



Email from Valerie Archer 4th September 2021

Valerie is the missionary doctor at Kapuna Hospital in the coastal swamplands of Gulf Province, Papua New Guinea. She also has responsibilities for Kikori Hospital, several hours by boat from Kapuna.



Hello All,

Communication woes: I am writing this letter in faith that one day I will be able to send it. We have not had good internet for a month. First the internet began to reject YouTube, Facebook and other social media... but that is not too unusual. Then it refused to download large files, then it was any attachments, then the internet worked on and off depending on its unpredictable mood. But we are used to all these things and usually they auto-correct after some time depending on how many parties are using the same connections and what time of day you are trying to send things. But this time it did not auto-correct, it went into auto-destruct.



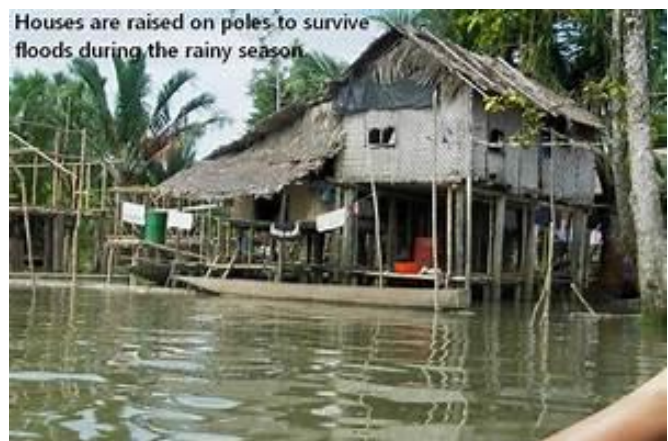
Last week occasional emails came in and you could get WhatsApp, this week NOTHING.

All of us x-spurts ran around trying out our pet ideas. I diagnosed a loose wire, so people checked all the wires and the result was that even WhatsApp disappeared. Others diagnosed coconut trees obstructing satellite connections over heated system, (an enormous helicopter-like fan now blows air over the modem all night), dirty satellite dish (now sparkling clean) ... but still no internet.

So a delegation has left at 4 am to Kikori (about 3 hours by dinghy) to spend the day connected to good internet and to all the experts, to see if the problem can be diagnosed and if we can afford to fix it ... think “new system.” But like the pearl of great price, communication is so important that we have to sell everything we have to try and make the system work.

I was just bemoaning the fact that these days we seem to have cut ourselves off from all the other options. In the “good old days”, when we had carrier pigeons. ... No, but honestly, I remember when it took one week to get a physical letter— one of those things inside a paper house called an envelope (with a thing called a stamp on it) – from Kapuna to Dunedin. Today if the letter turns up at all, you consider it a miracle. But today no one writes physical letters (or, for that matter, uses land line phones). That is just how we have chosen the world to be. So when internet is down, everything is down because where we are, everything depends on the other thing.

But God is good. We have food to eat. Beds to sleep on and clothes to wear. Grandma and I were just counting our blessings... she has a choice of 3 towels to dry herself with and she can use one at a time or if she wishes, all three at once. There are many families in the hospital where the whole family have to share one towel because they only have one towel.



And after that someone will probably use it for a pillow or a bed sheet to sleep under.



Hospital Renovations

The hospital renovations are still going, but at a scaled down pace. We had building inspectors out to see the place, this week, but they are city people and rather than worrying about foundations in the sinking mud or the pitch of the roof in a tropical downpour or whether the septic tanks are adequate, they insist on aesthetic things like rails on all the verandah walkways. All good. Rails are cheaper than foundations or septic tanks.

One thing they are insisting on though is a bigger incinerator... so if any of you out there are **waste disposal experts** who know about incinerators... we need you.

We also need:

Here are some other workers we need.
If you feel like 3 weeks in quarantine in a tropical paradise
Kapuna garden – here we are.

- **Doctors** – we always want these.
- A distance-learning **teacher** for FODE, a system of learning by extension. It is basically offering local high school students a second chance to complete their education.
It would suit someone who can teach at high school level, but who is semi-retired or doesn't want to be in the class room all day.
- Two **primary school teachers**. Prayer point – our local Grade 2 teacher has just been diagnosed with breast cancer, she will be off from work after this term. And the Grade 8 teacher is returning to Australia after 2 years with us.
- **Accounts**, office and audit people.



Due to complicated Covid quarantine regulations, I have decided to give up trying to get back to NZ for Christmas this year. Thank you those who tried to help me get a Covid quarantine space. One day things will settle down to a new normal. Then the whole world will begin travelling again. I will be among them. But for now I will be content to have a holiday in PNG. And perhaps I will see you all in 2022 or 2023.

Lots of love,
Valerie