

The Clark Connection

Christopher, Darlene, Nathan, Nehemiah & Hannah Clark
2008 Christmas Edition



“In or Out?”

Christopher recently spoke with an adult “MK” (missionary kid) who grew up in Papua New Guinea, spending much of her teen years in Ukarumpa. When asked if she’d been back to Ukarumpa recently, she replied, “I don’t want to go back. With “THE FENCE” up, it’s not the same place anymore.” Prior to the mid-90’s, there was no perimeter security fence around our Ukarumpa Center. Local and missionary men, women and children alike roamed back and forth from the local river and villages to the Center without guards or fences to disrupt their sense of belonging to the inside or outside. Our adult MK friend was comfortable with her former Ukarumpa home, not this now fenced, unknown place WE call home. And so it is with most of us. We don’t like the unknown. We’d rather stay **IN** our comfort zone than to move, whether literally or figuratively, **OUT** of it. But in which place would God gain the greater glory in our lives? “In or out?” We feel like we’ve had some experiences going in and out this past year and praise God for the glory He has received, especially when we were **OUT** of our comfort zones.

TOK TRU

1st Corinthians 2:9

“Things that no eye has seen, or ear heard, or mind imagined, are the things God has prepared for those who love him.”

(NetBible)

Out of PNG, In Australia

Spending almost three months in another foreign country (Australia) just to deliver a baby originally seemed like a poor use of money, time, emotional energy, and potential for fruitful work. We’d have to drive a rental car from the right seat, home-school Nathan, gain and then say goodbye to new friends, pay hospital bills “up front” and live in a small apartment with limited resources while trying to do fruitful work for the aviation department with small children wanting daddy’s attention. How would we live this life, out of our comfort zone, and still bring the greatest glory to God? Once again, God went before us doing the unimaginable. Even though we engaged our windshield wipers instead of our turn signal a few times, we arrived at our destination safely every trip. We had time to **BE** a family and enjoyed some vacation activities. We gained a new church family that offered friendship, prayers and even a couple of teaching opportunities. God provided finances through large monetary gifts and regular giving from our partners, assisted by a weak Aussie dollar. We got to witness Nathan learn to read. We had our best of three birthing experiences in an Aussie hospital. Granmommy (Christopher’s mom) arrived to “save the day” by spending time with both boys, expanding their list of “things to do.” Christopher did manage to do some fruitful work for aviation by making manual revisions and preparations for cargo loading on our bi-weekly King Air international flight and I did some curriculum preparations for the Tok Pisin VBS to be held January 12-16, 2009. All the while, we learned more about ourselves, especially areas for needed growth. We’re glad we were **OUT** of our comfort zone for awhile. We feel rested, thankful, and better prepared as a family to engage in the spiritual battles ahead of us, not to mention glad to be back **IN** PNG - together! (Darlene and Hannah stayed on alone in Cairns for 8 days while waiting for Hannah’s PNG visa to arrive.)



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Out of Blue, Into Pink

“Are you SERIOUS?” I asked. Christopher had just cut the umbilical cord and informed me that our new baby was a GIRL! We know boys. God had different plans. Our household has been invaded by the color pink. God has prepared unseen, unheard of things for us in the raising of a little girl alongside of our boys. We are overjoyed at the gift of Hannah (means “gracious”) Joy, who arrived October 19th. *Please pray that Hannah will grow and be loved well by her family.*



Out of Innocence, Into “Little Bearhood”



“No Tank You!” cries Nehemiah as he is picked up to be disciplined . . . again. He has been affectionately nicknamed “Little Bear” by his granmommy, who spent countless hours with her young grandson during her two-month visit with us. Nehemiah is our delightful, almost two, second born who is affectionate, animated, intuitive, musical, and rather cute. Combine that description with periods of disobedience and the result is . . . a challenging day in the Clark household. We give glory to God for the learning that Nehemiah is doing amidst a transitory year and *pray that a heart for obedience will transform him into a “Little Bear” with a passion for God, much akin to his Biblical namesake.*



