

The Kihleng Family Missionaries to Micronesia

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Kaselehlie oh Parakapw Mwauh! Greetings and Happy New Year!

We have much to be thankful for as we enter this new year. God has blessed in so many ways in the past months, we can't help but feel more than a little overwhelmed.

House/Mudslide Recovery Update! God has worked many miracles in all of this and it would be difficult to put it all into words. In November we were honored to have 4 men from churches in the States come to work on building our retaining wall. We had given up on getting a local company to do it for a reasonable price and are so thankful that it worked out for David Smith from MI, Buddie Callahan and Jerry Lovegrove from TN, and Larry Pruitt from NV to come and build the wall. It was amazing seeing these men work and what they were able to accomplish in such a short amount of time. It was also amazing seeing God work in many "impossible" situations during that time as we faced supply shortages, equipment malfunctions and often lack of, and so much more. It was also such a blessing to have these men stay in our home and be such an encouragement to our family and ministry. And we are praising God that the wall is up and we can once again feel safe living here during heavy rains. I can't even begin to describe how good it is to finally be able to sleep comfortably at night knowing that the wall is there. We still have some more work to do on the wall before it is complete but as one of the men put it, "we are safer than we have been in a very long time". We are so thankful for God's protection through all of this as well. October and into November we saw some extremely heavy rains and the week before the men arrived we had to evacuate the house a total of 4 times in just one week. We had a good bit of dirt come down the mountain but no damage was done to the house. Thankfully, God held back the rain the entire time the men were here working. They literally jumped into the project from the time they got off the plane and continued until the time they left. Mr. Buddie was scheduled to leave the day after the others; however, his flight was cancelled and there were limited seats on the remaining flights that week. We were thrilled to be able to have him stay longer and celebrate Thanksgiving with us. He also went ahead and installed our back door and window. No more plywood across the back of our house! The house itself has a ways to go before it's back to "normal" but at least now we can safely begin work on it. We will still need to install the flooring, lights and ceiling fans, and put in a kitchen as well as a few other projects.

We were also blessed to have Mark and Crystal Javaux over Thanksgiving week and are thankful for the work they did at our church, bringing and installing projectors and painting. Since the Pohnpeian hymnbook is no longer in print, it is very difficult to get copies and we have very few remaining at our church. With the projectors we are able to project the Pohnpeian hymns onto the platform wall for everyone to see. It has made a huge difference in our congregational singing!

Pastor Jim Davidson of Maranatha Baptist Church in Shelby, NC, which is our commissioning church and the church we attended through college at Ambassador, was also able to come to Pohnpei for a couple of weeks. The Eiben family, also missionaries here on Pohnpei are sent out of Maranatha. We were very blessed to have Pastor Davidson speak in our church and also speak at our missions banquet. It was truly an honor to have him here. He also spent some time working with the men on the wall construction.

Of course because of the mudslide/house situation, we have had to postpone our furlough. Now that the house is stable and no longer in danger of further mudslides, I feel more comfortable with leaving the island for a time. Due to the tremendous cost of traveling with the entire family at such a short notice, we have decided I will come with just our son

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Kyler as well as our church youth/song leader, Kimo Aron in March. I will be there until early May and then we will plan a longer, full furlough the following year with our entire family. Our current plan is to fly to the east coast from Pohnpei in early March. We would like to visit as many of our supporting churches as possible during that time. If you would like us to personally bring an update to your church, please contact me at rkihleng@hotmail.com. Also, if you are interested in helping with the cost of these three plane tickets, please contact me concerning that as well.

The church is doing well. We have had to say many goodbyes to families that have moved to the States for work in the past year. Just our youth group alone has bid farewell to nearly 30 young people that have moved to the US or other places for their family's work, school, or other reasons. But in spite of so many leaving, we have continued to see growth in the church. We've had several new families that have started attending, including a couple that had joined the Islam religion. After meeting with me several times, I was able to lead this man to the Lord and he began coming to our church. It took his wife a bit longer but she has also accepted Christ and is coming faithfully. This couple has been a blessing to see in their growth and their eagerness to bring others to church. We have also seen a huge growth in our children's ministry in recent months. We have a large group of children that are now coming regularly from some of the jungle villages above where we live now that we are able to offer rides on our church truck. We are thrilled to have these children coming, but it has presented some new and interesting challenges for Susan and the other ladies that work with the children's ministry. Many of these children have never been in church before and it is an entirely new experience for them. Please keep these children in your prayers and also Susan as she works with them. The children's ministry was able to present Ron Hamilton's "A Peanut Butter Christmas" for the church in December. They did a fantastic job and we pray that it was a blessing to the families of these children that came to see the performance.

The Bible Institute is also doing well. We have approximately 15 students this semester. We just began the new semester on January 20th. It is always a blessing to see these young people's enthusiasm for serving the Lord and using what they learn in the ministries around Pohnpei. We were blessed to have our very first Bible Institute graduate back with us for a short time before returning to his island of Nukuoro where he has a growing ministry. He was able to be with us for our missions banquet and also speak in one of our services.

Our family is also doing well. We had an exciting surprise for Christmas. Our son Kaleo came home from New Hampshire, a complete surprise to me and the kids. Kaleo had let Susan know and they had a good time thoroughly surprising us all. Kaleo was blessed with a plane ticket given as an anonymous gift and we are truly thankful for this gift. We had a great time with him home and said our goodbyes once again last week. Lord willing, I will be able to see him some while I am in the States in March. We are hoping to coordinate my return ticket to come back with him in May. He will be spending the summer giving guitar and ukulele lessons here on Pohnpei to help save for his next year of college. Our four children here on Pohnpei are also doing well, keeping busy with homeschool and their various activities. Kestra is in 10th grade and her current "hobby" is studying Korean. She seems to have a talent for picking up the Korean language and we hope she will be able to use this skill for the Lord someday. She also enjoys playing the guitar and ukulele. Kyler is in 9th grade and has an ever-growing love for the ocean and marine biology. He's currently working on his open water diving certification and loves to spend as much time as possible out on the reef. Kyler also plays guitar and ukulele and we are enjoying watching his musical talents develop. Katrianne is now a teenager, in 7th grade, and loves spending time with her friends. She and three of her close friends in our church were a huge help with the children's Christmas program in December. Katrianne has a natural gift for music and can play the piano and ukulele by ear. Her talents amaze us and we love seeing her be able to put these musical abilities to use for the Lord in the ministry. Kaylenn is nearly 10 (and reminds us of her upcoming birthday regularly). She is our social butterfly and thrives on playing with her cousins and friends from church. She has also been learning to play the ukulele and loves playing duets with Katrianne.

We do thank all of you for your continued support and prayers. We thank each of you as well that have given towards our home repair since the mudslide and we also want to mention what a blessing it is to receive birthday cards from so many of you. It is something our kids especially look forward to. So many of you may never fully know the blessing you have been in our lives, especially through some of the challenges we have faced these last two years. Your words of encouragement, gifts, and prayers are what have kept us going. Thank you!

Because of Calvary,
Rickson & Susan, Kaleo, Kestra, Kyler, Katrianne, & Kaylenn