

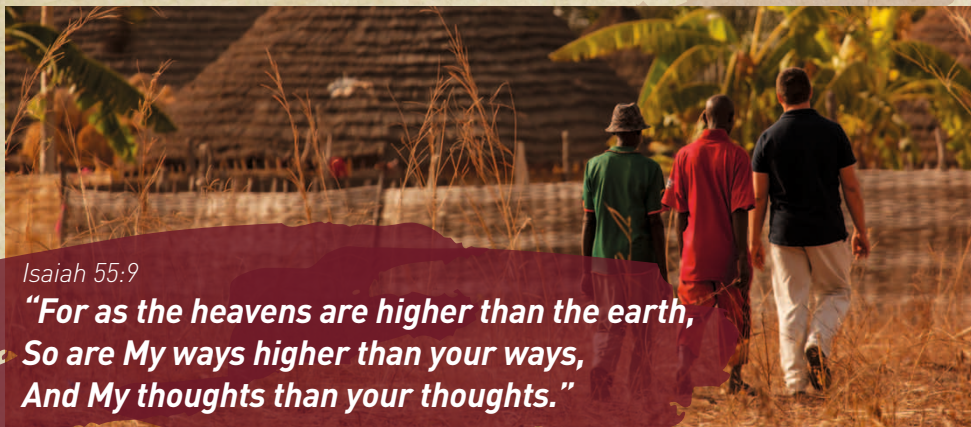


# LINK

YOUR CONNECTION WITH TRIBAL MISSIONS

March 2021





Isaiah 55:9

**“For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
So are My ways higher than your ways,  
And My thoughts than your thoughts.”**

All of us experience times of waiting; it may be for answers to our prayers, for new plans to unfold, or for a change in circumstances. These times may stretch our patience as we eagerly anticipate an end to the waiting and uncertainty.

Our missionaries also experience periods of waiting with interruptions and delays to their travel, or ministry plans due to illness, family needs, paperwork and, more recently, the pandemic and related restrictions.

It might appear that things come to a halt, but God is still at work. We hope that as you read the articles in this edition, you are encouraged to see that these times are not wasted; that God’s timing is always perfect and is never hindered by unexpected disruptions.

You will see in their testimonies the vital truth that it is God’s work in and through us each day that is most important, no waiting required.

## HEARTFELT THANKS

**Graham and Carol Townley** took their first steps of faith into missions together in 1985, and as the Lord directs, so He provides. They served in Papua New Guinea for twelve years with their young family, working in various support roles before returning to the UK in the summer of 2000, joining the team at North Cotes that September. Graham worked mainly on grounds as part of the campus management team, and Carol in many roles, including kitchen manager and practical programme co-ordinator. In May last year, they took another step of faith, moving to Ingleton to refurbish the bungalow belonging to Graham’s mum, hoping to care for her there. In September, they received the news that she had gone home to glory. Graham and Carol are very aware of the verse Proverbs 16:9, ‘In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.’ They are so thankful that God overrules in each step they take. For now, they have stepped out of NTM, but their intention is not to leave permanently, they are not ready to retire. Beyond the immediate plans for local ministry, they are waiting to see what God directs them to next. Their faithful service thus far is much appreciated.

**Ingvard and Erla Petersen** are from the Faroe Islands. They count it an honour to have served the Lord with NTM for 20 years, spending the first eight years working in Latin America, then moving to NTM North Cotes in 2008 with their three children.



*Graham and Carol Townley*



*Ingvard and Erla Petersen*

Ingvard taught in the Biblical Studies course and served in leadership, while Erla was involved in various ministries over the years, including student housing and administrative work in the college. Together they provided guidance and support to the students in their fellowship group each year. They moved back to the Faroe Islands just over two years ago where God has provided them with a place to live and new jobs. Recently they made the decision to step out of full-time ministry. However, their heart for missions has not changed and they will continue to support and represent the work of NTM Faroes. We are thankful for their many years of faithful ministry and pray that God would continue to bless them in their future plans.

