



Brian and Helen's News & Views

November 2013

Andy Seviofa – Bearer of Light



Inside Andy's House, now equipped with solar LED lamps running on old, expired car batteries.

Many of you have followed the life of our friend, Andy Seviofa, over the years. You know that he is a house painter by trade, with a reputation for outstanding work. You watched him come to my house and teach himself how to read in his Gadsup language, even though he is a 3rd grade leaver. He had earlier taught himself how to read Tok Pisin our national trade language. Since English is a high prestige language, Andy then took on the challenge of learning to read English.

Andy lives in a war-torn hamlet called Nafimpa, the site of many inter-tribal fights over the years. His house is tucked away in a wooded section, and near the village "water supply," a pipe with water coming down from the hills above which has a spigot on the end. Andy looks out for his wife Tresa, their three children and a number of nephews and nieces that live with him so that they can attend nearby Professor Schindler primary school, one of the better PNG schools.

Andy became fascinated by the Bible and reads it regularly in these three languages. He often comes by my house on the way to a painting opportunity, and then asks "the big question" that he is pondering in a Scripture portion. Something in the text, say in the Gospel of Luke, just doesn't quite make sense... "could you explain that to me?", he asks. Sometimes he asks a deep question that theologians have been arguing about for centuries.... but no matter, in the end I have to give my opinion on what is really happening with Jesus or the disciples, or the 1st century church. He then goes off to the village and discusses this with others.

In his visits, Andy noticed my many solar experiments at the house. I have been studying various technologies and controller designs from Western solar companies and looking specifically for the best of the smallest of systems, suitable (and affordable) for local level communities. My house is littered with failed experiments and with machines and objects, that I have assessed as "unworthy" of long term use at the village

level, since they will not be reliable. But that doesn't mean that they no longer work. So, these "throw-aways" have been given over to Andy's use. Included was a broken solar panel from a home that translator's urgently evacuated. It had been smashed by angry villagers and was unrepairable, the glass part all cracked up. But under testing, I found it still produced some power, albeit not efficiently. Seeing this panel re-used, for me, is an incredible picture of "redemption" - what the Lord does with us.



The broken Tigak Island solar panel sharing space on a clothes drying rack at the back of the house.

In addition, Andy collected used, beat-up car batteries that people were giving away. Too "dead" to start a

vehicle, there is still a tiny bit of usable stored power, enough to power LED lights, which turn out to be safer for the environment, than those CFL bulbs that are still popular in the USA. I have been experimenting with these for future village use and have given some of my "seconds" to Andy. As an aside here, but very important: The other huge advantage in the third-world is that eliminating self-made kerosene lanterns removes a principal source of bush-house fires, and kerosene is expensive for those with limited incomes.

Nafimpa has no power supplied by a utility company, so now, when Andy turns on his solar powered lights at night, everyone comes running, like moths to the light, since the village is otherwise in total darkness. This is unlike most locations in the US and other Western countries, where we have lots of ambient lights, and we are not really in "total darkness" at night. In Nafimpa any light is a huge draw and an attraction to "hang out".

And I am told that on Sundays, many villagers come to a reading of the Word and a Bible study led by Andy. It turns out that all those questions he asks me during the week are really his mind preparing for next week's lesson plan. Andy has turned into a Bible expositor and teacher, for his people. There is currently no formal church presence in this hamlet.

Andy is an amazing fellow. The Spirit of God has changed him and I can see radical changes. I pray that as he shares two kinds of Light in the village, LED light and THE LIGHT... that the lives of others are being transformed, by the Spirit of God. This has happened countless times throughout the ages since Christ's first appearance... and it is continuing now in a tiny hamlet, in a tiny valley, in the midst of the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. What a joy for me to see this all unfold, by the Grace of God.

Thank you, to all our friends that make this possible, and knew to send us to this faraway place. Our lives are so much richer to be part of His Master Plan.



Andy, figured out this array of "switches" from crimp-on auto-connectors. He can direct power from the controller to separate batteries, and also control independent lights, by manipulating connectors.

What is Helen Doing These Days?

Helen continues to work in the clinic. She has been rather busy this year as we have had only two (and sometimes only one) doctor all year. She is glad to have Dr. Carl back in the saddle after a 3 week stretch as the only doc. She has responsibility for the care of our international community including missionaries, their children and our many PNG employees. She also oversees the work of our local health sub-center which cares for the local PNG population. However, her real love in the clinic is teaching. This past year she has helped to train new expatriate



Rosie receiving appropriate monitoring and treatments.

nurses (who function as nurse practitioners) and several new PNG medical staff. She has also taught CPR and PALS (Paediatric Advanced Life Support) to many in our clinic as well as for another mission. She also enjoys teaching the staff how to recognize and stabilize a seriously ill child. She especially takes joy in seeing the staff improve their skills and use them to improve the lives of our patients.

What is Brian Doing?

I am continuing my juggling act with too many job assignments. I had forgotten how to to say "no", so am now signed up for too much work. I have assignments related to technology and their application, with fancy titles. So, for example, I am the "Pacific Technology and Publications" coordinator for the entire Pacific Region, as well as the "Area Language Technology Coordinator" (organizing remote training programmes, usually for software technologies related to Bible Translation) for the region. And you have already heard about my solar research activities, which produced a 2nd generation solar system using a new type of Lithium based battery. This is currently sold by JAARS Inc. a sister organization, servicing the mission fields around the world.

On the software side of things, I am a consultant for relevant programs for the expat community. For instance, if you wanted to make one hundred vernacular books to promote literacy... to actually produce 100 titles in a place where there is no literature at all... what tool would you grab and use? *Bloom* is the software of choice... I give counsel in a host of similar domains.

Finally, I am also part of the "think-tank" planning committee for a new work called the "Multi-Language Initiative" where we are trying to figure out how and when to enter entirely new regions of Papua New Guinea to start a parallel translation programme for up to 10 languages, while also engaging local churches far more than ever before.

Brian and Helen

*“The teaching of your Word gives light,
so even the simple can understand.”
– Psalm 119:130*

*“Send out your light and your truth;
let them guide me.*

*Let them lead me to your holy mountain,
to the place where you live.”
– Psalm 43:3*

Prayer Requests:

- That Helen continues in good health, and with wisdom trains cross-culturally various staff members at our clinic. Helen needs strength and stamina, working very long hours, and sometimes as the solo doctor in town.
- That Brian doesn't get too discouraged, trying to do too much. I am hopelessly an over-achiever and am frustrated when I do not accomplish as much as I would like. The lovely woman I married has the same struggles...
- That men and women like Andy and Tresa would flourish in their village, sharing the "great news" of Jesus while they bear fruit for the Lord. Pray that as the people of PNG delve deeper into His Message, their lives would continue to transform into His Image.
- And pray for us (you too) that the Holy Spirit and His power would be such an undeniable reality in our lives, that people around us would notice Him in us.... that the Kingdom would continue to go forward in this world.

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