

# Contact

*Christian Radio Missionary Fellowship*

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*Communicating  
across culture!*

Nobody needed to convince me of the need for a technical ministry such as CRMF. In the mid-nineties I spent 3 years serving as a teacher in a mission high school in Vanuatu. My background in Electronic Engineering helped although many technical repairs had to be sent away to be repaired - at significant cost. I remember thinking that there should be some kind of technical ministry which could offer low-cost equipment and repairs to mission organisations. I considered such work myself but the Lord took me on a different path and I have been operating my own computer/electronic business in rural South Australia for the last ten years.



*Craig Francis*

Something resounded within me when 13 years later my wife drew my attention to information about CRMF on our church notice board. "Goodness, here is an organisation doing in PNG almost exactly what I had thought needed doing in Vanuatu - and they've been doing it since 1957." I had to find out more. I looked up the CRMF website and read all the available issues of Contact magazine. It wasn't long before I was contacting Sheila in the Melbourne office enquiring about short-term volunteer service.

So, in early November of 2008, I kissed my wife and two daughters goodbye and found myself on a flight bound for Goroka.

In Goroka, it was a buzz meeting people first-hand I'd read about in Contact magazine. The ex-patriot staff were very friendly and welcoming. I was almost being fought-over for meal invitations - a reflection of their hospitality rather than my social graces. I got a kick out of being called "uncle" by the kids. Some of the wives took me to the market and the town shopping district to stock-up with food.

As I anticipated, the national staff took a little longer to get to know. Fortunately, the "Bislama" I had learnt in Vanuatu is very similar to the Pidgin spoken in PNG. Although a bit rusty, it was a great tool to use to try and endear myself to them. Coffee breaks (which of course consisted of strong Goroka coffee) were a great time to sidle up and strike a conversation.

I was very impressed with the level of expertise and competence of the staff. This is a tribute to the trainers that have gone before and to the strong emphasis that CRMF has on training.

The actual work I performed wasn't a whole lot different to my daily routine back home - only that there is a greater need to repair and improvise rather than throw away and buy new. There was a bit of tweaking done to the Linux server and several electronic repairs performed but my main assignment was to work along with Lina. Lina is a young national woman who handles most of the IT work at CRMF. We worked alongside together on a number of jobs in order to get ahead. This gave us time to spend comparing notes. We mainly focused on networking - with an emphasis on wireless networking.

One of the highlights of my time at Goroka was a MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship) flight to some surrounding villages. I consider myself a fairly seasoned flyer but I have to say I felt woozy with the take-offs and landings that the bush strips necessitated. Those MAF guys really knew how to handle a Twin Otter. At one strip a large number of people were claiming cheap fares on the basis of carrying out pastoral work. The pilots had to radio to the church offices in Madang to sort out the dilemma. As it turned out, only a couple were legitimate pastoral workers.

This emphasized the importance of good communications and it was no surprise that the radios used were supplied and maintained by CRMF.

I was treated like a dignitary while on that flight - even handed a set of headphones and given a running commentary from the pilots. I knew why this was so, I was riding on the goodwill of CRMF. Everywhere I went people only had good things to say about CRMF and their ministry.

As the MAF pilots said when we got back to the base, "We couldn't operate without CRMF."

Spiritually the trip was very uplifting. Having had a few health issues and recently hitting the big "four o" gave me the impression my overseas mission days were over. However, I was chuffed as feelings stirred that I hadn't felt since going to Vanuatu. My fleeting interest in the ministry turned to an inclination to help which turned to a passion to get involved.

Of course it was rewarding to be able to use my technical skills to help but I was surprised that I also seemed to be of some support and encouragement. The ministry is certainly more than purely technical - it is also about people and relationships. It is another opportunity to share the love and Grace of God to a hurting world.

## Communicating Across Culture!



### Front cover

Recently when Craig Francis spent a few weeks helping out in the CRMF IT department, he came upon the handsome gentleman on our front cover. Even in his splendid National dress, the mobile phone is now an essential part of daily life.

Please continue to pray for all who do not have this facility, that they may have the opportunity to have communication through the services CRMF provides.

*From  
the  
fullness  
of  
His  
Grace  
we  
have  
all  
received  
one  
blessing  
after  
another*

*John 1:16*

# *Let us be a blessing...*

Michael Wakefield, our General Manager, had been considering for some time how our CRMF staff could bless some other people at Christmas time. One morning after devotion (Lotu) he suggested we might like to visit the local prison, so it was arranged.

We waited patiently for the day to arrive, for me personally, I was very excited about the visit, because I had never visited a prison camp in my own country before.

The visit was coordinated with the Evangelical Brotherhood Church prisons ministry. Pastor Paul Dinigiso, the pastor in charge of the ministry informed us of the rules of the prison camp and what we could take with us, and what we could not. CRMF had bought three cartons of bar soap, to be given to the prisoners as Christmas presents and had also contributed to buying food and meat which would be cooked up as an early Christmas meal.