March 2021  
Volume XLVII  
Issue 1

Cover photo: NTM Resource  
Printed by: DMP, Keighley,  
West Yorkshire  
© 2021 New Tribes Mission

Content of this Link or any previous issue may not be reproduced in whole or in part unless expressly authorised in writing by the Publication team.  
As our missionaries are not professional photographers we are not always able to use the pictures supplied with the submitted articles. We will in such cases use pictures taken by other missionaries who

work in the same area or country or use pictures from other archives. Link is the official magazine of New Tribes Mission in the UK and is published three times a year. It is available without charge. Please notify us promptly of any change of address or if you do not wish to continue receiving a copy of Link.

All financial gifts should be sent to NTM-UK Finance Office at the following address:  
NEW TRIBES MISSION,  
North Cotes, Grimsby DN36 5XU,  
England

Gifts may be designated for a missionary, ministry or other purpose. Cheques should be made

payable to New Tribes Mission.  
You can donate online:  
[www.ntm.org.uk/give](http://www.ntm.org.uk/give)  
New Tribes Mission is a registered charity, No. 278627.  
Tel: +44 (0)1472 387700  
Fax: +44 (0)1472 387707  
[link@ntm.org.uk](mailto:link@ntm.org.uk)  
[www.ntm.org.uk](http://www.ntm.org.uk)

Contact our representatives:  
Ireland (North & South)  
[matthew\\_cuthbert@ntm.org.uk](mailto:matthew_cuthbert@ntm.org.uk)  
Mainland UK  
[frank\\_brearley@ntm.org.uk](mailto:frank_brearley@ntm.org.uk)  
[stephen\\_jerrard@ntm.org.uk](mailto:stephen_jerrard@ntm.org.uk)  
[andrew\\_murray@ntm.org.uk](mailto:andrew_murray@ntm.org.uk)





## GOD FINISHES WHAT HE STARTS

Looking back over life, now in our sixties, and in a global pandemic, we reflect on the goals of our thirties when a chunk of life was ahead.

As church planters in Papua New Guinea, by now, we expected to be retiring, a New Testament printed and a flourishing indigenous church established. But with sickness, family concerns, aging parents and more over the years, we find those goals unattained.

Our home and belongings in the village were destroyed during our home assignment of 2007. This occurred just three years after the first Gospel presentation and when translating of epistles and Bible lessons, together with teaching the new believers, was gaining momentum. Some suggested it was not God's will for us to return, but we expected the sin and attitudes in this world to touch us and so we rebuilt and picked up again with the Lord's

help. How should we respond to hindrances? Call it a day? In our case, convinced that God finishes what He starts, we wanted to bring the work to some sort of conclusion. Our main objective is to complete the translation and lessons of a selection of New Testament epistles.

In 2015, Paul had appendicitis, which a few months later resulted in a medical condition that grounded us in England. With that now rectified, but with concerns about leaving an aging parent, we have returned to PNG for shorter periods. Our last trip to the village was October 2019. Good progress was made with comprehension checks on 1 Corinthians and 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Susan and a friend completed the first draft translation of the book of Revelation.

Returning to England early 2020 there were obvious signs of the looming pandemic but we had determined to travel again in April. Then, as we were



about to buy tickets, the advice was that for over sixties, especially with medical conditions, it was unwise to return to PNG, as there are no critical care beds available if complications developed from Covid-19.

A year on we are still waiting to return, with limited flights and last-minute cancellations and reams of paper work. Some missionaries have returned, but the biggest difficulty for us is 'over insurance' due to pre-existing conditions. We are thankful to be able to call brother K.... in the village on his mobile phone each month. It provides a limited picture, but mutual encouragement. He is the only Bible teacher... teaching the believers from the translated Scripture and Bible lessons.

The believers worry about us in the pandemic. We rejoice that they continue to gather in one of their homes. News of our friends is vital. Yes, there is sadness at reports of those who once followed the Lord but choose to continue in sin rather than serve Him. We know something of what the apostle Paul felt in Philippians 1:3-8 in writing to the Thessalonian believers.

