Montags' Junglegram

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Dear Praying Friends,

Greetings from "Puerto Esperanza"! This is a little frontier town of about 200 permanent residents and an ever-changing Indian population from five language groups. We left Nueva Luz by canoe this morning after an early breakfast and arrived here in Esperanza at about 2:00. Our co-translator Waldemar brought us downriver and the canoe was a full one, for his family came along (his wife needed to go to the dentist) and he also had some visitors from Brazil that were just "hanging out" with him until someone came back from Brazil to get them. But it was a good time to get them half way home. The river was quite high due to quite a bit of rain and we moved right along without any delays. Waldemar had made a nice roof for the canoe, and we all appreciated that protection from the sun, and were pleasantly surprised that it didn't rain, for this is rainy season.

The almost finished buildings of the Kashinawa Bible Institute really looked good when we stopped there. A dear friend gave us a very generous gift to get this started and the men have worked hard on the construction of a three-classroom building with an office off one end, a cooking pavilion and four or five houses for sleeping, plus an increasingly large garden. They have to cut down the jungle before they can do anything, though. Construction here is just a bit different from where you live, where there are lumberyards, trucks to deliver, Ace Hardware and Wal-Mart's to run to for odds and ends, etc. The lumber here has been milled in Esperanza and all the corrugated roofing and almost all the building supplies had to be carefully calculated ahead and bought by Dick in Pucallpa and then sent out on cargo planes and transported upriver by many canoe trips. And the builders don't eat very well unless there is a garden and go hunting, or someone else provides the staples of their diet. Unfortunately the association of Kashinawa churches did not offer the immediate support that we were anticipating, and a small group did most of the work with a little help from the larger group. But they are now getting ready for the first course to start in about three weeks, and this will be a good time for them to see what additions they will need to make and how they can better involve all the students in the work of facilitating the program. Each student has to pay a matriculation cost, bring food, and provide a gallon of gasoline, in addition to several hours a day when physical work will be done. This will be about the eighth year they have had the Bible Institute course, and will now start offering it twice a year. Halleluiah, Halleluiah! The Kashinawa pastors are the teachers and have a wonderful time of fellowship and communion whenever they are together. There is a steadily increasing interest in worship songs and this has been a joy for all. They keep writing new ones and many have learned to play the guitar and "charrango" (like a lute) and really worship in song with all their hearts.

We have left ourselves an extra day to be in Esperanza and will try to rest a bit. I just said to Dick, "Imagine, no fire to start, no cooking, no dishes to wash, no pots to scrub (after cooking on the open fire), and even a nice cold shower!" We have been very busy and the days have been long and stressful. However we have been constantly reminded that the Lord's strength is always available for those who know they are weak and we have been blessed by being lifted up time

and time again. It is a joy to see how the Scriptures are being used in the Kashinawa churches, and they are very anxious to have the Old Testament portions we are working on now.

Our co-translators Roberto and Waldemar have begun preaching from the Old Testament, too, and that is really exciting for us to see. And our new co-translator Edmundo has just made a profession of faith in Christ. That is a joy to us all. He is a nice young man and has worked very hard with Dick, and always checks with Roberto and Waldemar when he thinks he should be able to say something better. They work together well.

Our plans for the near future will include our annual Mission to the World Conference for those working in Peru, and we will be in the Lima area for that from January 10-14, plus a few days ahead for a medical appointment. We will try to do all the needed shopping and filling out of forms, printing jobs, etc. before going to Lima so we will be ready for our next trip to Nueva Luz.

Then Roberto, Waldemar, and Tufí will fly in from Esperanza to Pucallpa on January 19 to again work on translation. Roberto and Waldemar and I will go on ahead into Lima in early February to work with a translation consultant on all that we have translated of the Old Testament portions. When we are finished with our time with him, we will be about 1/3 done with the selected Old Testament portions we anticipate doing. It will probably be the equivalent of the length of the New Testament, and basically the portions that are most helpful in understanding the New Testament.

Tufí needs some medical care in Pucallpa and then he and Dick will join us in Lima and continue on from with the first draft of II Samuel and then keep on going. We are hoping the road will be OK and we can go by bus. We will probably be in Lima for two months or so, and then be ready to return to Nueva Luz again.

I am sorry not to have gotten more personal notes off this time, but we have had a real struggle to keep enough power on our solar cell-battery set up to keep the translation going, and I have not been able to do much else. Rainy season has many cloudy days and the solar cell doesn't charge enough. But please be assured of our prayers for you. Most of you who will get this letter are in our prayers at least weekly, and we know that you are praying for us. We deeply thank you for your financial gifts and you prayer support. You are keeping us here. May the Lord continually bless each and every one of you with the richness of his wisdom and guidance.

And as we look forward to another year, may we each one be found worthy of our calling as followers of Christ.

Yours because of Calvary,
Sue for Dick and Sue Montag