By 12:30pm, we left the workshop and headed out of town for the Bihute prison camp, which is close to the Asaro River.



*Bryan, Koniel & Eric help with the food...*



*Bihute prison camp*



*CRMF team, Dan, Bryan, Eric, Linus, Koniel, Norm, Kannah, Doris, Michael, Rachael & Agnes*



When we arrived there, we started to divide up the food and soap for the male and female prisoners. Our female staff took the share for the female prisoners to the ladies prison camp up on the hill and we prepared what we needed for the men. As we started to go through the main gate, the inmates rushed out of their cubicles to greet us as we brought the food stuff and presents to their mess.

Pastor Peter introduced us to the prisoners and the meal was opened in prayer and a couple of songs lead by one of the prison leaders. The inmates lined up with their cups and plates and our staff and some of the ladies from EBC distributed the meat, kau kau (sweet potato), kumu (greens) with a gift of soap to them. Half way through, Pastor Peter and I had to rush back to town to get more food, because we had underestimated how much we would need.

After the meal was finished, they thanked us for what we had done for them – it meant a lot to them to have people from the community come and bless them at Christmas time. During this time, one of the prison leaders shared something with us that broke everyone's hearts. With tears in his eyes, he told us how this was the first time in many years that they had women there to help serve a meal – usually it was the male guards that would bring the food. This is very significant in our country, because it is always our mothers who love us and care for us, so to have the EBC ladies there was like an extra Christmas present to a lot of the men. After all of the thank you speeches were made, one of our staff members, brother Linus, finished the afternoon off with prayer.

Please uphold the inmates of Bihute prison in your prayers. Some of them are waiting for their hearings, while others have been convicted for months or even years. Pray that they will come to know Christ and be saved and through following Him become good citizens of their country.

*Eric Adagassi*

# A

# Father's Experience



*Les Moon*

Having family on the mission field opens up possibilities and experiences that we never thought would come our way. So, Faye and I went to PNG to spend some time with our daughter Rachael, Michael and our grandchildren.

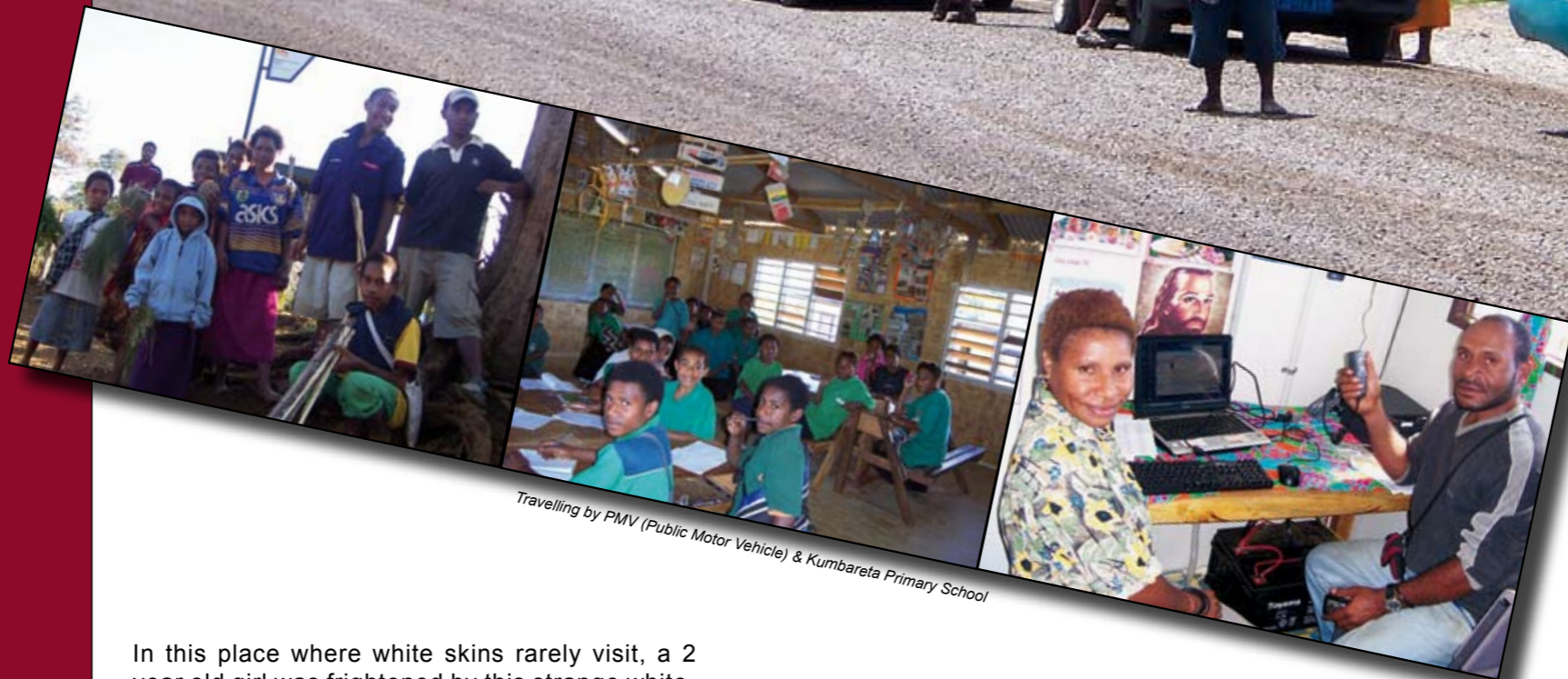
The following week I went with Michael on an installation trip to the Baiyer Valley in the Western Highlands Province. This was for the Baptist Union of PNG, installing HF radio and email into primary schools. This is the only communication the school will have, apart from snail mail which arrives only occasionally.