Meanwhile, slowly working on translation, although motivation is low without a return date, we take up any opportunities that present for us to serve the Lord. Our situation is not isolated and many missionaries face difficulties, but we rejoice that the work of the Gospel and establishing churches continues in many places.



*Paul and Susan*

***Paul and Susan are from Chesterfield and have served with NTM since they started Bible college in 1986 and have ministered in a number of roles. They have worked with a people group in Papua New Guinea since 1993. They have three daughters and five grandchildren.***





## NEW TO NAYBA

The exciting day of beginning our journey of living in the tribal village of Nayba had finally come! We could hardly believe that we were literally on our way up the winding path that leads to Nayba. We had been planning this move for a couple of years so I had to pinch myself to see if it was really coming true now, or was it still a dream?

After travelling in our truck as far as we could, we began the 15 minute hike up the steep mountain where we were greeted by lots of our neighbours, who had been there since early morning doing last minute things to make sure our house was ready for us.

Not only were we welcomed with big smiles and hugs, but they had also boiled sweet potatoes ready for us to go along with the coffee.

*Elizabeth is from Canada and her husband Ragnar is from the Faroe Islands. They have been working with NTM since 1978.*

*Most of their ministry has been in the Philippines, working mainly with the Kankanaey people.*

*They have two grown children and eight grandchildren.*

More folk had sent over freshly harvested rice, bananas, green beans, ginger, freshly baked rice cakes and more. They also stayed to cook dinner for us and then help carry some belongings that had been stored in the church building over to the house.

On our first Sunday there, our brothers and sisters could not have been more friendly and welcoming! After the morning service and before the afternoon prayer meeting, while



we were waiting for the rice and veggies to boil, the men made a circle around Ragnar and the women around me. They each introduced themselves, telling us a bit about their family, which village they live in etc. Lord willing it will not be long before we can call them all by name and know who belongs in which family.

Myrna has offered to take me to visit a new family in our church each week. What a great idea and wonderful way to get to know my sisters in this area. Her kind offer is very much appreciated and I really look forward to those times! The first two weeks we visited Alisha and Imelda. Then

on the third week, Myrna, along with 13 other ladies, came to spend the day with me. Their homes are very spread out so it will take some time, but over future months we should be able to eventually reach all of them.

What fun being surrounded by my sisters in Christ who are going way beyond what I would have thought or expected to make me feel like one of them.

What an encouraging beginning to life in Nayba! We look forward to the time the Lord allows us to live there working with this wonderful group of believers.





## THE 'REAL THING'

While in the training at North Cotes, we enjoyed learning about missions but longed to put into action what we had been learning about church planting, and finally leave for the mission field to start with the 'real thing'.

Shortly after arriving on the mission field we realised that we could do less here than in our home country. We felt like children again; we could barely say please and thank you, we could not drive, we did not know how to go shopping, we did not know how to cook, we did not know how to use the toilets and we were totally dependent on others to help us get by...

The thought that comes to mind is: maybe after we finish learning the trade language, then we can finally start the 'real thing'.

*Ben is from England and Tabea is from Germany. They have two boys and another one on the way. They have been studying national language and culture in Asia-Pacific for about one year.*

But then we are reminded that we will first need to learn the tribal language, which is even harder as it is often an unwritten language. This is necessary so that those language groups will understand the Gospel clearly.

All this together could add up to maybe ten years of waiting for the 'real thing'!

The problem with this attitude, is that by just trying to get to the next step as fast as possible can mean missed opportunities that are right in front of us.

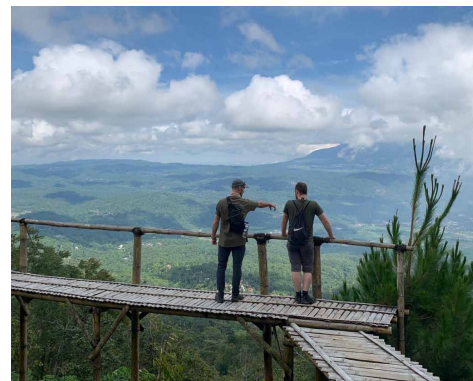


How much can things like marriage, kids, and a personal relationship with the Lord, change in ten years' time? Those changes will be based on how we think and act today.