Out of Little Boyhood, Into Little Manhood



“Watch me mommy!” I watched in amazement as my once little boy shed his floaties and jumped into the deep end of the Lodge’s swimming pool. After just one day of swimming freedom, Nathan was doing flips and turns under the water and nearly beating me in races across the pool. Then he read a book to me, held his baby sister in his capable, strong arms, lost his first tooth, and said “Hello Mrs. Miller!” in a big boy’s voice upon his return to Ukarumpa. Was this the same shy, tall but young boy who hesitantly stepped into the Kindergarten room in July and wouldn’t even speak to Mrs. Miller, his teacher? Growing pains are just that . . . pains. But we give glory to God for the growing that our firstborn is doing amidst the many transitions **OUT** of his comfort zone that he has experienced this year. *Pray for our son Nathan to be a joyful Jesus-follower and witness to his friends.*

Out of the Cockpit and In Again

For Christopher, 2008 has been the year of learning a new job . . . just in time to get a new one. From single pilot flying to flight instruction to center managing to flight coordinating to writing manuals to single pilot flying again. Being constantly **OUT** of his comfort zone this year, (sometimes discouraged or frustrated), has lead Christopher to pursue God more, hide His Word in his heart and grow stronger godly character. His family is reaping the rewards and God is receiving glory. **Please pray that Christopher's mind will be quick and attentive as he reviews and practices again all that is necessary to fly well in PNG after a 9-month lapse in flying.**



“WOW!” This is my favorite line while teaching the Walk-through-the-Bible. In August and September the Tok Pisin Sunday School children and PNG ladies Bible study group especially enjoyed pointing at Israel on our imaginary floor map and saying “WOOOW!” That’s what the nations said of Israel’s God when Israel abandoned the ways of the idolatrous nations around her and obeyed God, consequently being blessed abundantly by God. (Deuteronomy 28-30). God receives great glory when we, like Israel, step into the initially uncomfortable place obedience often creates. **Pray with us that this lesson was learned well by all of the participants of the Walk-Through-the-Bible course.**

Out of Egypt, Into the Promised Land



Out of Satan's Grip, Into God's Kingdom



This morning our PNG Branch celebrated the awesome things God planned and executed in 2008 for those who love Him. Steven and Holly Hong, translators in the New Ireland Province (whom Christopher has flown to and from the village), testified about a recent break-through in their language area amongst the young people. A young, drunken killer who was hungry for money wanted to learn how to use a computer. Holly taught him and also convinced him to do a Bible study with her using Scriptures in his mother-tongue. God's Word penetrated his heart and changed his life. He is now discipling others using their mother-tongue Scriptures. Neighbouring villages are requesting that this young man bring his team of equipped young men to teach them how to study God's Word. Testimonies like these are what motivate us to keep on keeping on supporting the work of Bible translation in PNG. Thank you for the part **YOU** play in bringing Papua New Guineans **OUT** of the once familiar grip of Satan and **INTO** the Kingdom of Light.

Out of Heaven, In the World

Because God had prepared an ingenious, marvelous plan for those who love Him, His Son took the ultimate leap across comfort zones. Why would Jesus, an eternal Spirit-being in equality with His Father in Heaven, forever be transformed into a human being? The Father's glory was at stake. Philippians 2:6-11 tells us that because Jesus obeyed His Father's will, becoming a servant obedient to death on a cross, every knee will bow and tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the GLORY of the Father. Calling Jesus "Lord" this Christmas requires a major comfort zone leap for you and me too. Faith, humility, self-denial, obedience. . . so many unknowns of the flesh we live in. But, to make the leap out of our natural comfort zone will bring a comfort of quantum proportions when the Prince of Peace comes to dwell within to make us powerful, equipped, joyful and fruitful children and soldiers of God. Which comfort zone are you in? Is it time for a change?

May your lives bring much glory to the Father this Christmas as you bow the knee to Jesus.

