

Andrew, tell us about staffing at the Autoshop:

I am primarily a motorcycle and small engine mechanic, but because we are usually understaffed, I have had to learn to do and be many other things over the years. When we have been short on auto electricians, I have learned to do some of that; when we have needed welders, I have improved my skills in that area; when we have needed a buyer who can research things on the internet and arrange to buy parts and equipment from the USA or Australia and have them shipped here, I have become proficient at that. Lately, we have been critically short on managerial staff and I have been learning to do that as well.

From time to time over the years, our workshop has been fortunate enough to be fully staffed. Those are the times when our shop functions best, when we can offer the best possible support for the Bible translators and when we can offer the best training to our national co-workers. When we are fully staffed, we are able to help people from other missions and people from communities all over PNG. When we are fully staffed, it becomes possible to devote time and energy to exploring new (or old) technologies that might be appropriate for use here: technologies like sustainable alternative fuel production, methods of generating electricity in remote villages, coming up with a vehicle that would be truly "PNG proof", that sort of thing.

Mechanics can struggle to raise the finances they need to be able to stay here. Fixing and improving machines is hardly the stuff of legends; our culture typically doesn't make heroes out of guys who fix trucks or repair generators; nobody would watch a webcam feed from our workshop, it'd be boring.

But nevertheless, these people who quietly plug away behind the scenes are needed. There are dozens of translators from around the world and from within PNG who depend on us to help keep their four wheel drive trucks running so that they can get to the remote locations where they work; their generators working so that they can keep computer batteries charged up or as back-up for their solar panels during the rainy season; and their chainsaws working so that they can mill the lumber needed to build village houses and translation offices and training centres. Thousands of people all over PNG rely on our workshop to maintain the big, industrial sized lawnmowers which they use to keep their airstrips open in some of the most remote, hard-to-reach areas on earth. Many of the services we offer are not available anywhere else in country.





In September, I (Clare) attended a course in caring for other missionaries (photo by Brena Bruner). At the time, I was planning to use what I learnt mostly in the context of my friendships.

However, over the last few months I've become more involved in our organisation's 'Staff Care' department.

Over the Christmas break, I helped to set up a staff care 'on-call' system. This

meant that people living on our centre would know where to get help if needed; it also helped ensure that the main pastoral carers were able to get a much needed break.

I've also started to support fellow mission workers who are wanting help with particular issues. Living cross-culturally, remotely, and away from friends, family and other support services, means that difficult situations have the potential to easily spiral into crises.

PRAYER AND PRAISE:

Clare is planning to finish her work of recruiting teachers for Ukarumpa International School in a couple of months. Please pray for a replacement so that Clare can focus on her new role in pastoral care as well as starting to plan for our 2017 furlough. She would appreciate your prayers for wisdom as she offers support to others.



Your continued prayers are appreciated for Andrew: He's finding it increasingly difficult having no manager at the Autoshop. We're praying for the right person to fill this gap soon.

We praise God that Eowyn's abnormalities of the kidneys and urinary tract have not got any worse and are not causing her any problems.

Thanks again for your prayers, encouragement and financial support.

***Andrew and Clare Koens
with Levi, Heidi and Eowyn***

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(In the USA please enclose a note with gifts stating 'preference for the ministry of Andrew and Clare Koens')