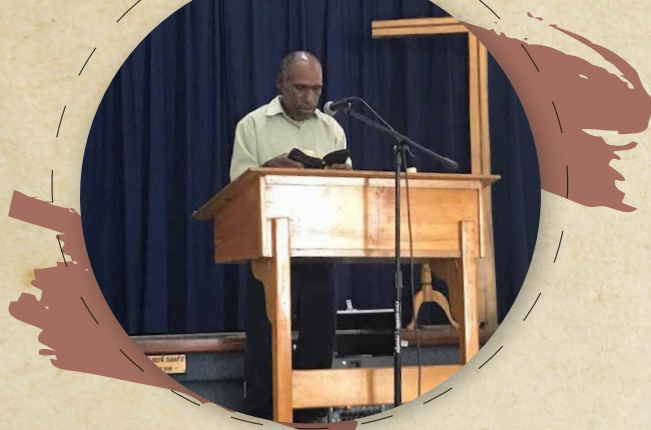
If what we do today only makes sense in the light of the goal of seeing a church planted, what if that goal does not work out the way we planned? Is it all wasted?

But what if the 'real thing' isn't the ministry goal? What if the Lord wants more than anything to have a relationship with us; for us to walk closely with Him, know Him more, praise Him, be transformed in His image, while heading towards the goal that He has put in our hearts?

We need not wait for the 'real thing' as it is the Lord working in and through us today that is important.







## DRIVEN BY GOD

Koen and Anne-Laure Verdonck from Belgium serve in Papua New Guinea. They were encouraged recently when PNG Pastor Zato spoke at a Sunday service. He talked about the grace of God. "Mari Mari belong God" in Pidgin.

The following is a rendering of some of the very simple wisdom Pastor Zato shared.

"Sometimes, when you go shopping, the shelves are empty here! God's grace is never low or empty!

If there is trouble in a tribal location and there is fighting (a very normal thing here) would you send your *son* to go in and solve the problems? We would not either. But God did!

Do you know how many roots a tree has or where they go? In the same way you do not know who and where people are praying for you.

In our lives, we often drive the car and God and Jesus are allowed to come with us, but in the back seat. But we should let God drive and we should be on the back seat as God knows where He is going! A daddy holds the hand of his child! Not the other way around!

When you mow your lawn, that grass will grow again. But when you pull it out, it is dead. When we try to get rid of our own sin, it will grow back but if Christ removes our sin, it will not grow back."

## TO THE FIELD

In January, a couple from Austria joined the team in Asia-Pacific.

In February, a single lady from Northern Ireland joined the team in Southeast Asia Mainland.



*Jack is from Lancashire and worked with his wife Isa in Papua New Guinea from 1970 until 2007, after which they made return visits each year to do further teaching. They were able to see several churches planted in the Pawaia language group and the believers there are going on well. After Isa's death in 2019, Jack came to live at North Cotes. He is a member of the teaching team.*



*Jack Douglas*

## CHOSEN PEOPLE

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;" 1 Peter 2:9. Whilst teaching through this verse to the village believers, I wrote the main points on the blackboard and continued teaching. Suddenly, as the application struck home, a man stood up and, pointing to the blackboard exclaimed, "That's us." He was right. That is us! It does mean that we believers are such a people, God's special people. It is clear in the Old Testament, that Israel was the one nation that God chose out of all the nations. They were to stand out as different, separated to Jehovah, holy. However, that was not intended to make them a proud nation. God's purpose in choosing them was that they should be his witnesses. They were blessed to have a God who is always near and who hears their prayers, a nation with an outstanding, God-given constitution. (Deut. 4:5-8)

When God chose Abram and promised him a nation and a land, He also

promised that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through him.

