fast shipping in the USA.

Pray for January 2027 when we plan, Lord willing, to relocate ministry and the TBT Director job from PNG to the USA. We are NOT planning on retiring for years yet! Our 2-year last full field term will end near the end of January 2027. After we arrive in the USA, we will take a week to resettle in Deer Park, and isolate to make sure we did not pick up a cold or flu in one of the five flying tubes or airports. Rich is brainstorming hosting a potluck evening somewhere in Spokane on Feb 2 to celebrate Joyce 70th Birthday and to connect with family and friends. Sorry, that will be during the cold winter. What would the groundhog think of Joyce's birthday sharing ground hog day?



Giving Options for Financial Partnership: TBT has a *very inexpensive and safe bank-to-bank transfer option!*

1. For help, call or text (TBT Office) at 971-231-4196. Or email: Office@tyndalebt.org
2. **Online:** <https://tyndalebibletranslators.org/give/>
3. Or send a **check made out to Tyndale Bible Translators** with a note attached stating: "for the ministry of Rich & Joyce Mattocks" to:

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Moving?

Please send address changes either to us, or to Joyce's sister:

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