*dodging potholes,  
people, pigs and goats...*

Travelling by PMV (Public Motor Vehicle) from Goroka to Mt Hagen (approx 300km) was certainly an interesting experience. This took us at speeds of up to 140 kms, dodging potholes, people, pigs and goats, going up and down hills, over bridges that were partly demolished. What a journey!

Reaching the Baiyer Valley, the first installation was at Kwinkya Primary School. Ikson (a National man) was our team leader, and other national staff from the Baptist Union in Mt Hagen were there to help.

Kwinkya had no electricity and no running water. Bathing was in the river, where the nationals got a laugh watching me trying to walk on the rocks in the cold river. At both schools the toilets were a long drop or bush loos. At Kumbareta the villagers apologised for this, but I explained to them that this is what I grew up with on the farm, along with no electricity, newspaper for toilet paper and sugar bag for towels. They were very surprised!



*Travelling by PMV (Public Motor Vehicle) & Kumbareta Primary School*

In this place where white skins rarely visit, a 2 year old girl was frightened by this strange white-haired, white skin!

At both schools we were treated like royalty, given the best food, along with cutlery. At Kumbareta we were given half a chicken per meal each, along with rice and local vegetables, like kau kau, and green leafy vegetables such as pumpkin runners. While we received the best food, the nationals ate only rice and vegetables, with their fingers.

Kumbareta Primary School is right next to Tinsley hospital and with no resident doctor we were able to stay in the house for the duration of our stay.

I found it very hard to believe that at both schools there could be 600 students eligible to attend each school, when we had hardly seen any form of housing on our trip to these villages. The majority of these students walk in from the bush.

It was interesting that we had to teach the nationals many things that we take for granted on the farm. For example, when erecting the tower for the aerials, we taught them how to tie the guy wires. (The solar panels had already been erected by the Baptist Union staff). For people who have little infrastructure, this sort of technology literally 'blows their minds'.

*Then came the time for the first call to be put through, a voice was heard loud and clear. What an emotional time - communication for the very first time!*

At Kwinkya a woman kept asking any visitors to the school if they had heard any news from her village. There were tribal problems back home and very little communication from that area. Now with the new technology she could hear news from her village.

I felt very privileged to go on this installation and it was an awesome experience to see the wonderful life changing work CRMF does in the villages of PNG.

*I would like to thank everyone for their prayer and financial support of a ministry that changes so many lives - a true Life-Line.*

# Faithful Service to CRMF...



*Thank you*

Visits to the airport in Goroka seem to be tinged with sadness lately, it is from there that all our friends go away. In January we found ourselves at the airport saying goodbye again.

Robert and Margaret Oppliger have been missionaries in PNG with the Evangelical Brotherhood Church (EBC) since 1971, the last 6 years Robert was head of their mission (SEBM) in PNG. Apart from his own mission, Robert has supported CRMF in many ways.

In 2002 he joined the CRMF Management Committee, becoming its President in 2006. The Oppligers have also been of incredible support personally to our staff, ministry to us, and in advisory roles. They have now reached retirement age and will resume a new life back in their native Switzerland. We thank them for their years of service and wish them a blessed future in whatever lies ahead.

*Michael Wakefield*

# A Joy-ful Time Raises Funds...



*Well done*

How can YOU help missionaries and God's ministry in PNG?

Three young girls used something they enjoyed doing to support missionaries from their church, Dan & Shannon Perrett.

In October 2008, the Murray family had an opportunity to put their faith into practice and serve God by raising funds. A local garden was having an open day, so Beth (aged 9), Amy (aged 7) and Lara (aged 4) had a great time cooking honey joys, chocolate crackles and pop corn, as well as making pressed flower bookmarks to sell on their stall.

The family enjoyed this challenge and both they and the generous community of Kingaroy were blessed through the opportunity to be part of God's work in Papua New Guinea.

*Sheila Stewart*

**Due to implementation of MAF International**

**Please note the new CRMF Australia email address: [crmf-australia@maf.org](mailto:crmf-australia@maf.org)**

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