This promise was repeated to Abram's son and again to his grandson. We now know that God had chosen that family to be the means of bringing the Saviour into the world, the Saviour who is the one to bless all nations. Jesus explained very clearly to His followers that they were to be His witnesses - that they were to make disciples of all the nations.

Whilst it is true that the nation of Israel is a witness to the fact that God works in world history, it is in a passive sense today. Let us make sure that our Christian witness is not merely passive, by maintaining a religious ritual performed weekly, but let us faithfully and clearly make the Gospel known. Peter tells us that the reason we are God's special people is that we should let it be known publicly that we praise Him for bringing us out of darkness into His wonderful light. We have a story to tell to the nations, about the only One who gives eternal life! What a privilege and what a responsibility!





"In order to continue to be able to have European students join us here for missionary training we are currently pursuing accreditation for the college via the British Accreditation Council. This is so that we can obtain visas for Biblical Studies students for the next academic year onwards, as well as for future Cross Cultural Communications and Advanced Linguistics students. We have already sent in our application and have added some more detailed

information which was submitted at the end of February. Following this, there will be a detailed inspection of all aspects of college life, although this may initially have to be done online (possibly in March). Hopefully, we will be granted a temporary licence, after which a more thorough on-site inspection will occur once the coronavirus restrictions allow. Please pray for us in this process and for a good relationship with the accreditors."

THE ONSITE 'NOAH'S ARK' NURSERY IS NOW REQUIRED TO BE OFSTED REGISTERED. PLEASE PRAY FOR THE NURSERY MANAGER AND TEAM THAT ARE WORKING THROUGH THIS PROCESS.



*The first valley on the workshop roof has now been refurbished to a very good standard. It is hoped that the other six can be done at some point soon.*

*A new heating control system has been fitted in five buildings. This should make the system more energy efficient, needing less maintenance whilst keeping a more even temperature.*

*Jakob and Christina Klein are from Germany. They have been richly blessed with three children Joshua (6), Nele (4) and Jack (1). They have been serving the Lord as kitchen managers at North Cotes College since August 2020.*



*The Klein Family*

1 Cor. 10:31

## SO WHETHER YOU EAT OR DRINK OR WHATEVER YOU DO, DO IT ALL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

In 2016, after we had a good conversation with my sister, my wife and I were challenged about going to North Cotes College; my sister had studied there several years earlier. We visited the college in October 2016, just after our daughter Nele was born, and applied shortly after for the biblical studies course starting in September 2017.

God made it very clear to us that the biblical studies course was the right next step in our lives. After we were accepted for the course, we faced several practical challenges moving to North Cotes. God blessed us with our praying church, friends and family, and all the challenges (big and small) were sorted out so quickly that we were amazed at how God blessed the preparation time.

God gave us a very special and blessed time during the year of biblical studies. We were able to look deeper into so many crucial truths of God's Word. During that year, God laid it on our hearts to support missions or mission training in a practical way.

After completing the biblical studies course, we stayed on at North Cotes as volunteers in the kitchen for another school year and were then challenged about being involved in the kitchen on a longer-term basis. After seeing the need for kitchen personnel on a more permanent basis, God laid this ministry on our hearts.

After the initial year of volunteering, we returned to Germany to spend time with our home church, family and friends. We prayed during that year in Germany that God would show us and direct us in the way He wanted us to be involved in mission support work.

Looking back, we are again so amazed that God blessed the period of decision making, especially throughout the time after March 2019 when the pandemic crisis began and many things became uncertain. We are grateful that He made it clear that He wants us to serve in the kitchen at North Cotes College and we are thankful for the amazing team He has put together to support the students in their training.

Kevin is from England and has served in the Philippines and North Cotes. He has three grown children, Caleb, Samuel & Heather, and a dog called Sakura. Heather now serves in the nursery here on campus.



## BEHIND THE SCENES

I began my journey with NTM back in 1982. Since then, I have served for 12 years in the Philippines and latterly for over 21 years here at NTM's Head Office, North Cotes. As I look back over these years, one thing that I know I should focus on is God's faithfulness. Just last year we put up a wall sticker in our office that serves as a constant reminder of all that God has faithfully provided.

*All I have needed thy hand hath provided*  
**GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS**  
*Lord unto me*

Just three years ago, we found out that my lovely wife of 25 years, Marie, was diagnosed with cancer. After a 364-day battle with Sarcoma, she was taken home to be with her Saviour. Even in the midst of pain, suffering and grief, God was faithful, and continues to show us His faithfulness. He is our faithful cornerstone and strong anchor in the midst of the storm.

I consider it a privilege to not only be aware of how God has been faithful

to me and my family, but also, as I am actively involved in the administration for NTM-UK, to have seen first-hand God's faithfulness to so many missionaries and to the mission in general.

As one of the families that first moved up to North Cotes back in 1999, it is amazing to remember how many times, and in so many ways, God has provided for the work here. He has not just provided financially, although that is for certain, but He has even sent along people to meet specific needs and projects. It remains a constant challenge to look at the hard situations we may experience, and at the same time remember we serve the One who cannot be anything but faithful.

I love the thought of the memorial stones that the children of Israel were instructed to construct, serving as a reminder of all that God had done for them. As we reflect on God's faithfulness in so many ways, may these reflections be a constant reminder that it is God who is faithful and that HE will build His Church around the world for HIS glory.

## IMPACT 4 ETERNITY

**Please pray for Brazil**, in particular Manaus, where the number of Covid-19 cases has been overwhelming. Earlier this year missionary, Phil Jansma, sadly did not recover from coronavirus and leaves behind his wife, Kristi and twelve children. The family have decided to return to the USA for a time of healing.

**Simon and Annika Flanagan** serve among the Mengen people of Papua New Guinea. They have five children and are looking for a home school helper from August 2021 - May 2022. Please pray that the Lord would provide the right person to fill this role.

Since travel has started to open up a little, **please pray for those who have returned to PNG** and also for several that recently arrived in Asia-Pacific and Southeast Asia for the first time.

The remote **Mibu people of Papua New Guinea** have been working on their airstrip for well over twenty years. Literally moving mountains by hand! Construction was completed in 2018. However, due to soft materials in a 90-meter section, while testing the strip a plane suffered total prop and engine damage. The strip was deemed unsafe and inoperable. It needs both permanent drainage as well as subsurface soil reinforcement. The cost of this is beyond the reach of the local people.

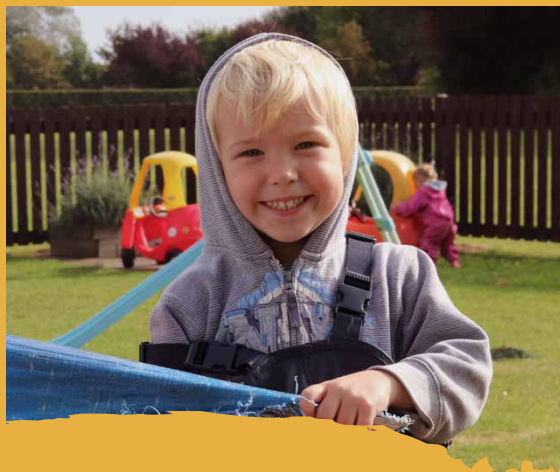
North Cotes College courses are open to anyone who desires to grow in their knowledge of God and His Word, or wants to be equipped to take the good news of Jesus to unreached people groups. **Pray for the accreditation process. Also, pray for students to apply for courses starting in September.**



**Sadly, due to the uncertainty regarding coronavirus, it will not be possible to hold our residential conference this year. However, it may be possible to have an online conference similar to the Reach conference.**

**More information will be posted on our website [ntm.org.uk](http://ntm.org.uk) nearer the time.**





# SEARCHING FOR VOLUNTEERS

**we are looking for:**

- kitchen volunteers
- nursery volunteers (preferably with a qualification in childcare level 2 or above)
- skilled maintenance volunteers
- IT volunteers

must be  
**UK resident**

**[volunteer@ntm.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@ntm.org.uk)**